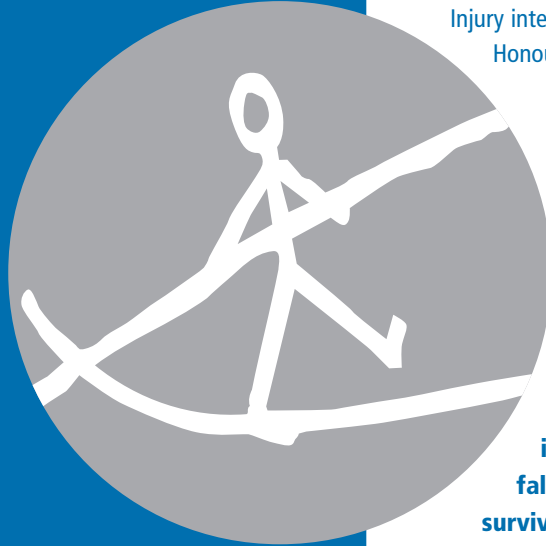


HEADS UP!

The official newsletter of SMARTRISK.



The Mission

SMARTRISK helps people see the risks in their everyday lives and shows them how to take those risks in the smartest way possible so that they can enjoy life to the fullest.

SMARTRISK



SAUVE-QUI-PENSE
preventing injury with smart thinking

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SMARTRISK Heroes: book now for fall

SMARTRISK Heroes will visit 33 communities in Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia before July. The fall 2008 and spring 2009 schedules are now being booked, with dates available in western Canada in the fall and in Ontario in fall and spring 2009. We are also recruiting injury survivors nationwide to join our team. For more information, e-mail smartriskheroes@smartrisk.ca or call 416-596-2703.

NATIONAL CURRICULUM

SMARTRISK takes over as national coordinator for Canada's first - and only - injury prevention curriculum

Many jobs have fairly clear career paths to success: attend journalism school to become a journalist or pursue business school to launch your career in business. For people wanting to specialize in preventing injury, the path hasn't been as clear cut: no injury prevention schools or curricula existed. That is, until 2004, after practitioners in different fields from across Canada came together to develop and launch the Canadian Injury Prevention Curriculum, available in both English and French.

The curriculum was built by Canadian injury prevention experts, whose organizations belonged to the Canadian Collaborating Centres for Injury Prevention (including SMARTRISK), using real-life examples and Canadian content. Provincial lead organizations have been responsible for delivering workshops in their own regions and training facilitators to deliver the program. In Ontario, the curriculum is offered by the Ontario Injury Prevention Resource Centre, located at SMARTRISK. At least 15 sessions of the first edition of the workshop have been offered to Ontario practitioners.

Why is a national curriculum for injury important? Well, just as we expect people in other professions to have some standardized training, so we can trust they have a minimal common language and understanding of their field, this curriculum allows practitioners in injury prevention to have standardized training. By this spring, close to 1,000 people across Canada had taken the curriculum in its 2-3 day format. Some have begun studying the curriculum in weekly lecture sessions, in

university nursing programs, for example.

The curriculum provides practitioners with an understanding of the theory and practice of injury prevention, including the tools needed to develop and implement effective programs. Participants are able to network with each other and work on group projects. Taking a population health approach, topics covered include:

- an introduction to injury prevention
- the impact and classification of injuries
- defining the problem
- identifying risk and protective factors
- selecting an intervention, and
- implementing and evaluating the program

The new curriculum was carefully evaluated from the start to ensure it was meeting its goals. It has since been revised, with the revised curriculum pilot tested in Ontario, Alberta and B.C. The second edition is nearly complete.

Meanwhile, SMARTRISK is pleased to take over national coordination of the curriculum from the Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research. SMARTRISK will now be responsible for the overall direction of the curriculum, administering it across Canada, revising content, continuing to organize Ontario workshops and updating and maintaining the website. SMARTRISK looks forward to working with the provincial stakeholders and coordinating the efforts of the CCCIP.

