

# COMMUNITY REPORT



**PublicHealth**  
WELLINGTON-DUFFERIN-GUELPH  
*Stay Well.*

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Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health is governed by a Board of Health consisting of elected representatives from Wellington and Dufferin counties and the City of Guelph as well as local representatives appointed by the provincial government. Board of Health reports and meeting minutes can be found at [wdgpublichealth.ca](http://wdgpublichealth.ca).

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# DR. NICOLA MERCER

## MESSAGE FROM DR. NICOLA MERCER, MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH AND CEO



Public Health's programs and services are available to everyone in the community.

Public Health works around the clock to help individuals stay well and to make our communities safer. Our role in the healthcare system is an essential one: we promote health and prevent disease and injury. We are also prepared to respond to any public health emergencies.

WDG Public Health provides health information, resources and services so everyone can be as healthy and safe as possible where they live, learn, work and play. All are welcome regardless of age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability or individual situation.

Making people feel welcome starts by understanding what a person experiences when accessing our programs and services. This was reflected in the findings of a client satisfaction survey that was undertaken at all our offices. The feedback indicates that staff are indeed committed to excellent client service. It is encouraging that 95 percent of those who completed the survey felt respected, 94 percent felt cared about and 95 percent felt we listened to them.

Where we found there was some client concern around the clinic hours and frustration with our phone system, we have taken action to address these issues. Already, clinic hours have been adjusted and our telephone technology is undergoing a comprehensive review.

Also important is ensuring that Public Health employees are equipped to meet the needs of each and every client. The ability to maintain services that are both relevant and dynamic is a priority in the hiring and training process of everyone who works at Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health. Ensuring that every client receives excellent client service is a part of the job.

Public Health will continue to monitor and evaluate how our services are delivered so that we can adapt to the changing needs of the communities we serve. Please, feel free to contact our office and let us know how we are doing and what we can do to better serve you.



# DOUG AULD

MESSAGE FROM DOUG AULD, CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH



This past year ushered in three, unexpected actions that will impact the provision of Public Health services in our community. First, refugees from Syria will require the services of Public Health in a number of cases. We welcome the opportunity to assist these families who have endured so much hardship and deprivation. While the scope of their needs continues to unfold, Wellington-Dufferin- Guelph Public Health is well prepared to provide a number of services to assist with their resettlement in Canada including immunization, sexual health, pregnancy and parenting support.

Second, the announcement by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to review a wide range of health programs will likely change not only the way we deliver Public Health services but the range of services offered as well.

Third, in the fall of 2015, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care announced a new formula for providing funds to public health agencies in Ontario. While the long-term effects of the new formula are not known, the short-term results have restricted our resources for 2016 and 2017.

Notwithstanding the uncertainties ahead, this agency is very fortunate to have not only strong leadership, but a very talented and committed staff who care intensely about the services provided to individuals, families and other agencies in the communities we serve. Overseeing the agency, there is a Board of Health; the members represent elected officials appointed by local municipal and county councils, as well as local residents appointed by the province. These members exhibit unique strengths and depth in governance, finance and a sense of community. We are aware that each dollar spent on vaccination programs, health promotion, water protection and many other activities generates a significant economic return in the form of less hospital spending in the years ahead, a healthier and therefore more productive workforce, and lower medical bills. And, we are acutely aware that public health services support one of the most fundamental foundations of a strong community: compassion and care.

In a world of expected change and uncertainty, there are no simple answers, only sensible choices. As the new provincial health policy unfolds, the choices we must make will, to the best of our ability, reflect the fundamental values of public health and the critical role public health plays to enhance both primary care and long-term support for the people of Ontario.

# PROGRAMS & SERVICES

**This is a sample of the programs and services provided by Public Health that help prevent disease, protect health and promote the well-being of individuals, families and communities.**

## **FAMILY HEALTH**

Public Health offers many programs that help with pregnancy and parenting. You can find out which ones will help you and your family by calling KIDS LINE at 1-800-265-7293 ext. 3616.

## **PRENATAL HEALTH**

You can attend a class or participate through our free online prenatal program to learn about how to keep yourself healthy during pregnancy, labour and delivery, breastfeeding and what to expect when you bring your baby home. Sign up online at [wdgpublichealth.ca](http://wdgpublichealth.ca).

## **BREASTFEEDING**

We offer a prenatal breastfeeding class for you and your partner to help you feel confident and breastfeed successfully. After your baby is born, a Public Health nurse can call or visit you and answer your questions. You can also attend a breastfeeding clinic or call KIDS LINE at 1-800-265-7293 ext. 3616 to speak to a nurse.

