

## Niagara Region Public Health School Health Newsletter March 2025

### NEW Quit Vaping Program for Youth

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) is excited to launch **Youth-Vaping, Substance use, and Technology (VAST)**. Youth-VAST is a program for youth in Ontario who are using vaping, substances, or feel like technology is taking up too much of their time. This program brings together existing and new resources across CAMH to deliver virtual services directly to youth and their family.

- Program offered for youth ages 12-21 years.
- Appointments are offered virtually for youth all over Ontario
- Youth will be assigned a care coordinator to create a customized treatment plan
- Individuals can self-refer directly into this program, no physician referral required.



To refer, visit [Youth-VAST](#) to book an appointment or email [youth.vast@camh.ca](mailto:youth.vast@camh.ca) for more information.

### Vaping Parent Webinar – Building a Vape Free 2025



View the [Lung Health Foundation's Vaping Parent Webinar](#) that was held on **January 29, 2025**, for great information and resources on how to support youth in quitting vaping. This 50-minute recording will help parents, caregivers and trusted adults understand the risks of vaping and have supportive, judgement-free conversations with the teens in their lives. It also explores how stress can impact vaping choices, making it a timely resource as the school year continues.

### Nutrition Month 2025

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 teenagers.



- [Learn more about the importance of healthy eating for teens](#)
- [Helpful tips and resources for teens around nutrition](#) – [unlockfood.ca](http://unlockfood.ca)
- For more information on healthy eats, dieting, fitness, and more visit [kidshealth.org](http://kidshealth.org)

## World Sleep Day – March 14<sup>th</sup>

### Why do teens need more sleep?

Sleep helps to fuel your brain and body – teens need more sleep because their bodies and minds are growing quickly.



Not getting enough sleep can lead to hormonal changes that increase appetite and food intake, which may lead to increased body weight in teens and young adults.

The amount of sleep a student needs can vary quite a bit from person to person, but the recommendation is eight to 10 hours for teenagers.

### Here are a few tips to help your youth sleep

- **Avoid caffeine** – while your teen may want to rely on these drinks to stay alert during the day, they can further disrupt sleeping patterns. If your child has caffeine, make sure it is consumed before lunchtime.
- **Limit blue light** – keeping things dark and avoiding screens before bed will reduce blue light and help your brain produce melatonin, a hormone that controls the sleep-wake cycles. Turn off any electrical screens 1-2 hours before bed.
- **Use the bed only for sleep** – encourage teens to avoid ‘activating’ activities in bed, such as using a laptop, doing homework or playing games in bed.
- **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 - teen and sleep](https://www.caringforkids.ca - teen and sleep). If your teen is still having trouble sleeping or has very low energy, it is important to consult a doctor.

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

## Financial Literacy, Scholarships and Bursaries

As you start thinking about your child’s future, remember, financial literacy is just as important as final grades when preparing for life after high school. Whether your teen is going straight into college or university, taking a gap year, or starting work, understanding how to manage money is key to thriving after high school.



Here are some key tips to share with your teen to help them be successful:

1. **Start budgeting:** Keep track of your earnings and expenses. By identifying where your money goes, you’ll find areas to cut back or make smarter choices.
2. **Save whenever you can:** Whether it’s through a savings challenge or just being mindful of your spending, every little bit adds up. Small savings now will pay off big in the future!
3. **Understand credit cards:** It’s important to learn about credit early. Seek information on interest rates, repayment plans, and how to build good credit. This knowledge will save you from common (and costly) mistakes down the road.

- 4. Apply for scholarships and bursaries:** Don't wait until the last minute, start researching and applying early! Check with your school for local options and explore websites like [www.scholarshipscanada.com](http://www.scholarshipscanada.com) Many scholarships aren't just for academic excellence, some are based on hobbies, life experiences, interests, community volunteer work & more. Check your eligibility for financial assistance using the [www.OSAP.ca](http://www.OSAP.ca) [Aid Estimator](#).

Financial literacy is your ticket to success in post-secondary life. Start building those habits now and feel confident about the future!

#### **Bursary Opportunity for Newcomers:**

Don't forget to apply for the **Niagara Newcomer Youth Bursary**! Application here: <https://forms.gle/actXq82bstYhAriy8>. This opportunity is available through the Niagara Folk Arts Centre.