



## SMOG DAYS

Smog affects everyone's health. Smog can cause: irritation to the eyes, nose, and throat; wheezing, coughing; low energy; headaches; and harm to your lungs and heart. Smog can also aggravate pre-existing heart and lung conditions, and can result in premature death. Groups who are especially vulnerable to smog include: people with lung diseases and heart conditions; seniors; children; pregnant women; people with allergies; smokers; and people who work or exercise outdoors.

Smog is mostly made up of ground-level ozone, fine particulate matter, and nitrogen dioxide. Ground-level ozone is formed when certain chemicals react with sunlight. Fine particulate matter gets into the air when we burn gasoline, diesel, coal, wood etc., when we spray chemicals into the air, and when we use oil based paints. The more of this "stuff" that is in the air, the poorer the air quality.

The Air Quality Index (AQI) provides us with information on the quality of the air compared to Canadian air quality emission standards for pollutants. The Ministry of the Environment currently uses it to rate the air quality as Very Good, Good, Moderate, Poor, or Very Poor. When the air quality for a particular area is likely to be Poor for the day, a Smog Advisory is issued and advice is given about what people should and should not do. However, the AQI is based on air quality standards developed more than 20 years ago and is based on environmental concerns not human health ones.

In 2007 Toronto was doing a pilot of a new air quality scale, known as the Air Quality Health Index. The AQHI captures the health risk from air pollution, not just the pollutant levels. The AQHI is based on the latest research on how pollution affects health, and takes into account how people are affected by pollutant combinations even at low levels. The AQHI is being developed through partnership between all levels of government, and pilots will be taking place across Canada; eventually AQHI will take the AQI's place. The Toronto pilot will be evaluated with the intention of expanding it through the GTA this spring.

June 4<sup>th</sup> this year is National Clean Air Day, as well as the ninth annual Smog Summit at which "government leaders will have the opportunity to announce new initiatives they will undertake in the coming year to reduce smog, air pollution and greenhouse gases." ([www.cleanairpartnership.org/smogsummit/](http://www.cleanairpartnership.org/smogsummit/))

### On Smoggy Days:

- Avoid exercising outside.
- If you have to be outdoors, be less active for less time, drink plenty of fluids, take breaks, avoid areas with heavy motor vehicle traffic, and monitor your health.
- If possible stay indoors in a cool, air-conditioned environment. Try malls, libraries, museums, churches, gyms, bookstores, coffee shops, friend's homes, and restaurants if your home does not have air conditioning.
- If you or your kids have lung or heart conditions, talk to your doctor about how best to manage the condition.
- Make sure anyone who will be looking after your kids – camp directors and counselors, babysitters, day-care operators, sports coaches etc. – knows about smog and its dangers.
- If you, your child, or anyone else experiences breathing problems or other worrisome symptoms contact a doctor or go to the nearest hospital.

### To help improve air quality for everyone:

- Reduce your use of motor vehicles all year round. Walk, cycle, carpool, or take public transit. Reduce the number of car trips you have to take by doing all your errands at once. Teleconference rather than drive to meetings.
- When you have to use a car, make sure it is well tuned, drive at moderate speeds, check the tires regularly, and do not idle the engine.
- Conserve electricity. Turn off the lights when you're not using them, only use your air conditioner when it's really necessary, and set it a few degrees warmer, set your heat a few degrees cooler, use a clothes line, etc.
- Limit your use of lawn-mowers, chain-saws, leaf blowers, and other small engine tools.
- Avoid using aerosol sprays and cleaners, oil-based paints, and other chemical products that contribute to poor indoor and outdoor air quality.
- Take steps to improve the air quality inside your home, in at least one room, so you will have someplace to go when the air-quality outside is bad – try fans, an air conditioner, an air purifier, limiting or eliminating chemical usage, reducing "dust-catchers" etc.
- Avoid having bon-fires, using your woodstove or fireplace, even smoking on smog days. They all contribute to poor air quality.
- Talk to your kids – teach them about smog, what they can do to reduce smog, and what they can do to protect themselves from smog.

This information and advice is from [www.airqualityontario.com](http://www.airqualityontario.com), [www.weatheroffice.gc.ca](http://www.weatheroffice.gc.ca), "New smog-alert system coming" from *The Globe and Mail*, May 8, 2007, and at Environment Canada Air Quality Health Index, [www.ec.gc.ca/cas-aqhi/](http://www.ec.gc.ca/cas-aqhi/).



## LENDING LIBRARY CATALOGUE IS ONLINE!

You can now find the WHCC's lending library catalogue online at [www.librarything.com/catalog/WomensHealthPtbo](http://www.librarything.com/catalog/WomensHealthPtbo) Search over 1000 books, videos, CDs and DVDs on a variety of health topics. These items are available for loan to people in the counties of Haliburton, Northumberland, Peterborough and City of Kawartha Lakes. You can also explore LibraryThing and read comments, reviews and conversations, find out about other recommended books, and look at other people's libraries.

