

## Welcome

Welcome to the first issue of the Interior Health Parent Newsletter. Newsletters will be released September, January and May.

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](#).

## Attention!

COVID-19 vaccination information for youth ages 12-17 on page 4.

## Healthy Summer Eating for Kids

Did you know that kids are more likely to try a fruit or vegetable that they helped grow or prepare? That's just one of the reasons we get excited about gardening season. Even one tomato plant in a pot can provide hands on experience and stimulate conversations about how plants grow, food preferences, and even about where the food we eat comes from.

Like the idea but not sure where to start? Here are a few fun gardening ideas for you:

- Get an instant herb garden by asking friends or neighbors for chunks of established herbs (with the roots on) like mint, oregano, thyme and chives. These herbs grow back year after year and don't mind being separated and replanted.
- Try growing a vegetable from a scrap. When cooking, save the bottom 2 inches of your bunch of celery and place it in a shallow dish of water on a windowsill. New stalks will start to grow, and when roots appear, you can plant the celery in soil. If you have fun with this, do a google search for other veggies you can grow from scraps.
- Try planting a potato that has sprouted in your pantry. In a large pot, add about 20 centimeters of soil, and bury the potato 10 centimeters deep. As your plant grows, add more soil until the pot is full. Water regularly, and you may just grow yourself a potato salad.



If planting something feels too daunting, you can hit your local [farmer's market](#) for a taste of spring.

## Words Every Child Needs to Hear



When children are experiencing big emotions, they often need us to step in and help them to calm the torrential storm. When a child feels safe with you, they are able to lower their defenses and are truly give voice to the feelings inside.

The language we use with our children becomes their inner voice. As the adults in a child's world, we play a pivotal role in determining how a child perceives themselves and others.

For tips on what to say when your child is angry or sad, when they needs limits, or even when we mess up as parents see: [Words Every Child Needs to Hear](#).

# Swimming Safety



Many families enjoy outdoor activities with their families during the summer, including heading to the water for a swim. While swimming and other water-related activities are excellent ways to get physical

activity and enjoy the outdoors, some basic precautions will help keep it a safe experience.

**Supervise children** – keep young children and inexperienced swimmers within view at all times. Or better yet, within arms reach. Don't rely only on floating toys to prevent problems

**Choose a safe place to swim** – a supervised beach, public pool, or well maintained private pool (with supervision)

**Check the water quality** – many public beaches are monitored by local government programs. Check the Interior Health [Public Beaches](#) page for beach advisories and the [Inspection Reports](#) for public pools.

Additional tips are available on Health Canada's [Swimming Safety](#) page.

BC Health Files are also available on [Sun Safety](#), [Swimmer Safety Tips](#), & [Residential Pool & Hot Tub Safety](#).

# Summer Food Safety

Many families enjoy outdoor activities with their families during the summer, including picnics, barbecues and camping. The risk of food poisoning increases during the summer because harmful bacteria grow quickly in warm, moist conditions. Keeping food safe can be done by following some basic tips:



[Summer Food Safety Tips](#)

**Chill** – keep perishable foods cold (ideally below 4°C), or limit the time food is out in hot weather to no more than an hour

**Separate** – keep raw meats separate from other foods to prevent cross-contamination

**Clean** – wash hands, surfaces and utensils used for food handling

**Cook** – kill food poisoning bacteria by proper cooking. Meats should get to a [safe temperature](#). Use a probe thermometer to confirm

Additional tips and further details are available at: Health Canada's

## Stay Pristine Clean by Keeping Up Your Family's Mouth Care Routine

Is your routine different in the summer? You may be tempted to let your child skip brushing because your normal schedule is off during summer break, but keep at it whether at home or

away from home, such as camping. The more ingrained the habit of regular brushing, the easier it will be to make sure your child is brushing twice a day for two minutes. A bright smile makes you feel good inside and out.



\*Keep the habit of brushing first thing when you wake up and last thing before bed.

\*Brushing twice a day with fluoridated toothpaste, cleaning between the teeth once a day, and limiting sugary snacks and beverages is how you do it.

\*Make sure your child sees the dentist regularly too.

