

# Northern BC Healthy K to 12 Schools Newsletter

ISSUE 6 | SPRING 2024



Information for Northern BC schools,  
students, and families



**northern health**  
the northern way of caring

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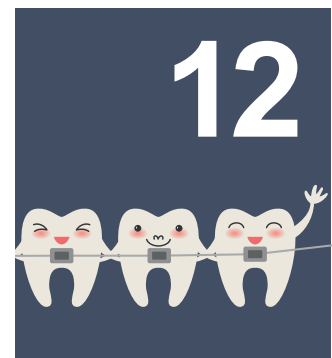
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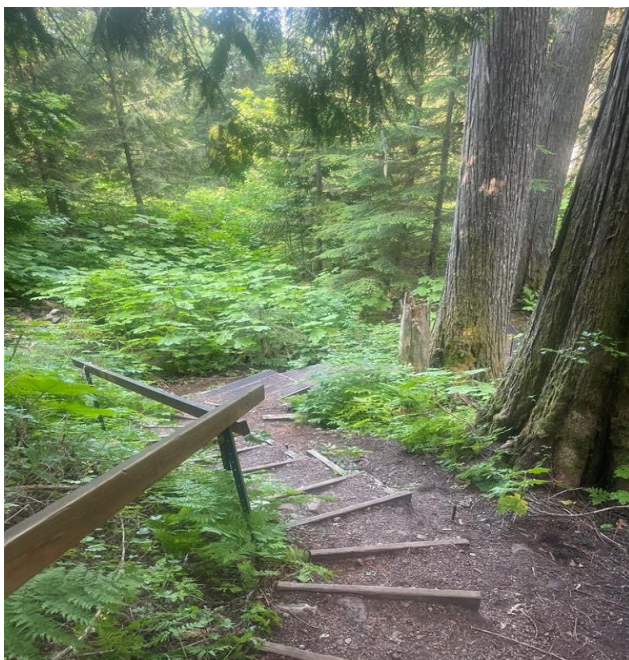
# FOR ALL SCHOOLS

## Using QR codes

In this newsletter, we use QR codes for various websites and resources. Here are steps to help you:



- **Step 1:** Open the Camera App from your mobile device (either on the home screen, control centre, or lock screen).
- **Step 2:** Hold your device so the QR code opens in the viewfinder and wait until you see a notification pop up with a link.
- **Step 3:** Click on the notification to open the link associated with the QR code.



Ancient Forest/Chun T'oh Whudujut Provincial Park, nestled in the traditional territory of the Lheidli T'enneh. Photo submitted by: Randi Leanne Parsons

## Territory acknowledgment

Northern Health acknowledges with gratitude that our work takes place on the territories of the Tlingit, Tahltan, Nisga'a, Gitksan, Tsimshian, Haisla, Haida, Wet'suwet'en, Carrier (Dakelh), Sekani (Tse'khene), Dane-zaa, Cree, Saulteau and Dene Peoples.

## People and partnership acknowledgment

We recognize the 11 Métis Chartered Communities, as well as the Inuit and Urban and Away from Home Indigenous peoples on these lands.

We are thankful for the continued opportunity to work in partnership to optimize the health and well-being of Indigenous peoples whom we serve.

## Commitment statement to Truth and Reconciliation

Northern Health (NH) acknowledges the harms experienced by Indigenous peoples accessing the health system. We are committed to new ways of being, through building healthy and trusting relationships with Indigenous communities, families, individuals, and employees. These commitments are interwoven throughout the strategic priorities and are integral to the success of Northern Health.



For more information on NH's commitments visit NH's [Strategic Plan](#).



## Assembly of First Nations' (AFN) digital education toolkit

The Assembly of First Nations has developed the It's Our Time First Nations Toolkit.

- It is the basis of a comprehensive strategy to reach out to First Nations students, teachers, schools, communities and the Canadian public at large.
- The AFN Toolkit consists of 22 learning modules that have been designed to enhance the understanding of important First Nations topics to ensure both students and teachers are learning in and out of the classroom.