A PROFILE

Kevin McKenna was just 16 when he learned the hard way that being complacent about the everyday risks we take can get us into trouble. Kevin wasn't what you might call a reckless teenager. He loved the outdoors and hanging out with friends – snowmobiling, skateboarding, fishing, riding dirt bikes and ATVs, partying. Living in Brantford, Ont., with a cottage north of the city, he had lots of opportunities to play. But he and his friends took care to wear the gear, for example, when they were going on long trail rides or doing jumps on their dirt bikes.



Yet when Kevin was just fooling around on or near his own property, he didn't see the risk of anything much happening. At 16, Kevin was about to enter Grade 12. Not yet sure of a career path, he was determined to knuckle down and pull up his grades. It was during the final long weekend of the summer when the cottagers in his area had gotten together as usual for their farewell corn roast that Kevin and his friend decided to go for a short ride on a friend's ATV. Built for a single rider, the two teens climbed onto the ATV together, planning on a short ride up and down the logging road. They didn't have their helmets with them, they had had a couple of beers and the sky was darkening. On the way down, they

hit what was known to be a bad corner. Going too fast to make the curve, they hit a large washout at the bottom, flew into the ditch, hit a rock and the ATV flipped. Kevin remembers only flashes of the incident and the following days, when he was transported to Sunnybrook Hospital in Toronto with two collapsed lungs, broken ribs and collarbone, a fractured neck and broken back. He spent long weeks in hospital and months in rehabilitation. Kevin is now paralyzed from the chest down.

After a few fruitless attempts to return to high school, where he realized he now had little in common with fellow students, Kevin eventually achieved his diploma and went on to college to study public safety communications. He relocated to North Bay for four years, working as an Ontario Provincial Police dispatcher, recently moving back to Brantford. Married and working for the OPP, he's back to using ATVs and snowmobiles, fishing "every chance I can get" and playing sledge hockey. But he talks of the aimless years after his injury when he wasn't sure what to do. "I lost my drive a little bit. I was trying to figure out my life as a paraplegic."

Kevin talks now of the complacency he used to feel over the risks he took and how he wants to give something back, in return for the help he got after his injury. He appears on a poster promoting ATV safety and is training to be a SMARTRISK Heroes injury survivor presenter. "I want to make people aware as much as I can that these things can happen to you." Kevin doesn't want to make young people fearful of risks but aware of what can happen and how they can take smart risks to prevent injury. "Going through what I've gone through, I wouldn't wish that on anybody."

RISK RADAR

SPRINGTIME IN THE GARDEN:

How to stay injury free while developing that green thumb.

Now spring has arrived, Canadians are spending more time outside enjoying the warmer weather and longer days. Research suggests that gardening is the second most popular active living activity among Canadian adults. Each year, about 95 Canadians are hospitalized with lawn mower injuries such as amputations or severe cuts, according to the Canadian Institute for Health Information. More than 800 are treated in Ontario emergency rooms alone for lawn mower injuries.

MANAGING THE RISKS

Because it's a regular chore for homeowners, many Canadians don't think twice about the risks of mowing their lawns or gardening. Working around the yard offers many benefits, including exercise, stress reduction, relaxation and environmental enhancement. While

the benefits far outweigh the risks, here are tips to keep you injury-free while developing a green thumb:

Wear the Gear

- Wear close-fitting clothing, goggles, and non-slip steel-toed boots when operating machinery (e.g., mowers, trimmers and chainsaws). Ear protection is also recommended, but using it means you'll need to be extra alert for children or pets in the vicinity. Remove any items that could get caught in moving parts, such as loose jewelry. Tie back long hair.
- Wear gloves to protect your hands from sharp objects and debris when handling dirt, trees, shrubs, flowers and weeds.
- Get down closer to the task. Make use of kneepads or a padded kneeling stool for work at ground level rather than repeatedly bending over for

gardening and pulling weeds.

- Protect yourself from overexposure to the sun by wearing a hat and applying sunscreen to exposed skin.
- **Look first**
 - Make sure equipment is in good working condition before using it. Use all safety devices, switches and guards as directed, and ensure they are working properly. Avoid using electrical equipment in wet weather or when the electrical equipment is damaged (e.g., frayed cord).
 - Check for rocks, debris, and other sharp objects. Remove tripping hazards (e.g., loose bricks or stone) and put away equipment as soon as you are done with it.
 - When operating machinery, make sure that people (especially children) and pets stay well back.

