

Our Health Matters

Welcome to 'Our Health Matters', a new section of the Capital Health Update aimed at promoting health. Each month you will read of a new focus for your own health. Each month you may also be challenged to think about how you are doing in that area.

April is Cancer Awareness month - provided by Sarah MacDonald, Health Promotion Coordinator, Public Health Services, Capital Health

You know that spring is here when the snow starts melting, the birds start singing, and you see the bright yellow symbol of hope in the fight against cancer - the daffodil - appear around our community.

Research tells us that 50% of cancers can be prevented by healthy living and policies that protect the health of Canadians. There are things that you can do to reduce your risk of developing cancer.

- **Be a non-smoker and avoid second-hand smoke.** Smoking causes about 30% of all cancer deaths in Canada. Non-smokers exposed to second hand smoke are also at a higher risk of developing cancer *and other lung diseases*.
- **Enjoy a healthy diet & physical activity.** Research suggests as much as one third of all cancers may be related to what we eat and drink. Choose plenty of fruits and vegetables and high fibre, lower fat foods. If you drink alcohol, limit your intake to 1-2 drinks a day. Regular physical activity helps us maintain a healthy body weight.
- **Reduce your exposure to UV rays from the sun or indoor tanning equipment, like tanning beds.** Skin cancer is the most frequently diagnosed cancer in Canada. Reduce sun exposure between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. Seek shade or create your own, Tanning beds and sunlamps are not safe.
- **Follow cancer screening guidelines.** Even people with healthy lifestyles can develop cancer. One way to detect cancer early is to have regular screening tests. Know the guidelines for cervical cancer, breast cancer, and colorectal cancer.

To learn more about reducing your risk, or for more information on all aspects of cancer, prevention, support or how to volunteer, visit www.cancer.ca or call the Cancer Information Service at 1-888-939-3333.