To access the toolkits and for more information visit.  
[It's Our Time: The AFN Education Toolkit.](#)

## HealthElife patient portal

### Parents and caregivers can now sign children up for HealthElife!

Parents and caregivers of children aged 11 and younger can now sign up and request access to their child's HealthElife patient portal account. This gives the parent or caregiver direct access to the child's health record without requiring a proxy relationship between the adult and child.

Using HealthElife has benefits:

- Easy and secure access to your personal health information online.
- Faster lab results and medical imaging reports including x-ray and ultrasound.
- Conveniently view your upcoming hospital appointments.



Sign up for HealthElife today at: [northernhealth.ca/healthelife](https://northernhealth.ca/healthelife)

## HealthElife



Parents and caregivers can sign children aged 11 and younger up for HealthElife.





## Services to schools

Healthy schools help to protect the health and safety of our children and youth in the North. For an overview of the current Northern Health (NH) services that are available to schools, visit the [NH School and youth health](#) webpage.



At a glance, the types of services offered for families with school-age children and youth include:

- Communicable disease follow-up
- Environmental health, Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) inspect schools. The School Act gives authority to Medical Health Officers (MHOs) for inspections and MHOs delegate inspections to EHOs.
- Immunizations at Kindergarten entry (4-6 years of age), Grade 6, and Grade 9



If you or your family need to connect with a health care provider, connect with the [health unit](#) in your community.

**Note:** Some services may vary from community to community and school to school.



For more information on Population and Public Health supports review [Northern Health Supports for Schools 2023/2034](#).



### Health education and promotion content to support curriculum are available for:

- Legal substances
- Injury prevention
- Mental health and wellness
- Nutrition and healthy eating
- Physical activity
- Sexual and reproductive health
- Support for children with potentially life-threatening medical conditions
- Support for substance use, including access to harm reduction supplies

## Child and youth mental health & wellness

### Online resource library

[HealthyMindsBC](#) is a website from the BC Government Ministry of Health that provides evidenced-informed prevention and early intervention tools and resources.

The site is for BC parents, caregivers, families, educators and other professionals to help them support the “everyday” mental health of children and youth.



### Social and emotional development starts early

From recognizing emotions to just talking and hugging, small things make a big difference.

Feelings First is a campaign to introduce important ideas about Social and Emotional Development in the early years, to parents and caregivers across BC



Visit [Feelings First](#) to learn more.



## · F O U N D R Y ·

Foundry offers young people in BC ages 12-24 and their caregivers easy access to mental health & substance use counselling and peer support, primary care and employment services.

All services are free and confidential.

### Foundry centres in Northern BC:

- Prince George
- Terrace
- Burns Lake – Coming soon!
- Fort St. John – Coming soon!
- Vanderhoof – Coming soon!
- Quesnel – Coming soon!



### Don't have a Foundry centre in your community?

Access Foundry's provincial virtual services from anywhere in BC, 7 days a week.

Schedule appointments through the [Foundry BC app](#) on your [smartphone](#) or [computer device](#).



## Environmental health



### Cleaning and disinfecting for schools

Handwashing is the best defense against spreading infections. Encourage students to wash their hands after using the bathroom and before every snack and meal.

Visit the BC Center for Disease Control (BCCDC) webpage to learn more about how to perform [hand hygiene](#). Regular cleaning and disinfection can help prevent the spread of communicable diseases.



For more information on communicable disease prevention visit [Communicable Disease Prevention in K-12 Schools](#).



For more information about Environmental health visit [Environmental health | Northern Health](#).

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## Food and nutrition

### Eating and body image concerns

Are you noticing more students with eating and body concerns? Worried that a child may be struggling with disordered eating? Whether you are an educator or parent, these resources may help.



[National Eating Disorder Information Center \(NEDIC\)](#) offers workshops for educators and students on topics related to diet culture, body-based bullying, body image and disordered eating. They also have a helpline.



