

Healthy Lifestyles



by Regional Chair Gary Carr

Fall is here and the cooler weather is on its way. Rather than hibernate, why not take steps toward a healthier lifestyle?

In my former life, I played professional hockey. I still play occasionally today. Being active and healthy eating habits are just as important for me and for my family now as they were earlier in my career.

We are incredibly lucky to live in a region that offers plenty of different opportunities to be active, such as walking and biking trails. Here are some suggestions on how you can stay active this fall and winter.

Walk your way to better health

Halton Region's **Walk This Way Program** supports adults becoming more active by building walking into their daily lives. Need motivation? Borrow a pedometer from your local library and track your steps through the **Count Your Steps Library Pedometer Lending Program**, aiming for 10,000 steps per day.

The Region also participates in the **Active and Safe Routes to School (ASRTS) Program** promoting active modes of transportation, such as walking and bicycling, to and from school. Walk with your children to school or ask their principal about the ASRTS walking school bus.

walkON promotes building environments that make it easy for people to walk, bike, or use public transit instead of using a car. Check out the "What can I do" page on iCANwalk's website www.icanwalk.ca to see what more you can do.

Did you know?

In 2009, Halton Region, along with our four Local Municipalities, endorsed the **International Charter for Walking**. This means we recognize the benefits of walking and are committed to creating a culture of walking.

As an employer, we encourage healthy lifestyles. During October, Halton Region staff participated in a walking challenge as part of Canada's Healthy Workplace Month. Staff teams tallied their steps for three weeks to see who could win the corporate challenge. An added bonus was that for every 10,000 steps taken, Conservation Halton will plant a tree through the Footsteps for Trees program.

Healthy eating

As recommended by Canada's Food Guide, healthy eating involves choosing to eat foods lower in fat, salt, and added sugar and enjoying nutritious foods such as whole grains, lean meats and meat alternatives such as beans and legumes, vegetables and fruit, and low-fat milk products more often.

Research shows major links between what we eat and the prevention of chronic diseases. That's one reason we launched Halton Region's **Community Food Advisor** program. Through trained volunteers, the program promotes safe and nutritious food selection, preparation, and storage practices. We are also working with community partners to establish the **Halton Food Council** to identify food issues in Halton and develop strategies to address these issues.

Halton Region aims to encourage a healthy lifestyle and promote programs to assist the community in achieving this. The Region has hosted community consultations on healthy weights and is working on programming to meet the needs of our community.

Reduce your risk of chronic disease

Living an active lifestyle through regular physical activity and healthy eating can reduce your risk of chronic disease. In addition, research shows that over 50 per cent of cancer deaths can be reduced by:

- **Living Tobacco-Free** – Being a non-smoker and avoiding second hand smoke reduces your risk of tobacco related cancers. Halton Region offers a Stop Smoking Clinic, available at no cost, where staff can help smokers develop a personal quit plan.
- **Following Screening Guidelines for Breast, Cervical, Colorectal and Prostate Cancers** – Even those with healthy lifestyles can develop cancer. Early detection saves lives.
- **Following Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines** – Did you know that having more than one or two alcoholic drinks a day increases your risk of stroke and cancer? The Guidelines help people make an informed decision about alcohol consumption.

Together we can ensure that Halton remains a healthy place to live, work, raise a family, and retire. Visit the Halton Region Health Department's web pages at www.halton.ca/health for more information about healthy living in Halton.



Healthy Workplaces

Regular physical activity has many benefits. However, getting started or maintaining an active lifestyle can be difficult, especially considering the time adults spend at work.

Employers can help support their employees by following some of these ideas:

- Provide bike racks in visible, safe, sheltered locations to encourage employees to bike to work. Organize a commuter challenge.
- Provide lockers and showers on site to encourage employees to be active before work, during lunch, and after work.
- Start a walking challenge using pedometers to motivate your employees to get active.

Follow helpful guidelines

Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living for Adults provides directions on how to make physical activity a part of daily routines. There are similar guides for children and older adults.

Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide describes the types and amounts of food to eat from each of the four food groups.

These and other resources are available at www.halton.ca/healthresources.

Halton Region Meeting Schedule

Nov. 16, 9:30 a.m. Health & Social Services Cte
Nov. 17, 9:30 a.m. Planning & Public Works Cte
Nov. 17, 1:30 p.m. Administration & Finance Cte
Nov. 24, 9:30 a.m. Regional Council
 Meetings can be viewed at www.halton.ca

Please let us know as soon as possible if you will have an accessibility or accommodation need at a Halton Region hosted event or meeting.

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