Plus, if you're online sometime between 9am and 1pm Tuesday to Friday, and you want help finding health information, you can message the Resource Coordinator at:

Meebo: [whccptbo](mailto:whccptbo)  
MSN: [manders@prhc.on.ca](mailto:manders@prhc.on.ca)  
AIM: [whccptbo](mailto:whccptbo)  
Yahoo: [whccptbo](mailto:whccptbo)  
Google Talk: [whccptbo@gmail.com](mailto:whccptbo@gmail.com)

If the Resource Coordinator isn't online and you have a question, feel free to email her at [manders@prhc.on.ca](mailto:manders@prhc.on.ca)

We're also book-marking stories, reports and other items that may be of interest to you at: [www.WHCC.newsvine.com](http://www.WHCC.newsvine.com)



## NO MORE DIETING: OVERCOMING OVEREATING

Thursdays, May 8<sup>th</sup> to June 19<sup>th</sup>

7:00 to 8:30 pm

Women's Health Care Centre, 157 Charlotte Street

A 7 week education and support program for people who are struggling with binge eating, weight preoccupation and body image but **do not** have symptoms of Anorexia or Bulimia. For more information or to register call **705-743-4132** or **1-800-419-3111**.



## WELL WOMEN ON THE ROAD

Our Well Women on the Road workshops are starting up again! We are in the process of planning a workshop series in Haliburton County. Keep an eye out for more information, coming soon.

Support group? Church group? Knitting club? Sports team? Youth group? Book club? Women's group? If you would be interested in a Well Women presentation or workshop, give us a call at **743-4132** or **1-800-419-3111**.

## NO MORE CANADIAN HEALTH NETWORK

The Canadian Health Network, a wonderful source of health information, is gone. The CHN served over 5.4 million individual users per year, had over 20,000 quality, peer-reviewed resources, was used by health consumers, librarians and health professionals alike, and was highly regarded both in Canada and internationally. CHN was officially shut down on March 31<sup>st</sup> because of funding cuts to the Public Health Agency of Canada, the CHN's largest contributor.

However, if you are looking for high-quality health information online here are some other places you can look:

### Women's Health:

Women's Health Matters [www.womenshealthmatters.ca](http://www.womenshealthmatters.ca)

A site from Women's College Hospital, Women's Health Matters features articles, conversations, and links to resources about many women's health concerns.

Our Bodies, Ourselves (American) [www.ourbodiesourselves.org](http://www.ourbodiesourselves.org)

The companion website to the famous women's health text.

### General Health:

Healthy Ontario [www.healthyontario.com](http://www.healthyontario.com)

A Government of Ontario site with information with general health information including prescriptions plus Ontario-specific items like OHIP, Smoke Free Ontario etc.

Health Canada [www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca)

Information on general and "popular" health concerns (i.e. bird flu) as well as Health Canada and the Ministry of Health.

Medline Plus (American) <http://medlineplus.gov>

A service of the National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health. A good source for general health information.



## INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA

May 17 is International Day Against Homophobia. This year's theme is health care: just like everyone else, gay, lesbian, transgender and transsexual people need health services free of discrimination, and need to feel comfortable consulting a health professional. International Day Against Homophobia this year is meant to be an opportunity to question current practices in health and social services, and start thinking about new approaches. Keep your eyes out for local events and activities for May 17. For more information, or to find out about ways you can participate, please go to: [www.homophobiaday.org](http://www.homophobiaday.org)



## PRENATAL HEALTH FAIR

Monday May 5, 2008

6:45-9:00pm

Holiday Inn, 150 George Street, Peterborough, ON

**Free**

Hosted by the Peterborough County City Health Unit. Interactive displays and seminars by health professionals and community partners, the Empathy Belly for Dads-to-be, information packages, refreshments, demonstrations and door prizes. Call **705-743-1000** for more information.



## MAY IS SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION MONTH

This is the 20<sup>th</sup> year that Ontario has recognized Sexual Assault Prevention Month. We are having a Brown Bag Lunch for parents to increase awareness about sexual assault. This is an opportunity to learn about some of the current risks kids are facing in our community. For more information please contact us at **705-743-4132** or **1-800-419-3111**.

These are some of the items available in our Lending Library that deal with sexual violence, self defense, and avoiding and preventing sexual violence:

*The Gift of Fear* by Gavin de Becker

*Real World Safety for Women; Peace of Mind, Security, Empowerment, Freedom for You and Your Family* by Christine Schlattner

*The Right Touch; a Read-Aloud Story to Help Prevent Child Sexual Abuse* by Sandy Kleven

*Against Our Will; Men Women and Rape* by Susan Brownmiller

*Man to Man; When your Partner Says No – Pressured Sex and Date Rape* by Scott Allen Johnson

*Stopping Rape; a Challenge for Men* by Rus Ervin Funk

*Transforming a Rape Culture* by Emilie Buchwald

*The Macho Paradox; Why Some Men Hurt Women and How All Men Can Help* by Jackson Katz

For information about Sexual Assault Prevention Month, or ways you can participate, please see [www.citizenship.gov.on.ca/owd/english/](http://www.citizenship.gov.on.ca/owd/english/) and search for "sexual assault prevention month 2008"



## BROWN BAG LUNCHES

Thursdays 12:05 to 12:50

At the Women's Health Care Centre

157 Charlotte Street (beside Wild Rock Outfitters)

Bring your lunch; coffee and tea will be served.

Call **705-743-4132** or **1-800-419-3111** for details or to register.

## May 15 The Lending Library's New Online Catalogue

Introducing the new WHCC library catalogue, messaging, and postings on newsvine.

## May 22 Coping Better with Stress

It is how we perceive any potentially stressful situation that determines if or how our bodies will react. Come and explore how we can redirect stress to be healthy and rewarding.

## May 29 Sexual Assault and Today's Kids; What Parents Need to Know

This is an opportunity to learn about some of the current risks kids are facing in our community.