

## Niagara Region Public Health School Health Newsletter

### October 2024

#### Stay Home When Sick

Fall brings the 'unofficial' start of respiratory illness season. This means that viruses that affect our respiratory system (for example our lungs and throat) begin to spread more often.

Help keep the classroom germ free by keeping your child home if they are sick. If your child is sick, they should stay home from school until:

- ✓ They have no fever, without the use of fever reducing medication **and**
- ✓ Their symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours or 48 hours if they have nausea, vomiting and / or diarrhea **and**
- ✓ They don't develop any new symptoms



Each year, different respiratory viruses can be spreading in our community at the same time. These viruses can have similar symptoms. This means it can be hard to tell what you are infected with based on just symptoms alone. For more information on, visit [Managing Illness - Exclusion periods](#) and our downloadable resource [Respiratory Illnesses: Protect Yourself and Others](#).

By keeping your child at home when they are feeling sick, you are actively helping to prevent the spread of infection and disease among the entire school community.

#### Don't Be Scared by Cavities this October!

Keep your teen's smile BOO-tiful this Halloween!

Here are some tips to help keep teeth healthy:

- Brush teeth twice a day for two minutes using fluoridated toothpaste
- Floss once a day
- Stay away from sticky, starchy and hard candy
- Limit sugary drinks. Drink water after eating tasty treats to rinse away sugar that may be stuck on your teeth.
- Book a FREE dental appointment at Public Health's dental clinics by calling 905-688-8248 or 1-888-505-6074 ext. 7399 or [live chat with us](#).



To learn more on how to keep your family's teeth healthy, visit [www.niagararegion.ca/dental](http://www.niagararegion.ca/dental).

## Canadian Youth Road Safety Week



Canada's national injury prevention organization, Parachute Canada has now updated its previous National Teen Driver Safety Week to Canadian

Youth Road Safety Week from October 20-26<sup>th</sup>. They shifted the focus to encompass all youth road users, including drivers, passengers, pedestrians, cyclists and transit users, with the goal of empowering youth ages 15 to 24 to become more involved in road safety issues.

Road crashes are the third-leading cause of death among young people aged 15 to 24 in Canada, making youth some of the most vulnerable on our roads.

### Factors that make roads safer and proven measures to protect young people:

1. **Safe speeds:** Traffic calming measures such as speed bumps, roundabouts and road narrowing ensure that speeds remain low.
2. **Active transport:** Pedestrian pathways, transit connections and separated bike lines make active travel an easy choice. Youth are more likely to choose active transport when roads are built to keep them safe.
3. **Public transit access:** Expanding transit options to make travel safer and more equitable for youth. More transit means fewer collisions, less pollution and greater access for all.
4. **Impaired driving:** Impaired driving remains one of the leading causes of preventable crashes. Harm reduction methods such as designated drivers, rideshare access and public transit can prevent impaired driving.

**SNAP FOR CHANGE:** During Canadian Youth Road Safety Week 2024, Parachute wants to hear from you about how our roads can be safer for everyone. In the [Snap for Change initiative](#), share your ideas for improving road safety in your community to receive a \$100 gift card!

To learn more, visit [National Teen Driver Safety Week's](#) webpage.

## Mental Illness Awareness Week 2024

This year, [Mental Illness Awareness Week \(#MIAW\)](#) is from October 1-7<sup>th</sup>. Mental Illness Awareness Week is an annual national public education campaign designed to help open the eyes of Canadians to the reality of mental illness.

### Mental Illness and Stigma:

Stigma is when people think badly of someone because of a certain characteristic or trait they have, which is seen as negative. This often happens because people don't fully understand things like mental illness. Stigma can lead to unfair treatment, which can be on purpose or by accident.

Some of the harmful effects of stigma can include:

- Hesitancy to get help or treatment
- Lack of understanding by family, friends or others
- Fewer opportunities for work, school or social activities
- Bullying, physical violence or harassment
- The belief that you will never succeed at certain challenges or that you can't make things better for yourself

You can help reduce stigma by educating yourself, being aware of your attitudes and behaviours and choosing your words carefully when you talk about mental illness and substance use disorders.

**Helpful Resources:**

- [Addressing Stigma](#)
- [Canadian Mental Health Association: Stigma and Discrimination](#)
- [Words Matter \(CAMH\)](#)

**Annual Memorial Forest Vigil:**

The [Memorial Forest](#) seeks to reduce the stigma around mental illness and promote a greater understanding and compassion from the community as a whole. Each year, a Memorial Forest Vigil is held during Mental Illness Awareness Week to provide an opportunity to share stories of hope and success as told by individuals and family members living with mental illness.