# Vaping

It can take 25 years to experience the negative effects of smoking tobacco, for vaping it is anticipated that those effects will be seen in 10.

To understand more of the health affects and finds ways to help prevent youth from vaping, check out: [BC Lung Website](#).



# Cannabis Use & Youth

Are you looking for information about cannabis and ways to speak with your child about cannabis use?

This [information sheet](#) has a dedicated section for cannabis and youth, as well as information about cannabis and health and harm reduction.



## Getting out in Nature

Hiking is a fun and easy way to get some outside relaxation time this summer. Being out in a green space has been known [for enhancing mental and physical well-being](#), especially by reducing stress. It's an energetic and relatively safe activity, but there are some things to keep in mind before going to the trail head:

- \* **Start early**
- \* **Pack right**
- \* **Remember to rest**
- \* **Check the weather**
- \* **Pick the right trail**
- \* **Be animal aware**

For more information see: [6 tips for Hiking this Summer](#)

## Bats & Rabies



BC is home to about 16 species of bats. They come out in spring when the weather warms and the bugs come out; and then go into hiding for the winter when the bugs die off. Most bats do not carry rabies; however, some do. Rabies is a serious viral illness that can affect humans and it is fatal if untreated. Rabies can be transmitted to humans when infected bat saliva comes in contact with mucous membranes (eye, mouth, and nose) or broken skin. This usually occurs through a bite or scratch. Bat teeth and claws are very sharp and small - bites and scratches may not be painful or visible. If a person has a physical encounter with a bat, they should contact their local public health unit or health care provider as a series of vaccines started shortly after the exposure can prevent rabies. Learn more about [rabies](#) and how to protect yourself. Additional information can be found at [Bats and Rabies](#) & [Rabies in BC- Risk to You and Your Pet](#).

## Ticks



Ticks are found in heavily wooded areas or grassy fields, and are most active in the spring and summer months. They can be carried into the home on clothing or on pets and will bite and attach to a person or a pet (and feed on blood). Not all ticks carry disease, but some do transmit them. It's important to check for ticks after being in heavily wooded areas or grassy fields and remove them if any are found. Information & removal methods can be found here:

[Ticks and Lyme Disease](#) & [BC Health Files](#).

## Resource for Talking to Children About Suicide

Talking to children about suicide can be difficult. But doing so can greatly benefit those who are facing this type of death. Research has shown that talking about suicide does not increase a child's risk of suicide. In fact, this discussion can lead to a rewarding learning experience.

The resource [Talking to Children about Suicide](#) is designed to help parents, guardians, and caregivers of children under 12 know how to speak with them when a suicide occurs in their family or community.



# COVID-19 Vaccines for Youth 12 to 17

## Information for parents, caregivers and trusted adults

Youth age 12 to 17 are now eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.



Under the [Infants Act](#), children can give consent as a mature minor to receive health care, like getting a vaccine. They don't require parental consent.

## Household and group vaccination options

Register all children born in 2009 or earlier (12+) in your household or group who need to get vaccinated. Following registration, you only need to book 1 appointment.

For example, if you need to get a 13 year old and a 16 year old vaccinated, register both. When you get a booking notification for either child, only book 1 appointment. Take both children to the appointment and both will get vaccinated.

You can also book separate appointments for each child.

## I am an adult and already have my vaccine appointment booked

You can bring your children with you and all get vaccinated at the same time. You don't need to make your children an appointment. To save time at the vaccine clinic, it's best to register children before you arrive.

## I am an adult and still need to book my vaccine appointment

As the adult, first you need to register and then book your appointment. Then you can bring your children with you and get vaccinated at the same time. You don't need to make your children an appointment. To save time at the vaccine clinic, it's best to register children before you arrive.

## I live in a small community

Interior Health is making plans for youth to attend clinics in small communities. See our [Vaccines for Youth page](#) for more information.

## Register a child

People born in 2009 or earlier are eligible and should register at: <https://gov.bc.ca/getvaccinated> or by calling call **1-833-838-2323**.

**Questions?** Visit the [HealthLink BC Website](#) or [B.C.'s Immunization Plan](#) website.