



December 2024 School Health E-Blast

from Peel Public Health

What you'll find in this edition:

For Parents/Guardians

- Pertussis and Vaccination Reminder
- Mental Health: A Key to Student Well-Being
- Ho-Ho-Holiday Fun: Get Active and Beat Screen Time!
- Tips for Healthier Holidays

Pertussis and Vaccination Reminder

There is an increase in pertussis (whooping cough) cases in Peel and Ontario. Parents and guardians should ensure that children are [up to date](#) with pertussis vaccination and all other vaccinations required for school.

For more information, please visit [Pertussis \(Whooping Cough\)](#).

Mental Health: A Key to Student Well-Being

It's important that we talk to kids about how to keep their mental health strong. Some kids vape to lower stress. Vaping may increase during exam time, which can be a high stress time for some students. Parents and teachers can encourage kids to cope with stress using healthy strategies like listening to music, exercising, or talking to someone they trust. Kids can also connect with Kids Help Phone for support by texting CONNECT to 686868 or calling 1-800-668-6868.



Ho-Ho-Holiday Fun: Get Active and Beat Screen Time!



*Snowman with snow
in the background*

As we head into the holiday season, it's a good time to keep your teen's online safety and health in mind.

While digital spaces allow kids to connect with friends and family, heavy social media use can increase feelings of anxiety and isolation.

25% of youth aged 12 to 17 reported being cyberbullied in the past year.

Cyberbullying has been linked to increased stress, lower self-esteem, and mental health challenges.

To promote healthy screen use and limit sedentary activities, you can:

- Make a Family Media Plan and check it often, set limits for each person.
- Watch shows, videos, or use screens together as family.
- Encourage focusing on homework without distractions.
- Use parental controls.
- Get the login details for accounts and talk about safe online behaviour ahead of time.

Fun and Easy Activities for the Holidays:



*A person skiing with
trees in the background*

Planning fun activities with your teen can promote mental and physical well-being. This may include:

- Going skiing or skating
- Family game night (puzzles, board games)
- Tobogganing

Tips for Healthier Holidays!

Food plays a significant role during the holidays for many families. It can also provide an opportunity to enjoy a variety of foods, eat with others, practice food skills, and learn about cultures and food traditions. Here are some tips to make the holidays be both fun and healthier:

- 1. Include vegetables and fruits** when offering foods at celebrations and events, [Canada's Food Guide](#) recommends making half your plate vegetables and fruit. Try preparing or adding fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables and fruits with festive colours to the meal.
- 2. Serve water** instead of other drinks such as juice or pop that contain sugar at your celebrations. Try offering holiday inspired [infused](#) water with a cinnamon stick and chopped apple or pear and a drop of vanilla extract.
- 3. Enjoying your food** is an important part of healthy eating. Ways to enjoy your food can be through eating with others while sharing stories and adding a festive touch to your eating environment. Practicing [mindful eating](#) and using your senses can also help appreciate your meal.
- 4. Encourage cooking together** as the holidays can be a time where families can share and learn food skills, cultures, or traditions. Including children in food preparation can help them learn family recipes and try new foods. For more ideas on how to involve children visit: [Cooking with Kids of Different Ages.](#)

Try this recipe for [Apple berry crisp](#) that is kid friendly and perfect to share during the Holidays.



A bowl of Apple berry crisp

Contact Us

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