## **HEALTHY BABIES HEALTHY CHILDREN**

Healthy Babies Healthy Children is a home-visiting program that supports pregnant women and families with children up to age 6. Public Health wants children to have the healthiest possible start in life. We help families find and access community services and help strengthen parent/child relationships through positive

parenting classes. Find out more by calling Public Health's KIDS LINE at 1-800-265-7293 ext. 3616.

## **KIDS LINE QUARTERLY E-NEWSLETTER**

Public Health launched a new e-newsletter that focuses on pregnancy and parenting from birth to school age. Each issue provides information on topics like growth and development, speech and language, safety, nutrition and local resources. Subscribe at [wdgpublichealth.ca](http://wdgpublichealth.ca).

## **DENTAL HEALTH**

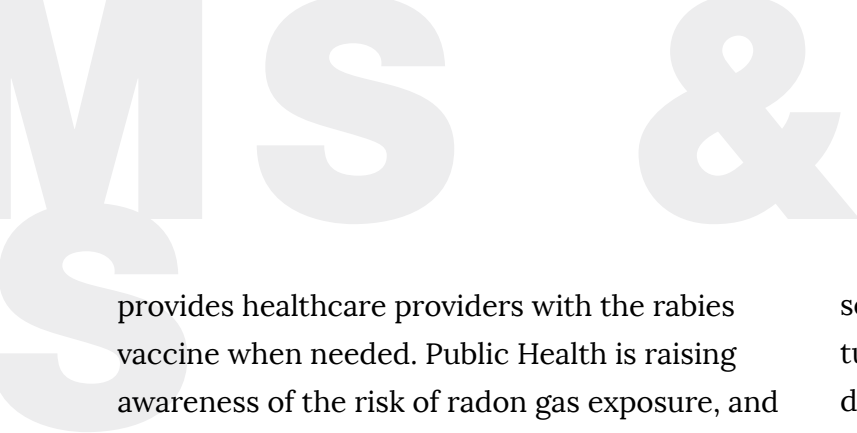
Children and youth 17 years of age and under who qualify, can get dental health screenings, preventive and treatment services for free. Public Health also works in schools providing fluoride clinics and screening children for dental needs. For more information or to book an appointment, call the dental line at 1-800-265-7293 ext. 2661.

## **PRESCHOOL SPEECH AND LANGUAGE**

Public Health partners with several agencies through "Wee Talk" which provides speech and language services for preschoolers. Contact KIDS LINE at 1-800-265-7293 ext. 3616 to get a referral to a community service, or to obtain information on how babies and young children learn to communicate.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH HAZARDS**

Public Health works to prevent the onset of health problems by protecting the health of individuals in the community. Larvicide programs reduce the mosquito population and the risk of West Nile virus. All animal bites are investigated for the risk of rabies, and Public Health



provides healthcare providers with the rabies vaccine when needed. Public Health is raising awareness of the risk of radon gas exposure, and encourages homeowners to test radon levels.

### **FOOD SAFETY**

Public Health inspects restaurants, grocery stores, food carts, daycares and long-term care homes to make sure they follow food safety standards. Before you decide where to eat, check our online inspection results at [checkbeforeyouchoose.ca](http://checkbeforeyouchoose.ca). Public Health also offers a food safety training and certification course for food handlers.

### **IMMUNIZATION**

Immunization is a safe and effective way to protect you and your family from serious diseases. Public Health can tell you what vaccines you or your children need, and you can get immunized at one of our clinics. Many vaccines are free of charge, while others are available at a low cost.

### **PREVENTING CHRONIC DISEASE**

Public Health is working to promote good nutrition and physical activity in local schools and to build healthier communities. Public Health also raises awareness about low-risk drinking, the dangers of tobacco and other substances, as well as cancer and injury prevention.

### **INFECTION CONTROL AND PREVENTING INFECTIOUS DISEASES**

Public Health inspectors and nurses are working in the community to keep the public safe from vaccine-preventable diseases,

sexually transmitted and bloodborne infections, tuberculosis, rabies and other infectious diseases. We manage outbreaks of infectious diseases like influenza, measles, mumps and tuberculosis to protect the public.

### **SEXUAL HEALTH, BIRTH CONTROL AND SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STIs)**

Public Health provides confidential services about birth control, pregnancy and STIs. Our clinics are a safe place to talk about your sexual health. Call 1-800-265-7293 to set up an appointment.

### **SAFE WATER**

Public Health Ontario offers water quality testing for bacteria in private wells and works with municipalities to monitor the safety of public drinking water. If there is a threat to safe water, Public Health may issue a water advisory alerting the public to boil water, or avoid using it entirely. Public Health monitors the quality of water at beaches and public pools to make sure they are safe to enjoy. From June to August, beach testing results can be found on our website and updates are posted on social media.

