

Healthy Teens

May 2020 Parent Newsletter

Water Facts

We use water in many ways every day. Every system in our body depends on water. We need water to:

- Cool our bodies (when we sweat)
- Help with digestion
- Absorb and carry nutrients throughout the body
- Remove wastes and help the body repair itself
- Act as a cushion for our organs and joints

Our body also loses a lot of water through the skin, when we breathe and through our urine. To maintain a balance we need to make sure we are drinking enough water and other healthy fluids to replace what we are using.

Kids will usually drink when they are thirsty. Make sure they have water available to drink throughout the day. Tap water in schools is safe. It is tested regularly for germs and chemical content. Often children will bring water bottles to school that can be filled with tap water. These bottles must be kept clean so kids don't get sick. Here are some guidelines to follow when drinking from water bottles:



- Reusable water bottles should be brought home to be washed at least once a week. They should be washed with hot soapy water and allowed to dry.
- The bigger the opening on the container, the easier it is to clean.
- Single service bottles, such as those used for bottled water that you buy at the store, should not be used more than one time. Exposure to heat can cause a breakdown in the plastic and these bottles are not made of durable plastic designed for cleaning.

Drinking water every day is a simple way to stay healthy and feel great!

Articles

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Self-harm in Teens

Skin cancer is largely preventable, with about 82% of melanomas linked to factors we can change. For more information visit <http://albertapreventscancer.ca/reduce-your-risk/limit-uv-rays/>



Self-harm in Teens

Self-harm is when a person hurts themselves on purpose without necessarily wanting to die by suicide. It is also referred to as Non-suicidal Self Injury (NSSI). This behaviour is more common among teens than any other age group.

Some common self-harming behaviours are cutting, burning and hitting oneself. Self-harming behaviours can result from a combination of life stressors such as drug abuse, mental illness and low self-esteem. Teens may self-harm to:

- Get rid of or decrease painful feelings (e.g., fear, depression, anger, feeling anxious, guilt, feeling lonely, self-loathing)
- Feel pain
- Manage stress
- Distract oneself from overwhelming emotions and difficult situations
- Use their skin to communicate with others about a problem they can't express in words
- Punish themselves
- Gain a sense of control over their body
- Experience a release of chemicals (endorphins) that improve mood and increase tolerance to pain



If you learn that your teen is self-harming, offer support without judging or criticizing; be aware of and keep your own emotions under control. Let them know you want to listen to them by asking if they want to talk and creating opportunities for them to talk. Help your teen create a plan for safer coping methods when pressures are strong. Learn about self-harm, understanding the behaviour makes it easier to talk about it. It may also be helpful to get professional help from a mental health therapist or psychologist.

It is also important to ask if your teen is considering suicide by asking clearly: 1) Are you thinking about suicide? 2) Do

you have a plan? 3) Do you have a way to carry out your plan? If your teen answers yes to any of these questions, get help. Use your instincts to identify whether the risk is immediate. If it is, call 911 or take your teen to the nearest emergency department. If the self-harm injuries are severe, help them get medical attention.

➤ If your teen is suicidal, but risk isn't immediate, contact a crisis centre in Alberta
<http://suicideprevention.ca/alberta-crisis-centres/>