

## Wellness Articles

Attached are weekly health and wellness articles provided by Alberta Health Services. As a way to help all Albertans live a healthy life, we welcome and encourage weekly newspapers, community newsletters and other publications to reproduce this information free of charge. Credit to Alberta Health Services or the identified content provider would be appreciated.

If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: [Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto:Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca). You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

An archive of past wellness articles is available at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/9966.asp>

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## National Addiction Awareness Week (NAAW)

National Addiction Awareness Week (NAAW) is a national week (November 12-18) recognized by Canadians across the country. Every year Albertans participate in NAAW in their local communities with the goal of providing information and promoting activities that increase the awareness of substance use problems and the range of services available in the province - including information, prevention and treatment services.

NAAW is also a week to celebrate and recognize the capacity of our communities and individuals who work together every year to support and encourage addiction-free lifestyles.

This year, the theme is *Words Matter*, and focuses on how the use of stigmatizing language can perpetuate false and harmful myths around substance use, and act as a barrier to recovery.

To help individuals, community groups, schools and businesses across the province in hopes of reducing addictions, AHS has created an online Addiction Prevention Toolkit. To view the toolkit visit: <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page14610.aspx>.

The toolkit includes tips for building healthy relationships and positive behaviours for individuals, parents, communities, families, schools, and workplaces.

Here are some small actions you can take to make a big difference

- **Know the facts.** Educate yourself about substance use problems—what can bring them on, who is more likely to develop problems, and how to prevent or reduce the severity of problems.
- **Be aware of your attitudes and behavior.** See people as unique human beings, not as labels or stereotypes.

- **Choose your words carefully.** Use accurate and sensitive words when talking about people with substance use problems. For example, speak about “people with substance use disorders” rather than an “addicts”.
- **Educate others.** Challenge myths and stereotypes.
- **Focus on the positive.** People with substance use problems make valuable contributions to society. Their health problems don’t define them or their worth.
- **Support people.** Treat people who have substance use problems with dignity and respect.
- **Include everyone.** People with substance use problems have a right to take an equal part in society.

It is important to know if you are or someone you know is struggling with an addiction help is available. Albertans can get more information or help by calling Health Link at 811 or the Addiction Helpline 1-866-332-2322.