### **TRAVEL HEALTH**

Book an appointment with a public health nurse and get good health advice about your intended destination. You will learn about the country's local health risks and the vaccines you need before you travel. There is an appointment fee plus the cost of vaccines. Call for more information.

# HEALTH FOR ALL

Health, or the lack of it, can be influenced by the opportunities each of us has. Those opportunities are not random but are based on patterns in our society that can deny someone their good health, and they increase the overall cost of healthcare in the community.

People who live with less face challenges each and every day. These challenges can include access to gainful employment, education opportunities, secure housing or a community of support, resulting in consequences for a person's physical and mental health. For children in particular, we know that poverty can start them on a lifelong journey of real and measurable health risks.

## SUPPORTING CHILD DEVELOPMENT



Early intervention can improve the long-term health and well-being of vulnerable children and their families. Public Health offers programs and services on a wide range of topics including family planning, pregnancy, mental health, breastfeeding, nutrition, physical activity, healthy

relationships, parenting, developmental delays and readiness for school. Parents can call KIDS LINE at 1-800-265-7293 ext. 3616 to speak with a public health nurse who will do an assessment and connect the family with community services, or answer parenting questions.

## ADDRESSING FOOD INSECURITY

Those who have to get by with less may not have enough nutritious food to meet their family's dietary needs.

These families are at a higher risk

of inadequate nutrition and negative health outcomes including increased risk for chronic diseases, adverse pregnancy outcomes, social exclusion, and negative mental health impacts such as depression.

To address the challenges local households face in affording and accessing healthy food, Public Health collaborates with community groups like the Guelph and Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination and Headwaters Food and Farming Alliance. These partnerships help to advocate for income security measures including a basic income guarantee, adequate social assistance rates and adopting a living wage. These partnerships help to ensure healthy foods are accessible and that there are opportunities for families to eat nutritiously.

## BUILDING UP IN OUR COMMUNITY

Evidence shows that the way a community is designed can have a significant effect on the health of a community. Residents, especially those in lower socioeconomic areas, benefit greatly from neighbourhoods that are designed to make the healthier choice the easier choice, such as children being able to safely walk or bike





Building up to ...



**MORE SAFE  
AND SOCIAL  
NEIGHBOURHOODS**

... and a healthier  
community.

to school. In 2015, Public Health worked with some local municipalities to support healthy, safe and equitable lifestyle opportunities in their communities. This is particularly timely as local communities plan for more residents, services and amenities based on the Ontario Places to Grow program.

## DENTAL CARE FOR CHILDREN

Dental care is not part of Canada's universal healthcare system. Many families who do not have dental benefits find it difficult to afford dental care for their children. Public Health helps families who face financial hardship access Ontario's publicly funded dental programs for children and youth aged 17 and younger. This includes emergency as well as preventive services such as checkups, cleanings and dental sealants.

In addition, Public Health dental staff provide fluoride varnish to students in seven local elementary schools identified as most likely to benefit from this preventive service. By grade 2, almost 50 percent of children in our community have had tooth decay, which is largely preventable and causes needless pain and many missed days of school. In the eight years since the fluoride varnish initiative began, there has been a significant reduction in the number of children in these schools with urgent dental needs. Public Health also offers

preventive dental clinics  
in communities  
where rural  
populations  
have difficulty  
accessing  
services.



# INFECTION PROTECTION

Being prepared to respond quickly to local outbreaks of infectious diseases is an important part of Public Health's role within the communities we serve. In the event of an outbreak investigation, public health nurses and inspectors work to identify the source of the outbreak and to follow up with anyone who has come into contact with sick individuals. The Medical Officer of Health is the leading health official and CEO of Public Health and is responsible for ensuring health providers and members of the public are able to make the best possible decisions about their personal health and protection.

## INTERNATIONAL OUTBREAKS

There are serious diseases that Public Health monitors and investigates to protect the public. In fact, an Ebola outbreak that began in 2014 in West Africa prompted countries, including Canada, to improve their preparedness for a possible international health emergency. In Wellington, Dufferin and Guelph, the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) monitored residents who returned from Ebola-infected regions of the world. If symptoms became suspect, the MOH worked with emergency services to transfer the patient to a designated hospital facility. The person would be isolated and tested to ensure patient and community safety. Although Ebola is a serious and often fatal disease, there have been no reported cases of Ebola in Canada due, in part, to the vigilance of Public Health.

## LOCAL OUTBREAKS OF VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASES

Outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles, mumps and pertussis (whooping cough) are making a comeback. In the spring of 2015, Public Health managed an outbreak of 15 confirmed cases of the mumps at three Guelph high schools. Public Health staff provided special vaccination clinics at the schools and monitored anyone who came into contact with an infected individual to ensure the disease didn't spread.



