

REMEMBER...

Healthy Lifestyles Build Healthy Families

Keep your family active...

Daily physical activity may be one of the most important investments you make for health now and in the future. Make physical activity a part of your day. Think of simple fun things to do as a family - a walk, playing catch or hide and seek.

Experts say that kids need 30 to 60 minutes of moderate to fairly vigorous physical activity every day. Very young children need activity in short bursts with frequent breaks. Running, rolling, climbing, throwing a ball are great fun for them. It's a great way to get involved in keeping them fit. Older children love learning to master things-volleyball, baseball, bicycle riding. Doing activities with your children will help them learn new skills.

Living actively can add a lot to your family life. It can improve the way you feel physically and mentally, and it can give your family a new sense of togetherness. Try it, you'll like it!

Protect your family from tobacco smoke...

A smoke-free home today lowers your family's chances of developing health problems tomorrow. Babies are less likely to develop Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Children are less likely to develop ear infections, asthma and bronchitis. Adults have a lower risk of developing lung cancer.



What You Can Do

1. Aim for a smoke-free home and vehicle.
2. Display a smoke-free decal at entrances to your home and vehicle.
3. Ask smokers to smoke outside.

The effects of alcohol...

You are your children's most important teacher. Your words and actions help shape their ideas about alcohol and other drugs.

The first few years of life are important in building good values; self-esteem and the skills needed to prevent the misuse of alcohol and other drugs. We have to start talking with our children about all sorts of things, including drugs, when they're very young. We need to give them clear and consistent messages about what is expected of them. Children need rules and limits.

Children are naturally curious and should be encouraged to ask questions about what they see around them. By listening carefully to their questions we let them know they are important. Simple, direct answers often satisfy them. Young children also learn by watching you and others. Has your child ever picked up a beer bottle, asked for a pill to feel better or pretended to smoke a cigarette? Children copy what they see.

Think about your actions and what they may mean.

Tips for your family's food...

Be sure to:

- Fill your shopping cart full of whole grain cereals, pasta, rice, dark orange and dark green vegetables.
- Add wheat bran, oat bran or wheat germ when making muffins, cookies or meat loaf, to increase fibre in your diet.
- Whole fruits have more fibre than juices. Fruit drinks (cocktail, beverage, punch) are higher in sugar and lower in nutrients than fruit juice.
- A serving of meat is 2-3 ounces (the size of a deck of cards).
- Limit candy, chips, soft drinks, cakes, etc. They are filling and will make you less hungry for nutritious foods.

Preparing for Parenthood

Making Informed Choices

There are a number of things to think and talk about as a couple before your baby arrives. One very important decision to make is the choice of who will deliver your baby. In Grey and Bruce counties you have the option of having a doctor or a midwife to follow you throughout pregnancy, labour and postpartum. Both services are fully funded by the Ministry of Health. For more information on midwifery services refer to page 58.

Each expectant couple has their own idea about what the birth of their baby will be like. Learn about the labour and birth options available to you in your community. Whether you choose a family doctor, an obstetrician, or a midwife, it is important that you feel confident and comfortable with your health care provider. Have a birth plan so the health care professionals working with you understand your particular needs. Whether you write it down or not, it is important that you share your hopes and expectations for your care and birth experience. Also talk to your health care professional about when you should go to the hospital after labour starts.

Comfort measures and options that are available to help cope with labour will vary depending on where you plan to give birth. In Grey and Bruce, the following may be available to you:

- shower
- whirlpool
- positioning
- massage
- back rub
- icepacks
- birthing ball
- warm blankets
- epidural
- analgesics
- laughing gas

