

# Parent Newsletter

**The Interior Health K-12 Newsletter provides health information for parents and caregivers.**

To share feedback or ideas for future issues reach us at [HealthySchools@interiorhealth.ca](mailto:HealthySchools@interiorhealth.ca). For more information on health topics see the [Interior Health Website](#).

## Resilience



We aren't born with resilience, we build it over time as our life experiences interact with our unique, individual genetic make-up. Personal resilience is about our strengths and assets, and helps us get through and overcome hardship. We can all develop resilience, and we can help our children develop it as well. Parents play an important role in helping their child build resiliency skills.

### Tips:

- Connect with your child often, during meals, car rides, by helping with homework, watching TV, or doing chores together.
- Listen and talk to your child about how they feel and show acceptance for their feelings.
- Notice your child's good qualities and show interest in the things that interest them.
- Make sure your child has a daily routine and gets enough rest, food and exercise, and make sure you do too.
- Help your child develop social skills. Encourage your child to be a friend in order to get a friend.
- Make sure your child has time to play. Unstructured play and other enjoyable activities help children deal with their stress.
- Teach your child coping skills like taking slow, deep breaths to help them discover ways to feel better when they are stressed.
- Role model a positive attitude. Keep things in perspective and maintain a hopeful outlook.

**For more information and resources on resiliency for children, teens, parents and educators:**

1. See the resources section on the [Psychology Foundation of Canada](#) and the [Parenting for Life booklets](#).

2. [Strong Minds Strong Kids Resilience Building Program](#), [Resiliency Quiz](#) and [COVID-19: Resources to build resilience](#) with resources for kids, teens and parents

3. Canadian Association for Mental Health [Raising Resilient Children and Youth](#)

# Dental

## Bring a Healthy Smile to School

Encourage your child start their day by brushing their teeth before they go to school. What can you do to help your child's teeth while at school? Add a water bottle to their lunch bags and choose fresh fruit and vegetables for their snacks and lunch. Water helps nourish the body and aids in clearing food from our mouth after eating, decreasing risk for tooth decay. Providing real fruit snacks helps your child quench their thirst, get important nutrients they need and decrease the risk for tooth decay.



# Healthy Eating

## School Lunch Survival Tips

Back-to-school is a busy and exciting time. The start of a new school year is not only a great time to try fresh new ideas for school lunches, but also a time to create positive food habits. If you need some school lunch inspiration, have a look at the [Lunches to Go](#) resource.

Check out these tips for packing lunches that your child will eat and enjoy:

- \* **Kids love to eat what they create** - Involving them in the planning, shopping, and preparing lunches can increase their [food skills](#) and the likelihood they will eat their lunch. Check out more tips for [Involving kids in planning and preparing meals](#)
- \* **Give them choice** - Kids are more likely to eat their lunch if they have some control over what is packed. They can choose between foods from similar categories. For example, "Would you like an apple or a banana? Would you prefer yogurt or a cheese string?"
- \* **Prep ahead** – When making dinner, cut up extra veggies to use in lunches the next day. Make extra at meals; leftovers can be sent cold or hot in a thermos. You can also cook large batches of favorite meals (e.g. macaroni and cheese or chili) and freeze it in lunch size portions.
- \* **Lead by example** - Whether you have young children or teens, as a parent or guardian, you play an important role in helping your child develop a positive relationship with food. Taking time for prepping and eating your own meals helps role model good eating habits. For more tips, check out: [Healthy eating habits for your family](#)



You can also check out [Dietitian Services](#) at HealthLink BC for more nutrition information. Or call **8-1-1** speak to a Registered Dietitian (interpreters are available in over 130 languages).

# Vaping

Vaping & other nicotine products are Big Tobacco's plan to keep nicotine addiction & their profits sustained through the next generation. They often refer to youth as 'replacement smokers' as 50% of people who smoke through their life will die from it, through: cancer, respiratory issues etc.

Despite this growth in popularity, many current vapers admit they want to quit, particularly young Canadians. In fact, over 60 per cent of youth—ages 15 to 19—who vape —reported trying to quit in the last year.

The long-term effects of vaping on people's health is not yet known. But a [new study done by UB-CO](#) showed that negative health experiences were the number one reason these individuals chose to quit. Symptoms such as shortness of breath, chest pain, wheezing and poor sleep were the complaints listed in the on-line forum studied.

This research suggests that gradual nicotine reduction is key to helping e-cigarette users quit.

For quitting support folks can access 12 week free smoking cessation through pharmacies or with [Quit Now](#).



Over 60 per cent of youth who vape reported trying to quit in the last year.

Photo credit:

[Toan Nguyen](#) on [Unsplash](#)

## Survey

The Government of BC is running a short survey to gather parent/caregivers input on addressing substance use with youth. If you are interested, the survey runs until **November 19** and can be accessed [here](#). . #HaveYourSayBC



# Supporting Healthy Minds in Teens

Mental well-being is the ability to: enjoy life, deal with challenges, and feel connected to other people. People with good mental health, have a sense of belonging, and feel optimistic and self-confident. Positive mental health is truly at the heart of one's overall wellness. Parents can help teens develop and maintain positive mental health in the following ways:



For more information see: [Healthy Living for Families](#) and [Healthy Living for Teens](#)

**Video Resources** - Surrey Schools, have developed video resources for students and families to support conversations around mental health, including stress and anxiety. [Here](#) are two animated videos, available in [age-appropriate elementary and youth versions](#), and translated in [multiple languages](#). Closed captioning is also available. The first, You Are Not Alone, is about mental health in general, while the second, Coping with Stress & Anxiety, addresses stress specifically and strategies on how to cope.

- ♦ **Plan time together** – Get together at certain times during the week to catch up with each other. Family meals are a great way to do this; if dinner doesn't work, how about breakfast? Other activities could include a weekly games night or going for family walks or hikes. Whatever you choose, make it a routine and stick to it.
- ♦ **Laugh with them** - Laughing reduces the effects of stress, and boosts the chemicals in our brain that relieve pain and sadness. It can be a fun and effective way to release the same tensions and negative feelings that sometimes make us want to cry.
- ♦ **Be positive** – Seeing things in a positive way—being optimistic—is an important part of mental well-being. Some people are naturally more optimistic than others; however, parents can support their teens and encourage them to think more positively by planning for a positive result, accepting both successes and failures, and supporting their confidence to try again.
- ♦ **Listen** – Don't do all the talking. Try not to offer solutions or advice to every problem (even if you think you have a good one). Instead, repeat back what you are hearing and ask questions about how they are feeling when challenges arise or exciting things are happening in their lives.
- ♦ **Support their independence** – Learn to compromise with your teen while maintaining fair rules. Consistency is important; however, be flexible enough to bend a rule occasionally. Of course, some rules are non-negotiable, and it helps to determine those ahead of time.
- ♦ **Involve other adults** - It is also important to your teen's mental well-being to feel that they have caring adults in their life that they can talk to and depend on. Spending time with a grandparent, relative, family friend, teacher or other responsible adult can help build those close relationships and provide the opportunity to explore different interests.



## Vision tests for children

Healthy vision is important for a child's learning. In B.C., **basic eye exams** - one per year - are **free for children** up to the age of 18, although some optometrists may charge a small user fee in the area of roughly \$35 per visit.

- School-age children and teenagers with no vision problems should have their vision checked every 18 to 24 months., while children and teenagers with nearsightedness or other refractive errors should have their vision checked at least once a year. Children with severe or rapidly worsening nearsightedness will need examinations more often.
- The [Healthy Kids Program](#) supports eligible low income families with financial assistance for their child's prescription glasses.