One of the challenges for Public Health in monitoring the spread of the mumps is the long incubation period of up to 25 days between exposure to the infection and the appearance of first symptoms. Individuals may be contagious before they know they are infected. Two full incubation periods with no new illnesses had to pass before Public Health declared the 2015 mumps outbreak over.

## REDUCING THE RISK FROM A LOCAL OUTBREAK OF HEPATITIS A

The Wellington Advertiser reported that its top online news story of January 2015 was about a case of hepatitis A in an employee of Marj's Village Kitchen in Alma. There is a vaccine that provides protection from hepatitis A, a virus that can be spread by eating food prepared by an infected person. Public Health launched an urgent campaign to inform people who had dined at the popular eatery of the potential risk to their health. Anyone who may have been exposed to the virus needed to get a hepatitis A vaccination as soon as possible for protection.

To raise awareness that members of the public needed to be vaccinated, information was distributed thorough traditional media outlets like television, radio and the newspaper as well as social media including Twitter. Public Health staff answered numerous information phone lines to let the public know if they needed to be vaccinated at an emergency clinic. In two days, the potential risk to the community was greatly reduced and 1,400 people who had eaten at Marj's were immunized for hepatitis A.

In the event of an emergency like an infectious disease outbreak, or the need for mass immunization including the situation at Marj's Village Kitchen in Alma, Public Health has an emergency response plan, qualified staff and an emergency operations centre in place.

## EXPECT IT INSPECTED

Public Health regularly inspects anywhere food is handled such as restaurants, food trucks and delis. Spas, nail salons, tattoo parlours and other personal service settings are also inspected regularly to ensure they are following proper infection control practices and to protect the community against infectious diseases. Results from these inspections are available at [checkbeforeyouchoose.ca](http://checkbeforeyouchoose.ca). Childcare centres and long-term care homes are also inspected for proper food safety and infection control practices.

If Public Health receives a complaint about how a regulated health professional handles infection control in their office, an unannounced inspection will take place within 24 hours by Public Health officials. If a lapse in infection control is found, Public Health will work with the health professionals to ensure safe practices are put in place. Findings resulting from infection control complaints are available at [wdgpublichealth.ca](http://wdgpublichealth.ca).



# REDUCING HARM

Public Health takes a non-judgmental approach when helping clients to avoid disease and harm. Public Health provides clean and sterile drug-using equipment and condoms; client-centred counselling and education; and referrals to addictions treatment, health and social services.

## REDUCING THE RISK OF BLOODBORNE INFECTIONS

Sharing needles and other drug-using equipment accounts for a large percentage of new cases of bloodborne infections which are spread through contact with the blood and body fluids of an infected individual. Public Health's



services are intended to prevent the spread of disease by providing a needle exchange program and other harm reduction services. The needle exchange program distributes new needles and drug-using equipment to people who use injection drugs, and accepts used needles for proper disposal. Other services include testing for bloodborne infections and sexually transmitted infections, and counselling.

## Need it? We got it.



LGBTQ friendly  
services



Birth control  
or Plan B



Confidential  
STI & HIV testing  
and treatment



Immunization



Travel health  
advice, products  
and vaccines



Harm reduction  
services

For more information, call or visit us online

**1-800-265-7293**

[wdgpublichealth.ca](http://wdgpublichealth.ca)



