

School Health Matters

Volume 7 - Issue 3
September 2011

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Peterborough County-City
HEALTH UNIT
...because health matters!

Electronic version available at: www.pcchu.ca/SHM

Should I Be Concerned About Wi-Fi in the Classroom?

Letter to all teachers from Dr. Rosana Pellizzari,
Medical Officer of Health



Recently there have been concerns raised about possible adverse health effects from radiofrequency energy emitted from wireless communication systems (Wi-Fi), particularly with regard to students. Many teachers want to educate themselves about this issue and it can be difficult to get a clear answer. This can be very unsettling when it involves something as important as the health and safety of school children and staff.

Those who claim Wi-Fi is dangerous argue that evidence about its safety is inconclusive. It is important to understand that inconsistency and, in some cases, conflict between the results of individual scientific studies often happens in health research. However, good public health decisions can still be made. That is why public health officials such as Health Canada and Public Health Ontario take into account the entire body of scientific research when considering the potential health effects of a certain issue instead of selecting specific studies to support a particular opinion.

Research on potential health effects from Wi-Fi exposure is an active field of investigation. For this reason, up-to-date reviews of scientific research which follow a weight of evidence approach are far more useful for informing debate and sound policymaking than reliance on individual studies.

I want to reassure you that the use of Wi-Fi does not pose a public health risk. The weight of evidence abundantly shows that as long as exposure to radiofrequency energy emitted from Wi-Fi equipment in schools is below the safety limits established by Health Canada, there is no convincing scientific proof that this equipment is dangerous. In fact, there is profuse research concluding that Wi-Fi exposure is not only well within recommended limits, but is only a small fraction (less than 1%) of what is received during typical use of cellphones.

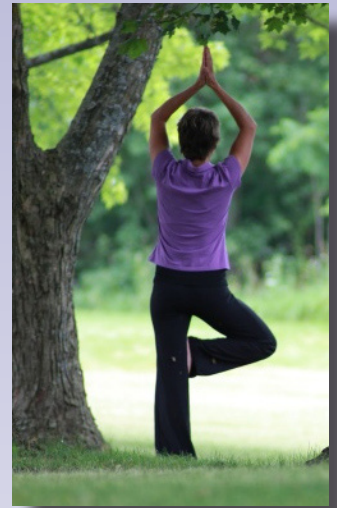
I encourage those interested in the health effects of Wi-Fi to seek out resources that consider the full scope of credible research into this area. Many of these can be found on the Health Unit's website at www.pcchu.ca.

Dr. Rosana Pellizzari, MSc, CCFP, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health
Peterborough County-City Health Unit

Teachers First

Worklife Balance

Every person's life is unique with different demands so it's hard to "prescribe" one right way to find the perfect balance between work and life priorities. Try to identify what's making you feel out of balance.



At work:

- Take some time to think about the major stressors that you experience. Identify one that you can and would like to change now. Come up with a practical solution to reduce that stressor.
- Encourage your colleagues to do the same. Get together to talk about how you can support one another.
- Check what school board programs and policies are available to support you.

At home - "the second shift":

The BC Council for Families suggests that you sit down with your family and develop "good-enough-for-us" standards for household chores. Create an A, B, and C list - the A list being the chores that are priorities (e.g., grocery shopping) and so on. Once you have the list, answer these questions:

- How often do each of these things need to be done?
- Is the family willing to give up something to pay someone to do some of these things?
- Are they willing to negotiate who'll do what or should a draw system be used?
- Just how are these chores going to get done?

One small change can make a big difference. Taking a little time now to plan, will give you time later for the things you value the most.

Don't Let the Bed Bugs Bite!

As bed bugs infest more and more homes, they are finding their way into Peterborough area schools. Schools need to be proactive to prevent infestation and stop the spread in schools and the stigma associated with bed bugs.



Most often bed bugs will hitchhike to school from an infested home by hiding in a student's clothing or backpack. Bed bugs that hitch a ride into the school in one student's backpack could be carried home by another student. Schools are a potential hub for bed bug spread.

What are bed bugs?

Bed bugs are small, brownish, flattened insects that feed on the blood of people while they sleep. Although the bite does not hurt at the time, it may develop into an itchy welt similar to a mosquito bite. Bed bugs do not transmit disease, but they can cause significant anxiety, and sleeplessness. Bed bug infestations are very difficult and expensive to control. Usually, bed bugs will hide during the day and only come out to feed during the night. Unlike head lice, they do not live on a person. However, they can hitchhike from one place to another in backpacks, clothing, luggage, books, and other items.

What if I find a bed bug on a student?

