

Niagara Region Public Health School Health Newsletter

September 2023

Eyes Ready for the School Year!

Proper vision is important for a student's learning and social development. A full eye exam by an eye doctor (optometrist) is the best way to ensure a healthy eyes and good vision.

The Eye See...Eye Learn® program is for students in junior and senior kindergarten to have a full eye exam (covered by OHIP) with a participating optometrist. If a child needs glasses, they will receive a free pair donated by Plastic Plus, Modern Optical Canada and the participating optometrist. For children aged 19 and under, OHIP covers the cost of a complete annual eye exam and any follow-up assessments that may be required.

A yearly eye exam is recommended – [find an eye doctor near you](#).

For more information, please visit <https://www.niagararegion.ca/health/schools/vision-screening.aspx>

Safely Packing Lunches

1. Clean

- Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water before preparing any meal
- Make sure you sanitize countertops, utensils and any lunch boxes or lunch bags
 - For surfaces and lunch boxes/bags: mix 2.5 ml (1/2 tsp) of bleach with 1 L (4 cups) of water.
 - Apply to surface and let stand briefly.
 - Rinse with clean water and air dry or use a clean towel.
- Wash raw fruits and vegetables before eating

2. Keep Cold Food Cold

- Meat, chicken, seafood, eggs, and dairy products must stay cold to stay safe. Use frozen packs to keep food at or below 4°C (40 F).
- Use an insulated lunch bag and place freezer packs between foods that need to stay cold. Refrigerate the night before to get your lunch bag off to a cool start.

3. Keep Hot Food Hot

- Hot food must stay hot at above 60°C (140°F). Use insulated containers and keep them closed until ready to eat or take your food cold and reheat it



For more information visit

https://www.niagararegion.ca/living/health_wellness/food-safety/default.aspx

Grade 7 Immunization Campaign

Niagara Region Public Health's school-based vaccination clinics will begin in September for the following publicly funded [routine school vaccinations](#):

- Meningococcal
 - Single dose
 - [Required for school attendance](#) under the Immunization of School Pupils Act
- Hepatitis B (HB)
 - 2 or 3 dose series – depending on age and health history
- Human Papillomavirus (HPV)
 - 2 or 3 dose series – depending on age and health history

School Vaccination Clinic for Students

For the clinic schedule
visit niagararegion.ca/vaccines
or call 905-888-8248 ext. 7428

Niagara  Region



Parents/legal guardians of grade 7 students will receive an information package and instructions on how to submit their completed consent form. Parents/legal guardians must complete the consent form whether their child is receiving **all**, **some**, or **none** of the vaccines. More information will be provided through your child's school.

Active School Travel

Back to school means restarting morning drop off and afternoon pick up routines. This year take the stress out of driving and consider active school travel instead! Active school travel is any mode of transportation that is powered by humans – walking, biking, and scootering for example. There are several benefits of active school travel for your children:



- More people walking means fewer cars and cleaner air around the school
- Kids who walk, bike, or roll to school arrive alert and ready to learn
- Active transportation to school counts towards daily physical activity needs for your children
 - And much more!

To help build confidence and participate in active transportation safely, consider reviewing the resources below:

- [Blue the Butterfly](#) – a pedestrian safety video for families
- [Cycle Safety Virtual Bike Rodeo](#) – education and training for safe cycling featuring skills like putting on a helmet, using hand signals, and doing shoulder checks



Educational Resources

Teaching Tools and Supports

The School Health team has been updating the [Teaching Tools on Public Health website](#) to reflect the changes in the Ontario Health and Physical Education curriculum (2019).

Updated resources include:

- Personal safety and injury prevention
- Substance use, addictions and related behaviours
- **NEW** – Supporting mental wellness

Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) could have lasting, negative effects on the health and well-being of school-aged children. As caring adults for children, it is important to understand that you have the opportunity to prevent ACEs and their associated harms and support youth in developing resiliency skills. When children feel safe and connected to their environment they are able to thrive! Creating and sustaining safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments for all children and families can prevent ACEs and help all children reach their full health and life potential.

The [Community Resilience Coalition](#) offers **free** online training opportunities to better understand adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and aims to equip educators with information and strategies to support mentally healthy schools and promote resilience among students.

Playground Activity Leaders in Schools – P.A.L.S.



Playground Activity
Leaders in Schools

[Playground Activity Leaders in Schools \(P.A.L.S.\)](#) is a great opportunity for students to build leadership skills, increase physical activity and have a great time at recess! Students from grades four to seven are trained to act as playground activity leaders to plan and lead fun and safe activities regardless of age, gender, size or ability.

For more information about the P.A.L.S. program, visit

www.niagararegion.ca/health/schools/playground-activity-leaders/

If you're a teacher or Principal, reach out to your School Nurse to get your school started!