**PublicHealth**  
WELLINGTON-DUFFERIN-GUELPH  
*Stay Well.*



# G H A R M

## MANAGING EXPOSURES TO BLOODBORNE INFECTIONS

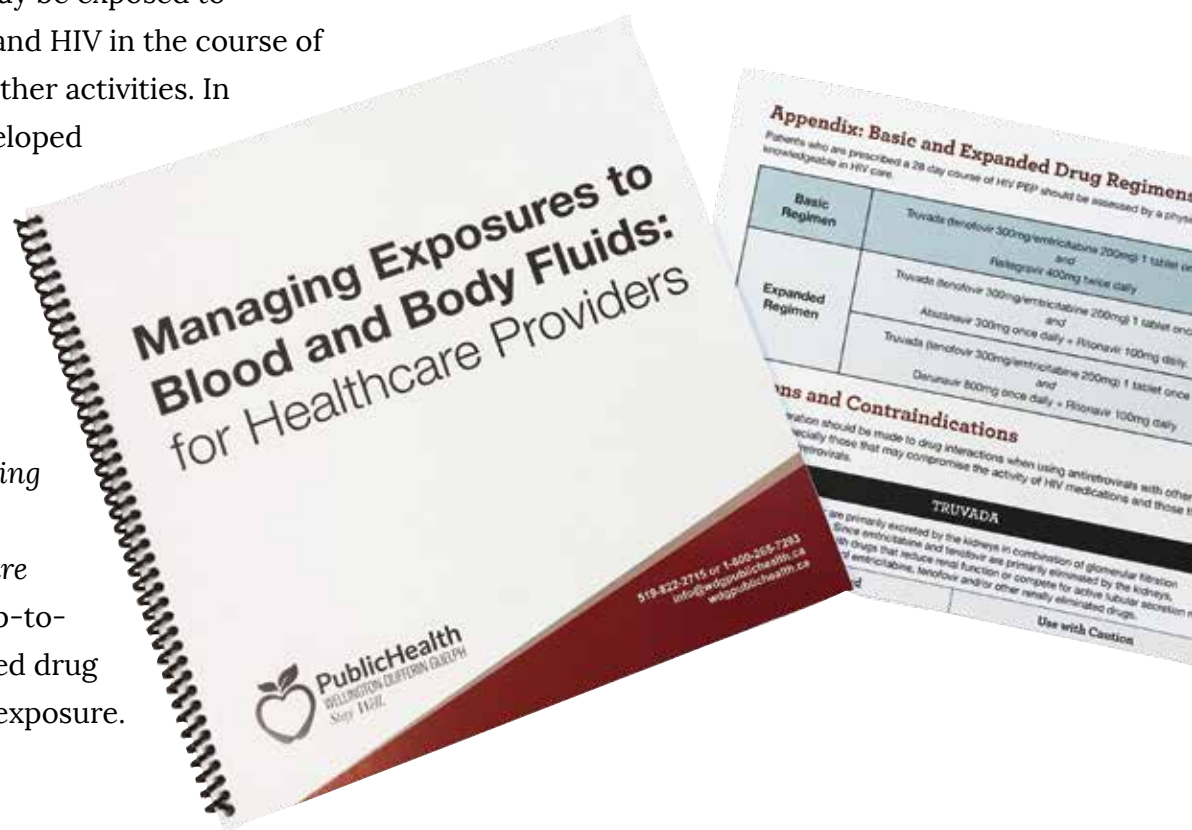
Public health inspectors and nurses work with community partners regarding protection from bloodborne infections, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases.



Healthcare providers may be exposed to hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV in the course of their work or through other activities. In 2015, Public Health developed a resource for local healthcare providers with important information about first aid, blood testing, post-exposure prophylaxis and counselling. *Managing Exposures to Blood and Body Fluids for Healthcare Providers* includes an up-to-date list of recommended drug regimens for HIV post-exposure.

The Mandatory Blood Testing Act allows for some individuals to apply to the Medical Officer of Health to have a person's blood sample analyzed if they have come into contact with a bodily substance from that person. These individuals includes victims of crime, emergency service workers and members of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario or the College of Nurses of Ontario.

A workshop, hosted by Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health, Public Health Ontario and several sponsors is hosted annually for infection control practitioners in the region. The workshop is an opportunity to discuss infection control issues. Two of the most recent topics were managing tuberculosis exposures in healthcare settings and hepatitis C management.



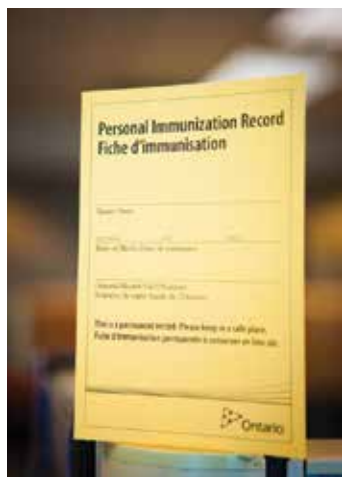
# VACCINATION

Getting everyone immunized who can be is a high priority for Public Health to prevent outbreaks of disease.

WDG Public Health is responsible for handling and distributing approximately six million dollars worth of vaccine to local physicians' offices, hospitals, long-term care homes, retirement homes, community clinics and pharmacies. We also train medical personnel to keep vaccines at the proper temperature in order to maintain their effectiveness.

## CHILDREN NEED TO BE IMMUNIZED TO ATTEND SCHOOL

There is scientific evidence that immunization protects individuals and communities from serious diseases. When students are fully immunized they are protected, and the spread of disease is reduced so children who can't be immunized for medical or philosophical reasons are also protected. That is why immunization is a requirement for school attendance in Ontario according to the *Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA)*.



