

Health Care

Health information on-line Choose your health sites carefully

An overwhelming number of health websites are available on the Internet; however, finding accurate and reliable information isn't always easy, in fact, it can be very frustrating.

Health consumers are looking for information that is not only up to date, but also helps them to make good health care decisions. Many Internet sites have information that is misleading, incorrect, or even dangerous if the advice they offer is followed. Knowing where to start and how to look for information is the first step in finding a quality on-line health resource.

The Canadian Health Network has provided the following recommendations for consumers when searching for health information on-line:

- Is the resource credible?
- Is the organization's name clearly stated?
- Is it a reputable organization?
- Is the site evidence-based?
- Is the content relevant to you?
- Does the content discuss the issue you are interested in?
- Does the website provide enough information?
- Does the site have original content or does it only link to other sites?
- Is the information Canadian?
- Is the resource timely?
- Is the information listed up to date?
- Does the date of the last update appear on the website?
- Are the facts presented clearly?
- Is there potential for bias or conflict of interest?
- Are both (or all) sides of the issue presented?

- Are commercial links and/or sponsorships clearly stated?
- Are there clear caution statements?
- Does the site offer a clear statement that health information should not be taken as health advice or a substitute for visiting a health professional?
- Is the site user-friendly?
- Is the information easy to read and understand?

There is a growing number of people using the Internet as a source of information and that number will continue to increase

in the years to come. Over 60 per cent of Halton adults who have access to the Internet, have used it to access health related information.

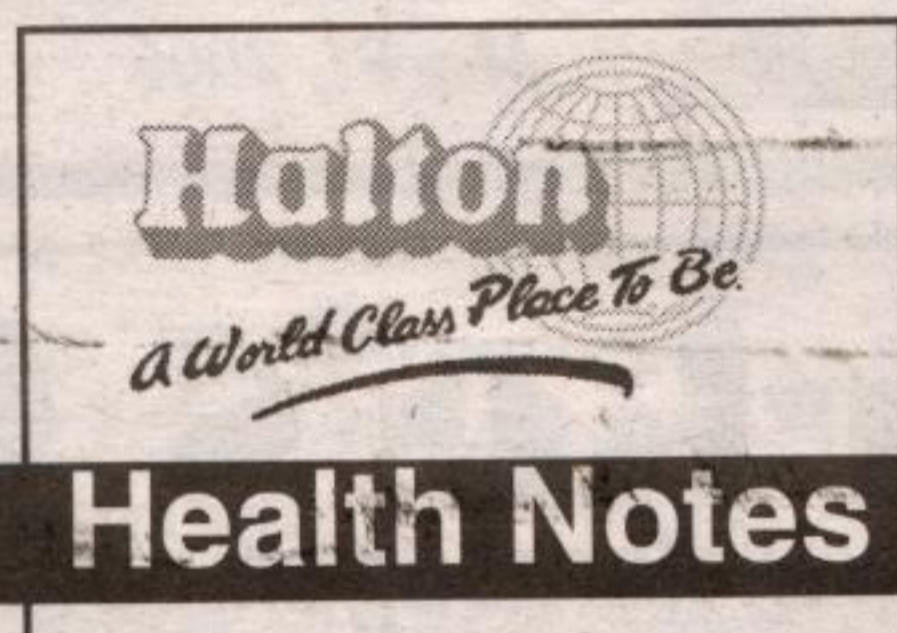
Informed decisions should always be made when taking information from any health website. On-line health information can be used as a valuable resource, but should never act as a substitute for talking to a trained health care professional.

Some recommended websites for reliable health information are:

- Halton Health Department www.region.halton.on.ca/health
- Health Canada www.hc-sc.gc.ca
- Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care www.health.gov.on.ca
- Canadian Health Network www.canadian-health-network.ca

For more information about health websites, please contact the Halton Region Health Department, 1-866-4HALTON (1-866-442-5866), TTY 905-827-9833, or visit www.region.halton.on.ca/health.

Health Notes is prepared by staff of the Halton Region Health Department.



Halton Paramedics graduate

Six paramedics who recently graduated from Halton Region's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Advanced Care Paramedic training course. Each of the six paramedics were presented with certificates on November 3 and are now able to offer patients a higher level of pre-hospital care. "One of the objectives of the 10-year Halton Region EMS Master Plan is to further enhance and educate our paramedics," said Regional Chairman Joyce Savoline. "Because of this continued training, Halton Region has been able to extend the coverage of Advanced Care Paramedics to all four of our local municipalities, enabling our residents the peace of mind to know that the highest level of pre-hospital care is available no matter where they live." To become an Advance Care Paramedic, a paramedic requires a minimum of one to two years experience and an additional 1,000 hours of training. The training for the program consists of a six-week classroom session that is delivered at EMS Headquarters. The classroom sessions are followed by a six-week clinical session, delivered at Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital. Following the clinical component is a field education session, which runs for a 16-week period. Graduates are from left, Scott Kline, Brian Franks, Tracy Sutherland, Nick Chovaz, with Regional Chairman Joyce Savoline, Katie Webster, Sarah Hendry.

Photo submitted

Wounded to Rock for Hope

Rock for Hope—a charity event for Hodgkin's Disease presented by In Good Company will be held on Saturday, Nov. 26, 7 p.m. at the George and Dragon.

Featuring the band, Wounded, there will also be a buffet dinner, silent auction and door prizes.

All money raised will be donated to a local resident diagnosed with Hodgkin's Disease to cover costs of treatment and recovery.

Tickets are \$25 or two for \$45, available at The George and Dragon or by calling 416-655-2218.

To advertise in this bi-weekly feature please contact Aaron at 905-873-0301 or aacthasson@independentfreepress.com

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