[How can we help prevent disordered eating among kids?](#) This article helps us challenge diet culture and offers strategies for helping kids develop a positive relationship with food and their bodies.



To learn more visit the NH [Relationship with food and body](#) (for schools) webpage or contact a Population Health Dietitian at: [PopHthNutrition@northernhealth.ca](mailto:PopHthNutrition@northernhealth.ca).

## Spring and summer safety advice



For safety information visit [Injury prevention](#) (NH).



### Fall prevention

Spring and summer are when people like to get out and enjoy the warmer weather.

Play is an essential part of a healthy childhood that sometimes leads to scrapes and bruises.



Falls can be common among children and youth as they climb, run, jump, and explore. It is important to encourage safe play and proper safety gear to prevent more serious injuries related to falls.

For more information on how to keep your child safe at home and at the playground, visit [HealthLinkBC Playground Safety](#).



### Road safety



#### Parents/guardians:

Help keep your child safe this spring/summer by teaching them about road safety. It's never too early to learn

to be street smart. For driving, cycling, scootering, skateboarding, and walking safety tips, visit [Road safety for your kids](#) (ICBC).



#### Teachers:

Check out ICBC's free learning resources to teach your students road safety skills and awareness. See [For educators](#) (ICBC) for access to learning plans from Preschool to Grade 10!



### Concussion awareness

A concussion can occur anywhere and can cause a variety of symptoms.



Any blow to the head, face, neck, or body that jars the head can cause a concussion. The Concussion Awareness Training Tool is an excellent resource for parents, youth, coaches, and educators to learn how to prevent, recognize, and manage a concussion.

Visit [CATT Online](#) to learn more.



## Physical activity



### Inclusion of students of all abilities

Physical and Health Education (PHE) Canada's **Inclusion of Students of All Abilities in School-Based Physical Activity Experiences** resources combine research and wise practices to support educators and school administrators with understanding and **addressing barriers** to physical activity participation for students with disabilities.

This suite of resources includes:

- A guidebook on the Inclusion of Students of All Abilities in School-Based Physical Activity Experiences.
- An instructional poster highlighting key concepts from Inclusion of Students of All Abilities in School-Based Physical Activity Experiences.
- A YouTube video detailing the Game Changers project.

For more information, visit [PHE Canada](#).



### 2024 GoByBike Weeks

**Mark your calendars for 2024 Spring and Fall GoByBike Weeks!**

These events are great opportunities to get students, teachers, and parents out on two wheels enjoying some fresh air and activity before and after school. GoByBikeBC has many tools available to help schools organize their teams and events.

- **Spring GoByBike Week:**  
June 3-9, 2024
- **Fall GoByBike Weeks:**  
September 23-October 6, 2024



For more information, visit [GoByBikeBC, Resources for Schools](#).



## Dental health



### Does my child need braces?

Crooked teeth can be hard to take care of and may lead to tooth decay or even tooth loss. Crooked teeth can even cause problems with eating or speaking.

Crooked teeth are usually caused by problems with the shape or size of the jaw or teeth.

Orthodontic treatment (also known as braces) can correct the way teeth and jaws line up.

Your Dentist will check your child's teeth for crowding and may suggest you visit an orthodontist.



For more information visit this website:  
[Malocclusion and Orthodontics.](#)

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## Provincial report Youth Development Instrument



Dr. Hasina Samji & CHART Research Lab are excited to share with you the [2022-2023 YDI Provincial Report!](#)

“This report is an opportunity to hear from young people about how we can work together across sectors like health and education and with youth directly to create environments in which young people can flourish,” says [Dr. Hasina Samji](#), an Assistant Professor at Simon Fraser University. “Whether it is more access to time outdoors or finding ways to bolster community belonging, there are a lot of concrete ways in which we can support youth mental health and well-being.”

Collaboration with teachers, principals, district administrators, and other school staff makes YDI delivery possible. YDI is now available to all school districts across the province.



