

HIGH ABSENTEE RATE AT NINE SCHOOLS PROMPTS REMINDER FROM PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

# 'Wash your hands' officials remind public

BY LISA QUEEN  
Staff Writer

York Region's public health department is asking parents and teachers to be

more vigilant about instructing youngsters to wash their hands properly after hundreds of children were off sick with mysterious bugs

over the past month.

Nine elementary schools from across the region reported unusually high absentee rates between mid-

January and mid-February, according to Bill Mindell, director of infectious diseases control.

He declined to identify

the schools, but said the last one hit was just getting back to normal the end of last week.

At its peak, 540 of the nine schools' 4,680 students were off sick one day, said Mr. Mindell, adding his department reported the absentee rates to the Ministry of Health.

adding several Toronto schools experienced the same thing.

"The upshot of all of this was we found very little (in terms of specific illnesses) and we think there was more than one thing going on.

"It's not some sort of serious outbreak. Now, it's over."

Mr. Mindell, who said letters went home from the nine schools advocating hand-washing and general hygiene, stressed the need for parents to co-operate with public health when there is a suspected health outbreak at their children's schools.

Participating in surveys and collecting stool or mucous samples allows the department to determine the cause of the illness.

"That's what helps us to get to the bottom of things," Mr. Mindell said.

*It's not some sort of serious outbreak.*

*Now, it's over.*

While one case of influenza B was confirmed, he said students were suffering from a number of symptoms ranging from upset stomachs and vomiting to fever, chills and sore throats.

"A lot of illnesses were very mild," said Mr. Mindell,

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### MARCH BREAK DAYZ

From exhibitions in the Museum to costumed guides throughout the Village, history comes to life. Activities include wagon rides, 19th Century crafts, games, soap making, and special guest appearances by Doc Century on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 10:30, 1:00 and 3 p.m. Call the Museum at 905-294-4576.



Markham Theatre  
For Performing Arts

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Friday, March 15  
at 11:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

The adventure begins again...in Joel Kaiser's superb adaptation of three exciting stories by Phoebe Gilman: Jillian Jiggs To The Rescue, The Balloon Tree and The Gypsy Princess. Join Touring Player's Theatre of Canada as they present this music-filled romp of imagination that is sure to entertain the entire family. Adults \$10.00

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### FAMILY ROCK CLIMBING AT THE CLIMBER'S EDGE

Monday, March 11, 7-9:30 p.m.

You and your family can reach new heights with adventures on the wall at Armadale Community Centre. Pre-registration required. Call 905-474-1007.

### PUBLIC SKATING

Take the whole family skating at the Markham Village Community Centre (located at Hwy. 7 and Hwy. 48) or Crosby Community Centre (Main Street Unionville). Special family rate. Call Community Services Commission at 905-415-7535.

### OTHER PARTNERS INCLUDE:

Bruce's Mill Sugar Bush, Skyloft Ski and Country Club, March Break Magic in Markham Village, Historic Unionville - March Break Activities and Embassy Suites Hotel and Conference Centre. For special MARCH BREAK PACKAGES, call the Embassy Suites at 905-470-8500.

PICK UP A COPY OF YOUR PASSPORT TO ADVENTURE AT ANY ONE OF THE PARTICIPATING LOCATIONS.



### MARCH ART BREAK

PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN 4-6

2-hour sessions run from 10 a.m. - Noon or 1:00-3:00 p.m. Cost per program is \$15.00.

#### ART PILLOWS

Monday, March 11

Design and paint art pillows inspired by patterns around us.

#### FABULOUS PORTRAITS AND FRAMES

Tuesday, March 12

Draw and paint fun portraits of self and others, and create an artsy frame.

#### BUGS IN MY PICTURE

Wednesday, March 13

Create 3-dimensional plasticine pictures while looking at the storybooks of Barbara Reid.

#### ARTSY BANNERS

Thursday, March 14

Create printing rollers to print your own banners.

#### NATURE EXPLORERS

Friday, March 15

Have fun drawing nature and people, and create your own nature tiles.

#### PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN 7-12

5-hour "hands on" studio programs run from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Cost per program is \$30.00.

#### ART MANIA

Monday, March 11

Create fantasy landscapes, abstract painting and sketches.

#### ARTSY PUPPETS

Tuesday, March 12

Use a variety of materials to create puppets and a theatre stage, and put on your own performance.

#### MOBILES

Wednesday, March 13

Create a funky mobile out of recyclable materials!

#### YOUNG TOM THOMPSONS

Thursday, March 14

Follow in the footsteps of Canada's well-known artist and explore landscape art.

#### YOUR SECRET ART BOX

Friday, March 15

Design your own secret box with hidden objects inside!

#### ALL PROGRAMS REQUIRE PRE-REGISTRATION.

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## The Regional Municipality of York THIS IS YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO BE INVOLVED IN IMPROVING TRANSPORTATION IN YORK REGION

### HIGHWAY 7 CORRIDOR TRANSITWAY STUDY

As one of the fastest growing municipalities in Canada, York Region is facing a number of transportation challenges. A top priority of the Region is to ensure the development of a high quality public transit system.

Highway 7 is one of the busiest transportation routes in York Region and past studies have identified that a rapid transit service is essential in improving the traffic movement in this corridor. The Region has consequently initiated the Highway 7 Corridor Transitway Study to address these needs.

The first step in the transitway study is to develop the Terms of Reference, as required under the Individual Environmental Assessment process. The scope and success of this study depends greatly on public input and participation.

The second round of Public Consultation Centres will be held on the following dates. The purpose is to obtain public input about the study findings.

Friday, February 15, 2002

Hillcrest Mall, Richmond Hill  
9350 Yonge St. (at Carrville Rd.)  
12:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Saturday, February 16, 2002

Bathurst Clark Resource Library  
900 Clark Ave. West, Vaughan (Bathurst St. & Clark Ave.)  
12:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Saturday, March 2, 2002

Markville Mall, Markham  
5000 Highway 7 East (Hwy. 7 & McCowan Rd.)  
12:00 pm - 5:00 pm

To receive further information on this study, please refer to the project web site at: [www.region.york.on.ca](http://www.region.york.on.ca) and click on "Sustainable Transportation Initiatives".

If you wish to have your name placed on our mailing list, or to direct questions and comments please contact:

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