

Not-so-tiny tots

The 2010 report card from Active Healthy Kids Canada, released Tuesday, reveals we are raising a baby nation of couch potatoes.

The findings were part of the group's sixth annual report card, which draws on a range of data and is produced in partnership with the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario.

According to the report, less than half the children between ages 1 and 5 are getting the necessary two hours of exercise they need each day for healthy growth and development. This lack of exercise, be it time spent in the playground or running around the backyard, is putting youngsters at risk for obesity and other health problems before they've completed Kindergarten.

"Active play (is) not frivolous," says Mark Tremblay, chief scientific officer for the organization. "Kids have a biological need to move."

But, according to the study, our modern lifestyles are conditioning kids out of their instinct to move around. Strapped into strollers or car seats, kids today are not getting the exercise previous generations did.

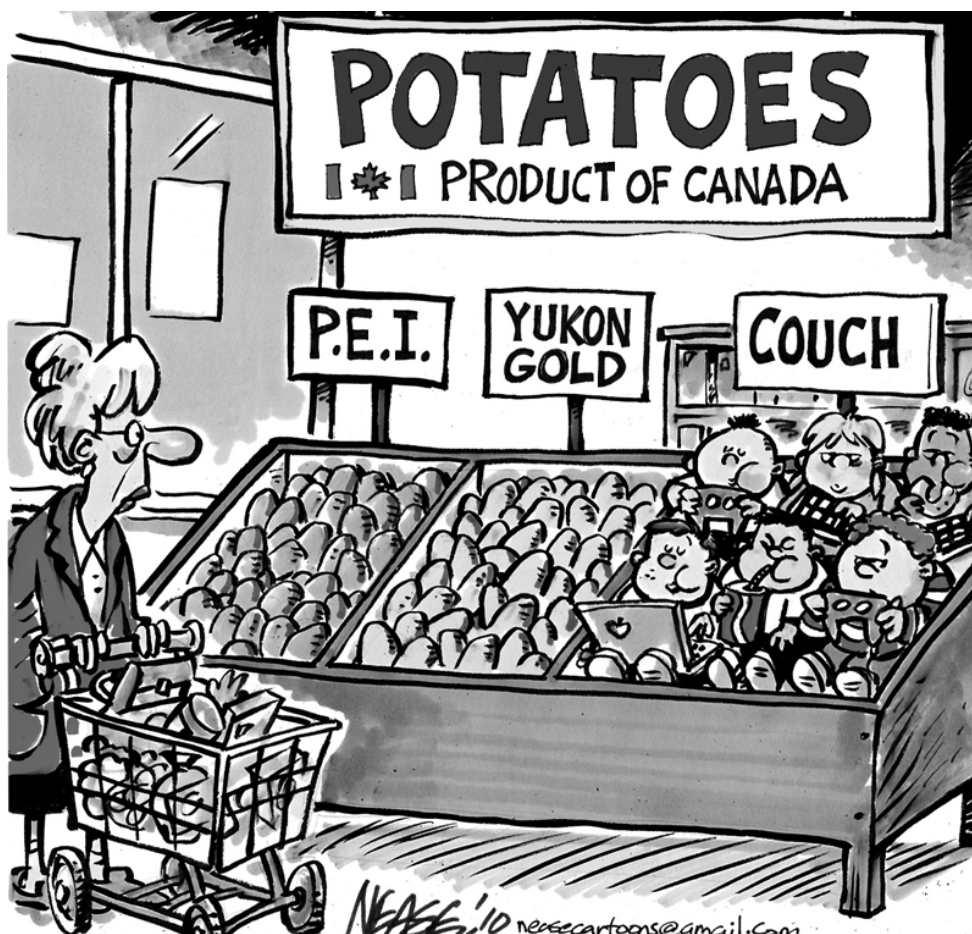
And an international survey of children's activity levels in 96 child care facilities found sedentary behaviour was more common than active play. While under Ontario rules, licensed child care providers must include two hours a day of physical activity; babysitters and unlicensed home-care providers are not subject to those requirements. That is more food for thought.

This year's report card also noted that only 12 per cent of Canadian children are meeting recommended guidelines of 90 minutes of exercise per day. It also awarded a failing grade for screen time spent on TV, video games or surfing the Internet.

Perhaps the most concerning aspect of the study is the amount of time we allow our kids to watch TV. In 1971, the average age kids started watching television was 4; today it's five months.

National data shows 15 per cent of Canadian kids ages 2 to 5 are overweight and 6.3 per cent are obese, making them more likely to become overweight and obese adults.

Failure to reverse this trend today will only lead to bigger problems— both literally and figuratively— down the road.



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WEB POLL RESULTS

Toronto council will be considering a proposal to allow shopping at all stores on every statutory holiday, including Christmas. Would you support a similar Ontario-wide plan that allows for shopping on all holidays?

- Yes (29%)
- No (71%)

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Letters to the editor

Emergency clinics 'busy by nature'

Dear editor,

I was rather shocked that there wasn't a whole page of letters from Georgetown folks upset about even a suggestion to close the local hospital (re: April 1 letter Smaller hospitals should be closed). I wouldn't want to put hospital closure on anyone's radar.

People do come from Brampton for emergency services in Georgetown. I know some. I would hate to have to drive 45 minutes to Mississauga or Brampton or Guelph for that matter, with a person in cardiac difficulty, with pregnancy complications, with fractures where the bones pierce the skin, with critical head trauma, with bleeding that I cannot stop/diminish. I don't even want the EMT crews to do that.

What one sees up front in an emergency clinic can be nothing like the chaos behind the scenes. Sometimes delays from being seen are because more critical cases have already been admitted.

As a vet tech, I had often seen critical cases, like "hit by cars" that would require the vet's continued attention

and yes, those people who showed up with their pets who were suffering from bouts of upset tummies from something they had eaten had to wait. It was all about life-threatening priorities.

Emergency clinics of any kind are by nature busy, based on the number of emergencies that show up. How many and which ones will show up on any day is never a certainty.

A number of years back there was a major power outage, which originated in the U.S. Would you care to try to rush a loved one through the gridlock and chaos of no traffic lights to reach Mississauga or Brampton? Would you be thankful to have a great little hospital here in Georgetown?

I vote for Georgetown Hospital, I don't even have to think about that.

Colleen Longhurst, Georgetown

Thieves shatter faith

Dear editor,

On Monday, April 19 at approximately 5 p.m. my son had his bike stolen from the front of the 7-Eleven store in Georgetown South.

Two teenage boys had just exited the store and were hanging out front when he left his bike and went in. If your son happens to come home with a lime green Haro BMX bike without a reasonable explanation of how its

in his possession— it's stolen!

It was an example that although 99 per cent of people would never think of stealing someone else's property, lest a 10-year-old kid's bike, there still lurks that 1 per cent who would steal anything not bolted down. These individuals are the lowest of the low.

I have a heartbroken son who has lost a treasured Christmas present. His, and my, faith in society is somewhat shattered.

Steven Buckingham, Georgetown

Masking the problem

Dear editor,

There has been some criticism of the Quebec government for initiating a law requiring users of the public services, to show their faces during that transaction.

If a masked face appeared at my wicket I would be alarmed. The opposition to this requirement is showing an unacceptable degree of militancy against this law. The Province of Quebec has welcomed people from all over the world to their land and given them every opportunity to enjoy freedom and happiness, surely it is logical that they also wish the freedom and security of their citizens. As one respondent has said— "when in Rome".

Trevor Trower, Georgetown

Letters to the editor policy

Letters must include an address and daytime telephone number. Anonymous letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 150 words and may be edited for content and/or length.

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