If there is a disease outbreak in a school, Public Health needs to know who is protected through immunization and who still needs protection. Therefore, children's immunizations must be reported to Public

**'As a parent, I would never take chances with my children's health. Would you?'**



**Dr. Nicola Mercer**  
Medical Officer of Health  
Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health

Vaccinating your children protects them and others from serious diseases—which still pose a real threat.

Parents are responsible for ensuring their children's vaccinations are reported to Public Health or your child may be suspended from school.

Go to [www.immunizewdg.ca](http://www.immunizewdg.ca) to update your children's records online.



Update your children's vaccination records online at [www.immunizewdg.ca](http://www.immunizewdg.ca)

Health. Children with incomplete immunization records can be suspended from school.

We've made it easier for parents to report their children's immunizations. An online reporting form is available at [www.immunizewdg.ca](http://www.immunizewdg.ca). Public Health monitors local immunization rates and reviews student immunization records to know who is safe and who needs protection in the event of a disease outbreak. Dr. Nicola Mercer, Medical Officer of Health and CEO has given her voice to this important Public Health immunization initiative: to ensure all students have had their vaccinations and their immunization records are up-to-date with Public Health so they can attend school.

## CHILDREN NEED NINE VACCINES

There are nine publicly funded vaccines required for school attendance: diphtheria, tetanus, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, pertussis (whooping cough), meningococcal disease and varicella (chickenpox). If your child's vaccines are not up to date, get immunized by calling your doctor or at one of our clinics. Parents who have questions or concerns about the safety of vaccines can call KIDS LINE at 1-800-265-7293 ext. 3616 to speak with a public health nurse.



## MEDICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL EXEMPTIONS

Any student who cannot be immunized for medical reasons, and those who choose not to be immunized for philosophical reasons, must complete an exemption form and have it on record with Public Health. In either case, students who are not immunized cannot attend school during an outbreak, for their protection and the health of the school community.

## MAINTAIN THE CHAIN

Vaccines need to be kept within a specific temperature range to be effective. The process of transporting, storing and handling vaccines until they are ready to be used is called the cold chain. Public Health inspects every location where provincially funded vaccines are stored including doctor's offices, hospitals and pharmacies. In 2015, Public Health developed a "Maintain the Chain" toolkit to educate local healthcare professionals on how to monitor and store their vaccines to ensure you are receiving the highest quality of vaccine possible.





# HEALTHY SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

According to a 2011 study, 45 percent of Ontario high school students answered “no” when asked if their sexual health questions were answered by their school’s sex education curriculum. Revisions to Ontario’s Health and Physical Education curriculum in 2015 laid the groundwork for helping students make the best choices for their overall physical, mental and sexual health. Public Health supports the revamped curriculum and has been available to assist principals and teachers with its implementation.

## SEX EDUCATION IN SCHOOL

Although many parents are having conversations with their children about sex, over 85 percent agree that sexual health education should be provided in school. Public Health supports

sexual health education that is age appropriate and respectful of an individual’s right to make choices about their own sexual and reproductive health.



According to Statistics Canada’s Canadian Community Health Survey, 16 is the average age of first-time sexual intercourse. Consequently, it is important for the new high school Health and Physical Education curriculum to address the key issues facing this age group including condom use, teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, the impact of technology (cyberbullying), sexual assault and issues facing LGBTQ youth.

Public Health represents everyone in our diverse communities including those parents from cultural or faith groups who may have questions about the new curriculum. Any parent can call Public Health to discuss the curriculum with a sexual health nurse. Any high school student can attend a Public Health clinic to speak to a nurse about relationships, birth control, sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy, HIV testing and anything else of concern. More information is available at [wdgpublichealth.ca](http://wdgpublichealth.ca).





## GO GET TESTED

Public Health promotes and supports healthy sexuality at every age. With the rising rates of chlamydia and a growing concern about antibiotic-resistant gonorrhea, Public Health is encouraging people to “go get tested” for sexually transmitted infections. Testing is important for many reasons such as concern about possible symptoms, high-risk behaviour, starting a new relationship or as a safe general practice. Anyone can download a requisition form and take it to a participating LifeLabs location for testing. Targeting university and college students in particular, Public Health launched a “Go Get Tested” campaign in 2015.

Public Health provides confidential sexual health services. Anyone can make an appointment to talk about birth control, pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (including anonymous HIV testing) by calling 1-800-265-7293.

Testing for  
gonorrhea and  
chlamydia is free  
and easy.

- 1 Get the form  
from our website.
- 2 Go to a LifeLabs.
- 3 Pee in a cup.

