

# SCHOOL HEALTH E-NEWSLETTER

Te Kura Hauora Rorohiko Panui

Term 4 2018

Regional Public Health's Child Health Cluster

Hutt Valley, Wellington, Porirua and Wairarapa regions. Please forward to all school staff.

Regional Public Health

HAUORA Ā IWI KI TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI  
Better health for the greater Wellington region

*Our aim is to support students with their health and improve their learning outcomes.*

We will inform you of 'hot health topics' and how to recognise evidence versus sensationalism!

## > Teachers' Asthma Toolkit

Spring is often a time when symptoms of hayfever and asthma increase. This is a good time for schools to look at who has medication for asthma and hayfever and whether there are clear instructions and action plans about how and when to use medications. On World Asthma Day 2018, the Asthma and Respiratory Foundation NZ launched the Teachers' Asthma Toolkit and was developed for teachers to have all the important information about asthma in one place.

The Teachers' Asthma Toolkit is a free online tool that covers information about asthma, how asthma affects

education, how asthma is treated, common triggers and what to do in an asthma emergency. The toolbox is interactive, featuring video clips, animations, classroom resources and child friendly activities.

One in seven kiwi children living with asthma, and an estimated 586,000 school days are lost each year due to the condition and its symptoms.

Access the Teachers' Asthma Toolkit [HERE](#).

Contact your Public Health Nurse for further information about asthma management.

## > Anxiety

Anxiety is a normal human emotion and part of our fight and flight response to keep us safe. However some people find themselves worrying or feeling anxious so often that it interferes with normal daily life. Increasingly we are seeing anxiety as a big issue in our children and in schools.

This article will give a brief guide to what anxiety is, looking at signs and symptoms, a few tips to help at home and school and a list of resources and contact numbers that might help.

### Common signs and symptoms of anxiety

Anxiety is ongoing, rather than just feeling stressed out for a short time.

**Emotions:** Upset, worried, irritable, unable to relax, difficulty concentrating.

**Physical:** Feeling sick, shaky/ dizzy, increased heart rate, short of breath, tired, sweaty hands, sleeplessness, Abdominal pains, eating too much/ not enough.

**Behaviour:** Lose your sense of humor, unable to make decisions, need to perform rituals to try and relieve worries.

**Thoughts:** Feelings of doom, paranoia (People are looking at me), fear of failure, feelings of losing control.

There are different types of anxiety: generalized, social anxiety, phobias, and panic disorder.

Note: Anxiety can lead to a low mood and depression.

### How can parents and schools help?

By Building Resilient Children: Being resilient is about how we deal with difficult situations and bouncing back after tough times.

- Teach kids to slow down and breathe deeply. (focusing on breathing can calm us and help us choose the next step)
- Teach our kids to ask for help.
- Talk about having a safe adult or friend to talk to.
- Take their mind off whatever is making them anxious.

For example, do something fun, make something, help someone else, be active (go for a walk, climb a tree).

- Helping children express sad or upsetting feelings and helping them find age appropriate solutions.
- Encouraging and allowing independence and success.
- Teaching healthy life styles that include a good diet, plenty of water, exercise and sleep.

### Places to find help:

- Your GP or doctor
- [www.thelowdown.nz](http://www.thelowdown.nz)
- [Depression.org.nz](http://Depression.org.nz)
- 0800 What's Up (24/7 help line for kids and teens) Banardos
- 1737 – Need to Talk, [1737.org.nz](http://1737.org.nz) (Ring, txt or email)

## > Scooter & Skateboard Safety

With summer coming, it's good to get active outside. Kick scooters and skateboards provide children with a valuable form of exercise and transport. Learning to ride a skateboard or scooter can be an important part of play, risk taking and development.

The rise in popularity of, and subsequent exposure to, skateboarding and scooting has been coupled with a marked increase in skateboard and scooter related injury.

Be Safe2Scoot: Wearing a helmet on your scooter and skateboard can stop your brain from getting badly hurt if you fall off. So follow the 2-4-1 steps on how to wear your helmet correctly.

Learn the helmet 2-4-1 rule

- **2:** The helmet should be no more than two fingers above your eyebrow.

- **4:** Adjust the straps under your ears. They should form two 'Vs'.
- **1:** No more than one finger should fit over the chin strap.

Be safe on scooters and skateboards

- Wear correctly fitting helmets that meet an approved safety standard
- Ride on the footpath, and watch out for sneaky driveways
- Give way to pedestrians
- Cross roads safely on foot, at pedestrian crossings
- Wear elbow and knee pads when scootering, and add wrist guards when skateboarding

For information about how to recognize head injury and what to do when you suspect a head injury click [HERE](#).

## > Helping children sleep better

### Why sleep is important

Sleep is important for restoring energy and helping children grow and develop. More and more evidence suggests that not enough or poor quality sleep can have a negative effect on a child's behaviour, learning, health, wellbeing and weight.

