

# Niagara Region Public Health School Health Newsletter

## March 2023

### Nutrition Month 2023

March is [Nutrition Month!](#) This annual campaign has been created by the Dietitians of Canada to highlight the importance of making informed food choices and developing both balanced eating and physical activity habits. Adults have a unique opportunity to help youth learn that healthy eating is more than the foods they eat. Below are some helpful resources to encourage healthy behaviours in children.



- [Building Healthy Eating Habits | Support Your Picky Eater](#)
- Visit [unlockfood.ca](http://unlockfood.ca) for recipes, food allergies, [menu planners](#), and to also find a Dietitian
- Check out this [free downloadable e-recipe](#) book from last year's Nutrition Month 2022
- For more support around healthy eating, visit [Healthy eating for parents and children - Canada's Food Guide](#)

View our recorded Instagram live event with [NEDIC - National Eating Disorder Information Centre](#) that took place February 7. This event discussed the importance of promoting and supporting body positivity with youth. View the recording here: [Transform the Narrative - Instagram LIVE](#)

### World Sleep Day, Sleep is Essential for Health – March 17<sup>th</sup>

Sleep is very important for physical and mental health, but many children and youth just don't get enough. Lack of sleep can cause a number of health problems and have a big impact on your child's school performance, behaviour and mental health.



#### How much sleep does my child/youth need?

AGE	RECOMMENDED SLEEP
Ages 3-5 (Preschoolers)	10-13 hours per day
Age 6-12	9-12 hours per day
Ages 13-18	9-10 hours a night

Source: Recommended amount of sleep for pediatric populations, from the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, 2016

#### Here are a few tips to consider that may help youth sleep better:

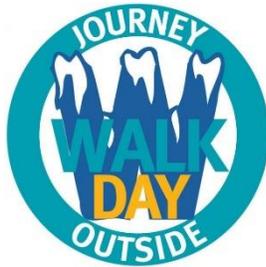
- **Limit naps** – some kids are really tired when they get home from school. A short nap can be helpful, but long naps can interfere with nighttime sleep. Consider keeping after school naps short, no more than 30-60 minutes.
- **Spend at least 1.5 hours outside during daylight hours** – natural light from outside helps set the body's internal clock. This is also important for helping a child's eyes grow properly and prevent nearsightedness.

- **Have an electronic curfew** – it can be helpful to have any electronic screens turned off 1-2 hours before bed. Avoiding screens will reduce blue light and help the brain produce melatonin, a hormone that controls the sleep-wake cycles..
- **Have a regular bedtime routine** – typical routines can include brushing teeth, having a bath or shower, putting on pajamas, going to the bedroom and doing relaxing activities such as reading, drawing, writing, or listening to calming music.

For more information, visit [caringforkids.ca](https://caringforkids.ca) - [healthy sleep](#)

Source: <https://www.cheo.on.ca/en/resources-and-support/resources/P5643E.pdf>

## Journey Outside



March is a funny month – it can bring spring-like weather or we can be hit with a snowfall. The good news is this doesn't have to stop us from walking or biking to school – it can add to the fun! To encourage children to walk to school, try making a game out of it. Adults can encourage interactive activities such as playing I Spy or storytelling while walking to make the journey more interesting.

Ontario Active School Travel has a great scavenger hunt idea that can help get children excited about exploring the outdoors on their way to school! Check it out at

<https://schooltravel.ca/activity/neighbourhood-hunt/>

It is a great time to start planning for April's "*Spring into Spring*", where students across Ontario will be participating in walk to school days throughout the month. A school can start planning a school event here: <https://ontarioactiveschooltravel.ca/spring-into-spring/>

Just remember to dress for the weather, and enjoy the fresh air!

## Niagara Parents

Public Health Nurses are available to answer questions and provide reliable advice about pregnancy, newborn care, infant feeding, child or parental mental health concerns, and provide connections to community supports through [Niagara Parents](#).



Individuals can connect with a Public Health Nurse at [Niagara Parents](#)

**Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 4:15 p.m.:**

- Call 905-684-7555 or 1-888-505-6074 ext.7555
- [Email](#)
- [Live Chat](#)
- [Facebook Messenger](#)



## Educational Resources

### P.A.L.S. Contest!

Many schools across Niagara participate in the [Playground Activity Leaders in Schools \(P.A.L.S.\)](#). Public Health wants to encourage schools to get involved and to celebrate those who are participating in this program. We are hosting a contest where two lucky schools will be the winners and receive new SUPERSIZED inflatable soccer and footballs, suitable for all levels of play!



Playground Activity  
Leaders in Schools

Tell us the reason you love P.A.L.S....

- Schools can submit a video reel through social media using the hashtag **#healthyschoolsniagara**
- Alternative entries can include a written description or poster also submitted through school social media.
- Check out our [sample reel](#) on the Niagara Region Public Health's YouTube page.

Each school that enters will be submitted into a draw. Contact your School Nurse regarding your entry **by Friday March 31st, 2023** or if you need any guidance or help with creating your social media post

Winning schools will be drawn on **Tuesday April 4, 2023** and prizes will be delivered the following week!

If you would like more information about the P.A.L.S. program or would like to start P.A.L.S. at your school visit [P.A.L.S. Niagara](#) or connect with your school nurse.

### Healthy Schools Spotlights



The Public Health School Health Team wants to shine light on some of the great work that is going on within Niagara schools! The spotlight showcases the Healthy School initiatives at one school in Niagara each month. While the spotlight highlights one specific school, there are many other schools across Niagara doing amazing work too!

If you know of a school that would like to be showcased in the upcoming months feel free to reach out to your School Health Nurse. Check out our [Healthy Schools Webpage](#) or **#HealthySchoolsNiagara** on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter to see past Healthy Schools Spotlights!

## Nutrition Month

- OPHEA has partnered with *Growing Chefs! Ontario* to provide lesson plans related to Healthy Eating for grades one to eight – [Lesson Plans by Growing Chefs! Ontario](#)
- Teach youth [how to read a nutrition facts label](#). As part of the lesson, ask students to bring in nutrition labels from home. Spend some time with youth reading labels and comparing information.

## International Women Day

March 8th is International Women's Day. This day is to recognize and celebrate women and girls' social, economic, cultural, and political achievements. There are many great ways to keep the conversation going within your class!

- Visit the [Women of Impact in Canada](#) gallery to learn about the inspiring achievements of Canadian women in various fields such as politics, sciences, and the arts.
- Explore the [Teacher Toolkit](#) created by the Government of Canada to learn of more about joining the conversation and celebrating International Women's Day in the classroom!