[wdgpublichealth.ca](http://wdgpublichealth.ca)

# PESTS, PEOPLE & PETS

Animals and bugs are all around us – whether it's a much-loved family pet, wildlife you encounter on a camping trip or those pesky mosquitoes and ticks that join you in outdoor activities. Did you know, each year many Canadians are infected with an illness passed on by an animal or bug? In an effort to protect people, Public Health offers a number of surveillance and prevention programs.

## REDUCING THE MOSQUITO POPULATION

The existence of West Nile virus was confirmed within Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health's borders in 2001 and continues to be found within the region each year. Public Health works to reduce the mosquito population through a successful larviciding program that begins in May each year. Larviciding involves the application of environmentally friendly products that affect mosquito larvae living

in stagnant bodies of water including ditches, sewage lagoons, storm water retention ponds and wetlands. To help keep our neighbourhoods safe, Public Health also monitors the spread of the West Nile virus in the region and investigates complaints about standing water on private property.



## BRUSHING UP ON TICKS

The presence of ticks in Ontario is on the rise and so is the occurrence of Lyme disease.

Lyme disease is a serious illness transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected blacklegged tick (also known as a deer tick) most commonly found in wooded areas. In 2015, Public Health worked to raise awareness of how to identify ticks and prevent bites. Members of the community who think they have been bitten by a tick should contact their healthcare provider and, if possible, bring the tick to Public Health for identification.

# TICK ID

KNOW THEM, PREVENT THEM.

**Blacklegged Tick (Deer Tick)**  
Image source: URI TickEncounter Resource Center

**Enlarged View**

larva      nymph      adult male      adult female

(inches) 0    1/4"    1/2"    3/4"    1"    1 1/4"    1 1/2"

**Approx. Size**

nymph (1/32" - 1/16")      adult male (1/8")      engorged adult (up to 1/2")

**American Dog Tick (Wood Tick)**  
Image source: Maine Medical Center Research Institute

**Enlarged View**

adult male      adult female

## A RESURGENCE OF RACCOON RABIES



Raccoon rabies in Ontario was thought to be eradicated with no new cases reported in the province since 2005. However, in late 2015, more than 10 cases of raccoon rabies

were found in neighbouring areas including Hamilton and Haldimand County. Rabies is caused by a virus that attacks the nervous system of warm-blooded animals including humans, pets, farm animals and wildlife. There is no cure for rabies and once symptoms start the outcome is almost always fatal. Public Health gets involved when a person may have been exposed to the rabies virus and, when necessary, provides rabies vaccine to healthcare providers. All animal bites must be reported to Public Health for follow-up and surveillance.



Image: Rabies vaccine bait.

Credit: Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry

## CARING FOR PETS AND THEIR OWNERS

The bond between a person and their pet forms a powerful and trusting companionship. The most vulnerable members of our community, including those who are



homeless or living in low-income circumstances, are sometimes unable to properly care for their animal companions.

In 2015, Public Health partnered with Community Veterinary Outreach to offer free, referral-based clinics



to provide quality pet care for those who might not otherwise be able to afford it. While pets are being cared for, Public Health nurses are on hand to share how Public Health can support pet owners with their own healthcare including providing advice on nutrition, dental care, harm reduction and sexual health.

# DRINK & SMOKE

People drink and smoke for many reasons that are personal, social or both. In 2015, Public Health analyzed the effects of these habits in an effort to identify risks and reduce associated harms in the communities we serve.

## DECREASING ALCOHOL-RELATED BURDENS

Did you know that healthcare costs related to alcohol in Canada were estimated at \$14.6 billion in a report published in 2002? Alcohol is linked to many diseases including cancer, digestive diseases, low-birth weight, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, addiction and mental health issues.

In 2015, Public Health published a report that found that WDG residents reported drinking at a rate nine percent higher (81 percent) than the provincial average of 72 percent. Public Health also conducted a community survey which found that drinking and driving, alcohol-related violence and over-serving at bars, pubs and restaurants were seen as major issues in the community for WDG residents.

In response, Public Health developed an alcohol misuse prevention strategy with a vision of a community that is free from alcohol-related harm. This strategy will focus on local and provincial initiatives to help reduce alcohol-related harm including education, policy, skill building, community action and health services.

## If you choose to drink, know your limits:

### MEN

- 3 drinks/day
- 15/week
- 4 on a special occasion



### WOMEN

- 2 drinks/day
- 10/week
- 3 on a special occasion



Visit [wdgpublichealth.ca](http://wdgpublichealth.ca) for more low-risk drinking information.





# SMOKE

## HELPING RESIDENTS BREATHE EASY

Everyone should have the opportunity to breathe clean, smoke-free air, whether enjoying time outside, or in their homes. Second-hand smoke is harmful and increases the risk of lung cancer and heart disease, and it's the second leading cause of death in Canada. The *Smoke-Free Ontario Act* has reduced the risk of exposure for residents outdoors, but there still exists a gap for those living in multi-unit dwellings like apartment buildings and condos, especially for children and youth who are often involuntarily exposed.