Bed bugs can crawl onto or off of a person (or their belongings) at any time, so it is also possible that the bed bug was brought to school by someone else or came from a student's home. If a suspected bed bug is found on a student or a student's belongings, the following procedures should be followed:

- The student should be discreetly removed from the classroom so that the teacher, principal or other qualified individual can examine the student's clothing and other belongings. Any bugs found should be removed and collected for identification. Try to keep the specimens as intact as possible.
- If a confirmed bed bug was found on a student, then the school principal should contact the student's parents or guardian to inform them of the bed bug presence on their child. Refer them to www.bedbugsinfo.ca.
- Students should not be excluded from school due to bed bugs. Schools should not be closed due to

bed bug presence; if pest management is necessary it will normally be targeted to certain areas of the school.

- DO NOT allow untrained staff to apply pesticides on school property. By law, only licensed applicators can apply pesticides (even ready-to-use products like sprays) in schools, and in compliance with the school's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan.

What if one of my students has an infestation at home?

When a student is dealing with an infestation at home, it is important to be sensitive. Although bed bugs have nothing to do with cleanliness or socioeconomic status, there is still a stigma with having bed bugs. Parents may be hesitant to admit to having bed bugs, and students may not want others to know. Students living in an infested home may feel anxious or tired during the school day.

Schools should work with the parents of any student living in an infested home to develop strategies for preventing the further spread of bed bugs, such as:

- Determine if the infested home is being treated. If a parent lacks the financial resources to hire a pest management professional, they can access online resources at www.bedbugsinfo.ca.
- In an infested home, parents should store their child's freshly laundered clothing in sealed plastic bags until they are put on in the morning. This prevents bed bugs from hiding in the clothing and being carried to school.
- Backpacks, lunchboxes, and other items that travel back and forth to school can also be inspected daily and stored in sealed plastic containers at home to prevent bed bugs from getting into them.

Call the Peterborough County-City Health Unit at 705-743-1000 for assistance in identification and further information.

Resource Corner

Dr. Crazy - A Tobacco Use Prevention Video for Grades 4-6

How much do today's kids know about tobacco products? Dr. Crazy is a mad scientist who puts all of his energy into trying to trick children into buying tobacco products so that he can make loads of money. Working with Dr. Crazy is John Sly, a sneaky marketer who is just as determined to sell tobacco products to children. However, Dr. Crazy and John Sly are in for a surprise. Claire Commonsense shows them that kids are smarter than they think! This is a great tool to get your students talking about tobacco. Get your free copy at www.pcchu.ca or call Tobacco Use Prevention at 705-743-1000, ext. 332.

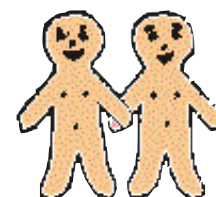


Healthy Sexuality: Care for Kids

Help your students meet curriculum expectations related to Growth & Development and Personal Safety.

The *Care for Kids Early Childhood Sexuality and Abuse Prevention Program* gives children age-appropriate information about sexuality and personal safety, through the use of songs, books, dolls, crafts and games.

This program has been approved for use in KPRDSB classrooms from JK to Gr. 3, and in PVNCCDSB Kindergarten classrooms.



For more information or to book *Care for Kids*, call 705-743-1000, ext. 235.

Visit www.pcchu.ca for Triple P course schedule



Triple P
Positive Parenting Program

Active and Free - Tobacco Website

The website www.caaws.ca/activeandfree now includes new tobacco prevention and cessation tools and resources to teach youth and teenage girls.



This website covers:

- the negative effects of smoking;
- tips for resisting peer pressure;
- personal stories and messages from girls who choose to stay physically active and tobacco free;
- an interactive cost-calculator; and
- a healthy living pledge to stay Active and Free.

To download these resources visit www.pcchu.ca/SHM

POSTER -
Be a FLU Fighter

ARTICLE -
Keep Germs Away
From Your School!

Elementary Healthy School Grant Projects: 2011-12

Healthy schools are built on a foundation of high quality instruction and programs, a healthy physical environment in and around school, a supportive school social environment, and community partnerships. Healthy School Grants support exciting health promotion projects in local schools. Click on the links to find out more about projects for 2011-12.

Schools	Projects
Apsley Central	<i>Promoting Physical Activity Through Intramurals and Outdoor Play</i>
Armour Heights	<i>Pathways to Success Student Workshop</i>
Adam Scott Intermediate	<i>Healthy Living Club</i>
Buckhorn	<i>School Garden</i>
Immaculate Conception	<i>Active Winter Play Day</i>
Prince of Wales Public	<i>Healthy Nutrition Project</i>
Rhema Christian	<i>I Love To Cook</i>
St. Paul's (Norwood)	<i>Healthy Body-Healthy Image for Girls</i>
St. Paul's (Peterborough)	<i>Healthy Eating, Healthy Play</i>
St. Teresa	<i>Physical Activity Promotion</i>

