TORONTO Public Health

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Dear Parents/Guardians, Students and Families,

Re: Stay Healthy, Active and Safe this Summer

As the 2024-2025 school year comes to a close, Toronto Public Health (TPH) would like to share some important information and health tips to help families stay healthy, active and safe over the summer months.

Protect You & Your Loved Ones Against Measles

Measles continues to spread in Ontario and around the world. Measles is a very contagious virus that spreads when an infected person breathes, coughs, sneezes or talks. The measles vaccine is safe and effective to prevent the spread of measles. One dose provides about 85 per cent protection and two doses provide more than 95 per cent protection.

Take this time to check your child's and your family's measles vaccinations in their yellow vaccine card, online at ICON or speak with your primary health care provider. Anyone born in 1970 or later should have two doses of vaccine. Students who are not up to date with their measles vaccinations can miss school or summer camps if there is a case of measles at their school or camp.

Visit toronto.ca/measles for more information.

Stay Up to Date with Vaccinations and Report them to Toronto Public Health

With summer fast approaching, we encourage parents and students to stay up to date with all vaccinations, as outlined in the Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA). This includes vaccinations for measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, tetanus, polio, pertussis (whooping cough), meningococcal disease and varicella (chickenpox).

If students in grades 7 to 12 missed one or more school-based vaccines in Grade 7 (hepatitis B, human papillomavirus (HPV) and meningococcal), they can still receive them for free until the end of high school through primary health care providers or at a Toronto Public Health (TPH) summer vaccination clinic. Appointments can be made at TPHBookings.ca.

Preparing for Kindergarten

Starting kindergarten is an exciting time! TPH has information for parents and caregivers to help your young one have a healthy start to school. You can also find this information in the Healthy Start to School booklet.

Sun Safety and Hydration

This summer, the #BeSunSafe program is back, providing sunscreen and shade tents for City of Toronto camp and park recreation programs and free sunscreen at various locations across the city. Protect your skin when enjoying the summer weather by:

- Seeking shade and limiting time in the sun between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. or when the UV index is 3 or higher.
- Wearing clothes that cover as much skin as possible including a wide-brim hat and sunglasses that provide 100% UV protection.
- Using sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher. Reapply every 2 hours and after swimming or sweating.

Make water your drink of choice this summer. Very hot weather can pose health risks. Encourage children to drink plenty of fluids because they may not feel thirsty while at play.

Staying Active and Preventing Injuries

Encourage everyone in the family to be active together. Children five to 17 years of age need at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per day (three- to four-year-olds need even more active time!). Reduce the “non-active” time children spend on computers, electronic games or watching TV to less than one hour per day for three- to four-year-olds and less than two hours per day for five- to 17-year-olds. Less is better!

Stay safe this summer while enjoying wheeled activities (bikes, scooters, inline skates/roller blades, skateboards). Wearing a properly fitted helmet will help protect your head. A head injury can permanently change the way a child walks, talks, plays and thinks. Children and youth under 18 are required by law to wear a helmet when cycling in Ontario. TPH encourages all people participating in wheeled activities to wear a helmet, regardless of age.

Did you know? E-Scooters are not allowed to be ridden in the City of Toronto regardless of your age and e-bikes are only allowed in Toronto for those 16 years and older. Visit the City of Toronto’s Electric Scooters & Electric Bicycles webpage for more information.

Resources for Teens & Parents

Sexual Health

You can continue to access sexual health resources, services and supports this summer, including:

- Sexual Health Support for Parents & Caregivers has resources on bodies, boundaries, safety and raising sexually healthy children and teens.
- Sexual Health Infoline Ontario (SHILO) provides free, anonymous and inclusive information, support and referrals on sexual health topics by phone or e-Chat. It's available seven days a week and is staffed by counsellors who provide services in multiple languages.

Safer Partying and Substance Use

As the school year comes to a close, TPH is sharing Safer Partying information to raise awareness about the risks of alcohol and drug use and encourages safer celebrations during prom, grad night and year-end events. TPH also has information and resources to help prevent youth vaping or help them quit.

Questions?

For more information, please contact us at publichealth@toronto.ca or 416-338-7600, Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Service is available in multiple languages.

Wishing everyone a safe, active and healthy summer!

Sincerely,

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