Preventing tobacco smoke from seeping between apartment units and into hallways is practically impossible. Second-hand smoke can enter through windows, doorways, light fixtures, electrical outlets and shared ventilation systems. The only effective way to eliminate the health risks associated with second-hand smoke indoors is to ban smoking. Public Health provides support to tenants, landlords and housing providers wishing to create smoke-free housing policies.

Smoke-free housing policies are not about marginalizing smokers and do not cause eviction, prevent people who smoke from renting accommodation or force people to quit smoking. Rather, smoke-free housing policies are about providing clean, safe living spaces for all individuals.



*Illustration by Carey Sookocheff*

Do you live in an apartment or condo, **and are dealing with tobacco smoke entering your home?**

**Public Health can help.**

Call 1-800-265-7293 ext. 4664 or email [tobacco.enforcement@wdgpublichealth.ca](mailto:tobacco.enforcement@wdgpublichealth.ca)

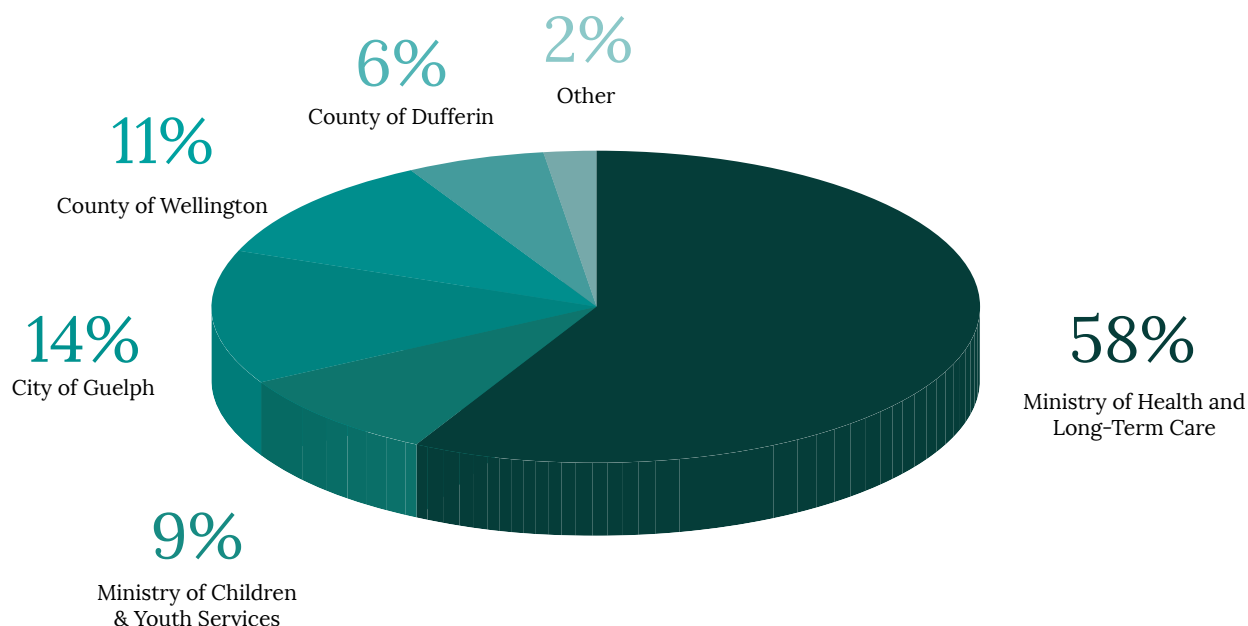
# PUBLIC HEALTH FUNDING

In 2015, the total operating budget for Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health was \$26,232,820.

Public Health receives funding from multiple sources:

- The Province of Ontario provides funding through the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. In 2015, the Province of Ontario provided funding for 67 percent of the total operating budget.
- The municipalities of Wellington, Dufferin and Guelph provide funding based on the population of each municipality relative to the total population of the region. Population numbers are determined by the most recent Census. In 2015, the County of Wellington contributed 11 percent of the total operating budget, the County of Dufferin contributed 6 percent and the City of Guelph contributed 14 percent.

As a publicly funded organization, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health reports under the accounting standards of the Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB). The financial statements are subject to an audit by an external audit firm as outlined in *The Municipal Act*. The full audited financial statements for the year can be found at [wdgpublichealth.ca](http://wdgpublichealth.ca).



1-800-265-7293  
[wdgpublichealth.ca](http://wdgpublichealth.ca)



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