If you are interested in bringing the YDI to your district, please feel free to review our [school administrators and staff page](#) and to reach out directly at [ydi@sfu.ca](mailto:ydi@sfu.ca) to register!



## Harm reduction

### Naloxone kits

Did you know that nearly 7 people die every day in BC from an opioid poisoning/overdose? Each death is devastating to families, friends, and communities. Naloxone quickly reverses the effects of opioids like morphine or fentanyl and saves lives, take home naloxone kits are for anyone who may need it for themselves, for friends, or others.



Photo submitted by: Gwen Herrington



Check out the [site finder](#) for a location to pick up one up, ask questions, and learn how to respond to an overdose. **It's completely anonymous. No questions asked!**



Nasal naloxone is available free for First Nations Health Authority clients at pharmacies. It only takes a few minutes to learn how to use the kit. Have a look at [Towards the Heart](#) for more information on the toxic drug crisis and get trained to recognize and respond to an opioid poisoning/overdose.

### First Nations Health Authority approach

Harm reduction meets people with open arms, acceptance, and compassion – not judgment or shame.



Stigma causes people to **hide and not seek help**. Learn more about [First Nations Health Authority's](#) approach to harm reduction and ending stigma.



### Kelty Mental Health Shared Services BC

It's common for youth to have many new experiences as they age, including trying substances like cannabis and alcohol. This doesn't mean they have a problem.

Even if it's hard, it's important to talk openly about substance use. Focus on facts and not fear.

Check out [Kelty Mental Health](#) for great information to support you and your child.



## FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS



### Sun safety

Did you know that exposure to ultraviolet radiation (UVR) during childhood is a key factor in developing skin cancer later in life? It's true, as little as one sunburn can increase risk of skin cancer.

Staying inside is not the answer, as learning and playing outdoors is essential to every child's learning and development. Teach kids SunSense to empower safe and enjoyable time outdoors.

SunSense is a national initiative developed by the Canadian Cancer Society that provides free tools and resources to schools, daycares, camps and parents to increase understanding of skin cancer risk, ultraviolet radiation and how to protect your skin.

Visit [sunsense.ca](https://sunsense.ca) to learn more about how to protect your skin this spring/summer.



### SunSense Challenge



#### Join the SunSense Challenge Month for Schools

During the month of May (Sun Awareness Month) we invite schools/classes to participate in the SunSense Challenge by educating staff, students and parents about sun safety.

- Register and implement educational activities throughout the month of May. A calendar of suggested activities will be provided as a guide.
- By registering you receive access to additional resources and can order materials such as UV bracelets, posters as postcards.
- Complete a brief report at the end of the Challenge to be eligible for a prize.



Visit [sunsense.ca](https://sunsense.ca) for more details and to register!

## Vision

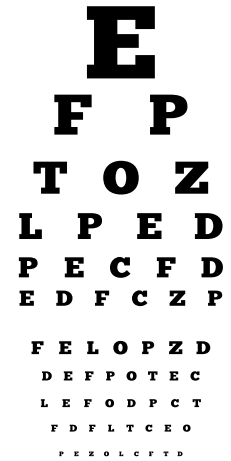
### Seeing clearly helps learning!

Did you know that 80% of a child's learning is based on vision. It's important for children to have regular eye exams.

[BCDoctors of Optometry](#) recommends yearly eye exams between ages two and 19 years. All children under 18 years who live in BC are eligible and MSP (Medical Services Plan) will help families cover all or a portion of the exam cost (depending on the clinic).



Read more about the EyeLearn Children's Vision program at [bc.doctorsofoptometry.ca](http://bc.doctorsofoptometry.ca).



