



# DID YOU KNOW?

AN INFORMATION SHEET FOR ST. JOHN AMBULANCE MEMBERS

## HEALTHY LIVING

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**DID YOU KNOW** that many factors can affect our health from our family history to our social, physical and economic environment to our own individual coping skills?

Although we cannot control all factors, we can make personal life and self-care choices which reduce our health risks. Eating well, being active, feeling good about ourselves, all these elements work together to help us live a healthier more active lifestyle. Good health is determined by what we do.

**Physical activity** reduces stress, increases energy levels, helps maintain and achieve a healthy body weight – and it improves our outlook on life. Active living doesn't have to be hard to improve our health. Small changes can lead to big benefits, i.e. taking the stairs instead of an elevator, going for a walk at lunch, and playing a sport. With just 30 minutes of activity every day, we'll not only feel healthier – we'll actually be healthier.

**Healthy Eating** - Canadians are becoming more conscious of the health effects of the food we eat. Healthy Eating is easy! We don't have to give up the joys of delicious food. By choosing more vegetables and fruits, lower fat foods and a variety of choices from the four food groups we will feel more energetic and healthier too. Health Canada introduced new nutrition labeling regulations in January 2003 which help us understand the nutritional value of the food we eat.

**Safety and Injury** – Unintentional injuries in the home, at work and play are preventable and often times, predictable. As adults, we know that life is full of risks but we have the option of choosing to take smart risks, avoid injuries and enjoy life.

**Family violence** – Violence, which has an impact on our health and well-being, can be in the form of physical, verbal, emotional, and sexual abuse. It just doesn't happen to strangers - it happens in our families, in our neighborhood, among our friends and co-workers. **Alcohol and drug abuse** can also lead to serious health and social problems, including family violence. There are programs, support groups, and initiatives available for the prevention of drug and alcohol use and victims of abuse.

**Mental health** affects our daily lives. Our sense of personal well-being has a major impact on our physical health and communication with others. Help is available for treating and preventing severe mental illness and disorders through our community, health clinics, and our physician. Don't be afraid to ask for help - you do not have to go through this alone.

**Tobacco** – Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in Canada. An addiction, smoking affects more than 5 million Canadians and causes several health problems including cancer, respiratory and heart disease. Second hand smoke is just as detrimental to an individual as the smoker. To smoke or not to smoke is a choice we make. With the help of support groups and programs you too can quit.

Healthy living is about making healthy food and lifestyle choices daily to improve our overall health and sense of well-being.

**SEASON'S GREETING EVERYONE! Wishes for Health and Happiness in 2005.**

Additional information source: Canadian Health Network – Public Health Agency of Canada and Health Canada ([www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca)) and [www.canadian-health-network.ca](http://www.canadian-health-network.ca)). Programs and health resources are available through your personal physicians, clinics and community groups.