SPONSOR NEWS

SMARTRISK is pleased to announce new funding to support our No Regrets peer leadership program from Health Canada through the Public Health Agency of Canada and from RBC Foundation.

Health Canada is one of SMARTRISK No Regrets' original funders and has extended support into the 2008-2009 school year. We also welcome RBC Foundation's participation in SMARTRISK No Regrets. Almost 50,000 high school students across Canada are now hosting hundreds of fun,

interactive injury prevention events in their schools each year, with the generous support of our funders.

We also extend our thanks to Transport Canada, who committed to funding up to 10 SMARTRISK Heroes shows in rail communities across Ontario. SMARTRISK and Transport Canada have a history of working together through the Direction 2006 program that brought SMARTRISK Heroes to thousands of students in key rail areas. SMARTRISK is pleased to continue this partnership.

JOIN SMARTRISK FOR A ROUND OF GOLF

The 14th annual SMARTRISK Golf Tournament will be held June 24 at the Glencairn Golf Club for the first time, a picturesque course designed by renowned golf course architect Thomas McBroom.

The tournament has been sponsored by Royal & SunAlliance for 14 years

running, offering a great day of golf, a fine banquet dinner and prizes for every player, along with the opportunity to help SMARTRISK further its work helping Canadians learn to take smart risks.

See www.smartrisk.ca for registration information.

Children often assume it's safe to stand or sit behind you. Look behind before backing up.

- Design a garden that does not require a lot of maintenance and lifting.
- Store all equipment, tools, chemicals, seeds and bulbs out of sight and reach of children and keep a close watch on kids when they are in the garden.

Get Trained

- Read, understand and follow manufacturer's instructions before using any equipment.
- Teach children equipment can be dangerous and ensure they stay at a distance while in use.
- Learn which plants are poisonous to ensure children and pets stay away from them. Better yet, avoid planting these.
- If you need help to tackle a job, enlist family members, take frequent breaks, spread the

job across several days, or hire professional help.

- Use your legs, not your back, for lifting. Use a dolly or wheelbarrow to transport heavy loads. Ask for help if needed.

Drive sober

- Be sober when using equipment. Alcohol and other substances that impair your judgment can slow your reflexes and result in poor decision-making.
- Operate machinery when you are alert and focused. Pace yourself and plan ahead. Know your limits and take frequent breaks, especially in the heat.

For more information, visit the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety: www.ccohs.ca; Health Canada's garden safety fact sheet: www.hc-sc.gc.ca/iyh-vsv/life-vie/garden-jardin_e.html; and the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research at www.cflri.ca.

An Opinion: Dr. Conn's Point of View



Very early on in medical school you learn the importance of lists – it's the only way that you can assemble and remember all of the information required to be a good doctor. In 1988 when I had the opportunity to head to the USA, a career in preventing injury wasn't on any of my lists and in fact, was the furthest thing from my mind. I had just arrived in the southern United States to begin fellowship training with the 'father' of cardiac surgery in North America. Little did I know that before I would be allowed to learn how to perform a heart transplant, I would have to earn my stripes by spending time harvesting donor hearts from brain dead young people. Those experiences, combined with research that more youth in Canada were dying from injury than all other causes of death combined, became the seeds for the creation of SMARTRISK and in 1991 I put down the scalpel for the last time to devote my energy to keeping people from being seriously hurt and killed.

The first task I set for myself was to create a list of the 10 things that needed to be done to create a successful organization. Number two on this list was to have a plan for my departure. And so, 17 years later and about five years behind the initial schedule, I find myself preparing to depart from my role as President and CEO of SMARTRISK, confident that I am leaving this thriving organization in great shape for the incoming CEO.

There is one question that I have been asked more than any other since founding SMARTRISK: "Do you miss practising medicine?" It is such a loaded question because I have always felt that I have continued to practise medicine – but on a much larger scale. Rather than treating one patient at a time, I've been part of an incredible team of employees, volunteers and funders, who have reached thousands of young people every week with life saving information and training. And yet, unlike traditional medicine, the challenge has been finding the resources required to have the impact I've always known we could have. We have solid research and evidence that demonstrates that the unique way that we reach young people with our positive messaging and peer leadership works. I am grateful that we have had the loyal support of a dedicated group of corporations and individuals who have understood what we are trying to do and have agreed that spending \$6.70 per teenager to keep them from being hurt is worth the price!