**Can you tell which one contains cannabis?**



**Neither can a child. Store edibles safely.**



## High and locked

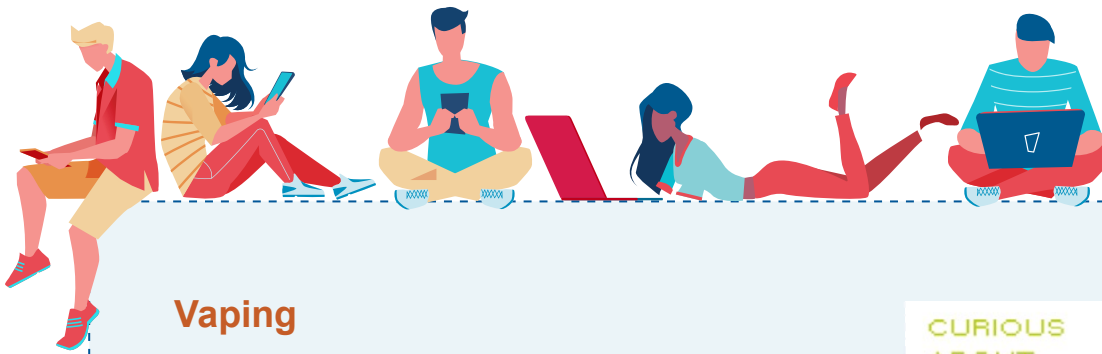
### Cannabis poisoning in children

Kids can't tell the difference between regular treats and cannabis edibles. Make sure to store edibles up high and locked and avoid eating them in front of children.

For more information visit [Cannabis Poisoning in Children](#).



# FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS



## Vaping

### QuitNow youth mini site

QuitNow launched a mini site for young people who vape and want to quit or cut down. The mini site offers information and interactive activities on the health risks of vaping, the benefits of quitting, and ways to cope with addiction and mental well-being.



For more information visit [QuitNow, Your Vape-Free Life.](#)

CURIOUS ABOUT QUITTING VAPING?

Explore a step-by-step guide on how to get started with QuitNow's new mini-site.

Addiction + Mental Health

Savings Tracker + Quizzes

Coping Skills

quitnow

Vaping can put you at risk for long-term nicotine addiction and dependence.

northern health  
the northern way of caring

## Tools for Schools

Teachers, educators, and youth groups are in a unique position to provide non-judgmental information to teens and their families about youth vaping.



Visit the [Tools for Schools](#) website for key health education resources including brochures, posters, presentations, and toolkits.



## Physical activity

### NH and UNBC youth physical activity project

Are you a northern BC youth OR program leader with experiences (good and not so good) and ideas related to youth physical activity opportunities in your area?

#### We want to hear from you!

NH and the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) are partnering on a community-based research project to develop a physical activity engagement strategy **with and for** youth living in Northern BC. Together, we will develop an action plan that centers youth voices and strategies to improve youth participation in physical activity in Northern BC.

**Northern youth (ages 12-24)**, youth physical activity champions, members of the community, education sector, and organizations offering physical activity programming are invited to:

1. Complete this [e-survey](#).



and

2. Let us know if you are interested in participating in an **in-person workshop** near you over the next 12 months (locations are to be decided).
  - Youth and community-based workshop participants will receive a \$75 honorarium.
  - To participate in a workshop or for more info, email [PhysicalActivity@UNBC.ca](mailto:PhysicalActivity@UNBC.ca).



Northern Health  
wishes you a  
safe and fun spring  
and summer.

## Previous issues



[Issue 3 - Fall 2022](#)



[Issue 4 - Spring 2023](#)



[Issue 5 - Fall 2023](#)

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## Important contact information

If you need to speak with a health care provider:

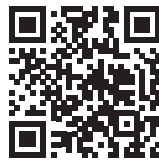
- Call your family doctor or nurse practitioner
- Connect with your local health unit
- Check out the [NH website](#) for more information



Here are some more options for you and your family:



Connect with the [First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day](#)



Call [HealthLinkBC](#) at 8-1-1



Contact the [Northern Health Virtual Clinic](#) at 1-844-645-7811



#HealthyNorth

[northernhealth.ca](#)

[HealthySchools@northernhealth.ca](mailto:HealthySchools@northernhealth.ca)

10-420-6168 (FF07915-IND-05/24)



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