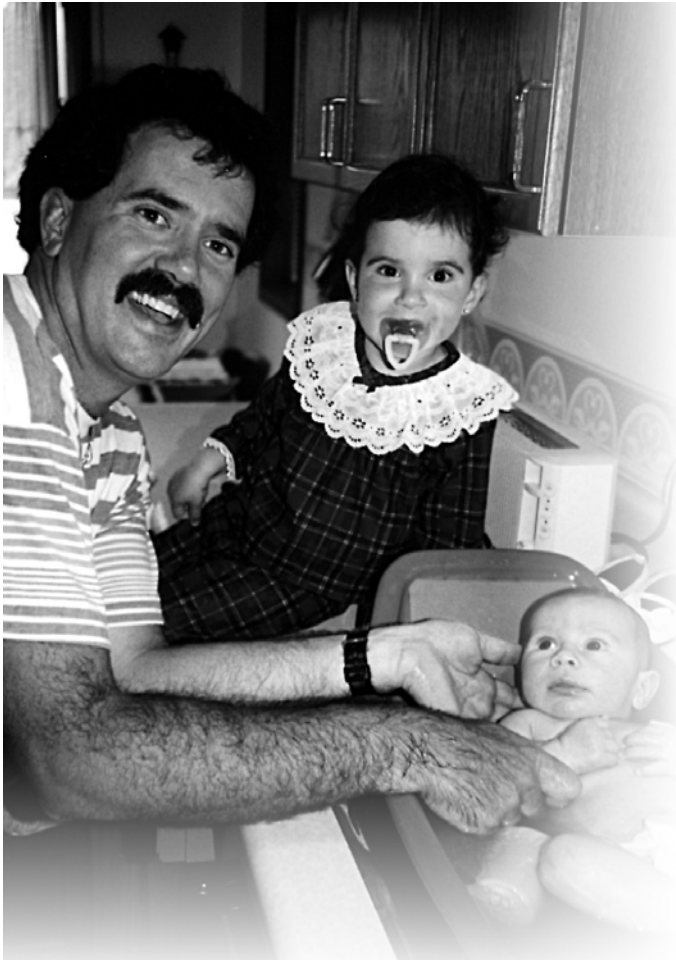
If you choose to deliver in a hospital, be sure to go on a hospital tour before your due date so you can find out what your hospital offers and learn about any special policies.

Learning From Other Parents

Take the opportunity before baby arrives to get information from couples who have just had a baby. You can learn from people who have “been there” not long ago. Ask them questions like:

- Was there some information that you wished you had been told before you had the baby? (What was it?)
- In preparing for the birth of your child, is there anything that you wish you had done differently?
- What items did you buy that you never used?
- What baby products did you find the most valuable?
- What did you do to make those first few days at home with the baby easier?
- How do you manage to have time together as a couple now that your baby is here?





When You Are An Expectant Dad

- Share in the experience with your partner; you are expecting too! Tell your friends and family you are going to be a dad! It is not obvious to others that you are an expectant father, since you are not physically carrying your baby. Some expectant fathers report experiencing symptoms of pregnancy like fatigue, nausea, weight gain, and/or cravings. This is known as “couvade syndrome”.
- Talk with your partner and friends about how you are feeling about fatherhood. It is normal to feel afraid and anxious about the changes, new responsibilities, and expectations a baby may bring to your life.
- Go to prenatal appointments with your partner and don’t miss the opportunity to see your baby during an ultrasound.
- Talk, read, and sing to your developing baby. Babies can hear even in the womb, and your voice is already a familiar favourite!
- Attend Healthy Start prenatal classes/workshop. You will learn more about caring for a baby and will have the opportunity to meet other expectant dads you can relate to.
- Continue with the healthy lifestyle you adopted before trying to conceive. You will be a support to your partner, will feel good about yourself and be a model for your children.
- Carry an extra load yourself by helping out. Sit down with your partner and discuss ways you can be of most help now, and how you will share in the care of your baby and other household tasks after the baby is born.
- Check with your employer or human resources department to see if some form of paternity leave is available to you. You can support your partner’s recovery best and help each other adjust to parenthood, by being at home for awhile.
- Share in the preparation of your baby’s arrival. Learn about infant care and safety.
- Be present at the birth of your child. It truly is an amazing experience! Do not worry about being the coach of the year - your reassurance and physical presence is the support your partner needs.

The New Dad

Men and women realize the importance of an involved dad in raising a healthy child. “Children whose fathers help care for them are less likely to become violent; they have higher IQ’s, better impulse control, better social adaptations - all of the elements of mental health are better” Your Child-Newsweek, 1997.

This father-child attachment can start even while baby is in the womb.