What Kids Say About the RF Downey School Garden

School gardens are a hands-on way to engage students in learning about our environment, local food production, healthy eating, physical activity and sun safety. For information about local school gardening projects, contact the Peterborough Community Garden Network at Peterborough Green-Up at 705-745-3238, ext. 204 or pccgn@greenup.on.ca. Here is what RF Downey students say about their school garden:

"It makes your school yard look pretty! A garden saves money because you can buy seeds for less money than buying vegetables for more money. It gets you working outside. It is way healthier than sitting on the couch watching TV. A garden gets you moving outside." **Jocelyn**

"A garden is good for you because the work in the garden builds up your muscles from the exercise. It's fun to have a garden because when you see things growing you get so happy." **Lydia**

"Having a garden at school is important because if you don't have something healthy to eat you can pick a fruit or vegetable. Fresh vegetables give you energy and it's fun!!! It's handy too, because if you're sweating and you really need something to eat and you don't want to go in the house, you can pick it." **Dakota**

"The garden also teaches kids like me how to garden and it also gets us outdoors and it gets our muscles working." **Sarah**

"We need the garden to be a good eco-school and to encourage other schools to plant a garden and be a good eco-school as well. We also remember to wear a hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, long sleeves and drink lots of water." **Madison and Ashley**

"We grow carrots, beans, peas, potatoes, tomatoes, cabbages and more. Fruits and vegetables are great for your body so you can stay active and not get tired. When kids work in a garden they get close to nature. A school garden is great because some kids come to school without lunch, so they could just pick some vegetables and eat them. Eating healthy is important, instead of junk food." **Bramon, Emilie and Niki**

"The breakfast club gets our fresh fruits and vegetables. The garden looks beautiful and keeps us busy. It also attracts beautiful animals." **Sarah and Alexis**

"Making a garden helps because it tastes better because it has no chemicals at all. It's also local. It saves money because you don't have to buy as much food. You can pick something fresh from the garden if you don't have enough fresh veggies in your lunch." **Ethan**

"It makes the school look beautiful and welcoming. Learning about flowers is very educational too, same with learning about bugs. The flowers also attract hummingbirds." **Kate**





Putting Nutrition Policy into Action

KPRDSB and PVNCCDSB nutrition policies come into effect in September 2011. Both go beyond the Ontario School Food and Beverage Policy (P/PM 150) which is mandatory in all Ontario schools. Local nutrition policies set the stage to create healthy school nutrition environments. Become familiar with your board's nutrition policy.

Promote a consistent message about nutrition by putting nutrition policy into action. Help to create a school community that promotes healthy eating through words and actions. Children who eat well are healthier and healthier children are better learners.

- Teach healthy eating, based on Canada's Food Guide, in your classroom. Nutrition education helps establish lifelong healthy eating attitudes and behaviours.
- Be a positive role model. Elementary school students identify teachers as influencers. When you talk about healthy eating, make healthy food choices and engage in regular physical activity, it is more likely that your students will too.
- Focus on non-food classroom rewards. Avoid offering food or beverages as a reward or an incentive for good behaviour, achievement or participation. Rewarding children with food, healthy or unhealthy, can lead to problems with children's diets and health.
- Ensure healthy food and beverages are provided for classroom celebrations, meetings and events. With a little imagination, these events can provide nutritious, tasty choices and still be fun!
- Fundraise with healthy foods or non-food items.
- Provide a safe and pleasant eating area.
- Support the Student Nutrition Program at your school.
- Promote hand washing and safe food handling among students.
- Use the Nutrition Standards referred to in your board policy when choosing food and beverages.
- Use the Nutrition Tools for Schools toolkit to put policy into action at your school. To get started call Nutrition Promotion at 705-743-1000, ext. 251.

Together we can make the healthy choice the easy choice!

School Nutrition Policy does not pertain to food brought from home for lunches.



Reading, Writing and Running!

Research shows that regular physical activity helps students improve their



concentration; increase academic, social, and interpersonal competence; and reduces risky behaviours, isolation and mental health problems. Everyone can benefit from those results!

DPA (Daily Physical Activity) Guidelines are part of a teacher's work day and an opportunity be active yourself.

Some ideas include:

- Have students in older grades lead younger grades in their activity session. Have older students lead each class with their activities. Build a binder with their ideas to pass onto for next year's leaders.
- Partner with another teacher for a friendly challenge to have groups of students in each class create classroom activities to perform on bad weather days. Each group of five could make a week of activities or lead one day each week.
- Create graphs to compare class results and be sure to share your DPA ideas.
- Give the students a topic each week to incorporate into their activities like the food groups, healthy choices, math, or geography.

The ideas are as endless as their imaginations.

To download the current Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines click on www.csep.ca/guidelines

DPA and curriculum resources available from OPHEA (Ontario Physical Health Education Association) at <http://hpe.ophea.net>

The Canadian Intramural Recreation Association (CIRA) has resources available at www.ciraontario.com