Ninety-eight percent of parents tell us that the thing they dread losing the most is a child and we are about to give them an opportunity to help us make sure that their family doesn't become a statistic. We intend to provide ways for all Canadians to get behind what we are doing and to support our ambitious fundraising targets. SMARTRISK is well positioned to reach our ambitious goal of reaching every young person in Canada with our life-saving messages. We have a well-trained, professional, committed staff, a superb Board of Directors, clear evidence that what we do works, and a strong business and operational plan.

Everything has fallen into place for me to finally realize the second item on my original list and to move on and let someone else take the reins of this very capable organization. It has been a distinct pleasure working with all of you and I look forward with anticipation to watching SMARTRISK grow and thrive.

Robert Conn, President and CEO

Injury Interpreter



Don't just read about injury statistics.

Learn from them. Here's a roundup of recent and relevant injury news and research, from trends to statistics, fads to hard facts.

Practice helps, won't make perfect

Much research is available on the effects of cellphones on driving. But a new study out of the University of Calgary investigates how young people manage manipulating an iPod while in a driving simulator and whether they get any better with practice.

The verdict? The 18-22-year-olds did improve over their six experimental sessions. But their driving was still noticeably impaired when they were doing the more challenging iPod tasks, including finding a specific song in the song titles menu. The researchers note that many vehicle manufacturers are integrating iPods into vehicles. They suggest the manufacturers and Apple should lock out the more challenging features of the

music players while the vehicle is in motion, before legislation is required.

Source: Chisholm, S.L. et al., "The effects of practice with MP3 players on driving performance," *Accident Analysis and Prevention* 2008; 10:704-713

Wheeled shoe injuries reported by CHIRPP

They look like regular running shoes to the casual bystander – until the child wearing them suddenly takes off, rolling down the floor or pavement, powered by the wheels in the sole of the shoe (commonly known by the brand name, Heelys).

These shoes were introduced several years ago – and now the Canadian Hospital Injury Reporting and Prevention Program has injury numbers showing that 131 children over four years were seen in the 14

hospitals CHIRPP collects data for. The children hurt were mostly 5-14 years old and 58% were female. All were hurt after falling and most fractured wrists and arms.

Source: "Injuries associated with wheeled shoes" CHIRPP Injury Brief at <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca>

How to prevent spinal cord diving injuries

An in-depth telephone survey of people who suffered spinal cord injuries from diving in Quebec between 1961-2004 found only 37% said they were aware of the risk of spinal cord injuries from diving, before they were hurt.

Half those injured dove into swimming pools, with 63% hurt after striking the up-slope between deep and shallow ends. A dock or wharf was the most typical natural site for injury. Signs prohibiting diving were absent in most places.

The researchers say the target for prevention is male youths and young adults. Above-ground pools are too shallow for diving, they say. Prevention should educate potential victims and pool vendors and water safety efforts should

highlight diving as a high-risk activity. Safer pool designs and better warnings are needed.

Source: Barsz, P et al., "Risk factors and prevention for spinal cord injury from diving in swimming pools and natural sites in Quebec, Canada: A 44-year study," *Accident Analysis and Prevention* 2008;40:787-797.

Fewer children suffer from burns in Canada

Injury prevention advocates can take comfort – and some credit – in this story: a report of 10 years of Canadian hospital in-patient child burn injuries finds "a clear reduction in the number of patients with burn injury requiring hospital admission." Burns can be devastating, whether due to flames or scalding, often requiring years of skin graft operations and leaving terrible scars. Injuries declined by about 4.7% per year between 1994 and 2003 and may be partly due to such campaigns as those for smoke alarms and reduced hot water temperatures. Source: Spinks, A. et al., "Ten-Year Epidemiological Study of Pediatric Burns in Canada," *Journal of Burn Care & Research*, 2008; 29.

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