### How much sleep does your child need?

The table below shows the recommended total hours of sleep per day for children and young people. Some children naturally sleep slightly less or more than these recommended hours.

| Age                        | Recommended sleep per day |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| School age (5-13 years)    | 9-11 hours                |
| Teenagers (14-17 years)    | 8-10 hours                |
| Young adults (18-25 years) | 7-9 hours                 |

Adapted from the National Sleep Foundation: [How much sleep do we really need?](#)

It is not just the amount of sleep that is important but also the quality of that sleep. The tips below may be helpful.

## > Ways to improve your child's sleep

### Bedtime routine

- Have a regular bedtime routine: this might include your child having a shower, brushing their teeth, then going to bed. Quiet activities, like reading, are good before bed.
- Have a regular bedtime and wake up time. This will help your child understand when it is time to sleep.
- If your child is going to bed too late, gradually change this by having them go to bed 30 minutes earlier and get up 30 minutes earlier.
- Avoid active games, playing outside, and screen use (eg, TV, internet, computer games, etc) in the hour before bedtime. Try dimming the lights earlier.

### Sleeping environment

- Arrange a comfortable sleeping environment for your child. The place where they sleep should be quiet, warm and dark (although a night light is OK).
- Don't have any distractions within sight or hearing of the area where children sleep, including TV or any kind of computer screen.

### Food

- Avoid having your child eat a meal within 1 or 2 hours of going to sleep. However, a light snack or a milky drink may help some children.

- Avoid giving your child food and any drinks that contain caffeine (especially in the afternoon/evening) as this can affect their sleep.

### Keeping active

- It is important for children to be active throughout the day. Activity can also help your child sleep. Time spent in bright sunlight, such as being active outside, can also help children to sleep, but don't forget to be SunSmart!

### Things that might affect your child's sleep

- Illness can affect your child's sleep. If your child snores a lot or stops breathing for short periods while asleep, discuss this with your GP.
- Irregular or insufficient sleep can be a symptom of depression. Discuss this with your GP.

The [Australian Sleep Health Foundation](#) has a range of factsheets on sleep health, including behavioural sleep problems in school-aged children, teenage sleep, understanding and helping poor sleep, and technology and sleep.

These tips were adapted from the Australian Sleep Health Foundation: [Sleep Tips for Children](#)



# SLEEP

WAYS TO PROMOTE SLEEP

- Regular sleep time
- Have a regular bedtime routine – shower/ read a book
- NO screen time 1 hour before bed
- Be active during the day but avoid active games in the hour before bedtime
- Avoid food and drink containing caffeine
- Avoid large meals within 1-2 hours of going to sleep

WHAT HAPPENS IF WE DON'T GET ENOUGH SLEEP

- Tired and lethargic
- Poor memory and difficulty focusing
- Morning headaches
- Moody, anxious and irritable

WHY WE NEED SLEEP

- Strengthen your immune system
- Repair damaged cells
- Promote growth
- Keep your heart healthy
- Sorting and storing memory
- Improve concentration and ability to learn

How much sleep do you need?

|                          |                                    |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Children aged 3–5 years  | 10–13 hours a day (including naps) |
| Children aged 5–13 years | 9–11 hours a day                   |
| Teens aged 14–17 years   | 8–10 hours a day                   |



## > Water-only schools

To help schools that have just started on their water-only journey, or who are wanting to embark on this journey, Regional Public Health, Healthy Families Lower Hutt, Healthy Futures, Bee Healthy Regional Dental Service, Ministry of Education and the Heart Foundation developed a [Water-Only School Toolkit](#).

The toolkit along with a range of resources and communication tools are available on the Regional Public Health [WEBSITE](#). Here, you can also find a link for contact details of organisations available to help your school with their journey to become water-only.

Click [HERE](#) to see Wellington Branch of the New Zealand Dental Association doing their bit.

Register your school to receive your Certificate of Achievement [HERE](#).

## > Dental Care

A water-only school policy and reducing access to sweetened drinks and foods is a great way to improve dental health.

This infographic poster shows the amount of sugar in drinks commonly consumed by school-aged children.

The Bee Healthy Regional Dental Service has some tips about keeping your smile. Click [HERE](#) to download.



Schools infographic: How Much Sugar Do You Drink?

## > Sun Protection Alert

**Did you know?** Around 80% of UV radiation can still get through on a cloudy day. The Sun Protection Alert tells you the time each day that you need to protect your skin and eyes.

<https://www.sunsmart.org.nz/sun-protection-alert>

Did you know? Glass reduces UV radiation but does not block it. If you spend long periods in a car or next to a window receiving direct sunlight you should be sunsmart. So slip, slop, slap and wrap. Protect your skin and eyes from the sun's damaging rays (UV radiation).

For more Mythbusters about sun safety go to <https://www.sunsmart.org.nz/be-sunsmart/mythbusters>

We encourage you to continue sharing this newsletter with as many people at your school as possible.