

CANADA'S

# Physical Activity Guide

to Healthy Active Living

ISSUE 1, MARCH 1998

## Welcome to the first issue of *Launch News!*

*Launch News* will be produced several times over the course of the development and launch of *Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living* to help keep you up-to-date. We aim to give you the latest news about the Guide's progress, and an opportunity to come forward with your questions regarding the Guide and its launch. If you have any comments regarding *Launch News*, please contact Randy Adams, Health Canada, by e-mail (Randy\_Adams@hc-sc.gc.ca) or fax (613-941-6666).

**Please circulate this newsletter.**

## Guide On Schedule

The final touches are being put on *Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living*. The Guide is a result of a partnership between Health Canada (HC) and the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (CSEP). To date, the text for the Guide has been approved and the graphic design is in its final stages.

The goal of the *Guide* is to provide guidelines for Canadians on how to achieve health benefits by being physically active.

The *Guide* is set for a spring launch and will be followed by the reinforcement of key messages at the community level over the summer months through a number of communications activities, including Summer Active '98.

National and regional launch events are being planned so that we can achieve the broadest possible promotion. These events will provide a forum for communicating key messages found in the *Guide* and building demand for the product itself.

Several initiatives are planned to help build momentum in the coming months prior to the launch. For example, a media relations campaign will precede the launch to set the stage for the unveiling of the *Guide*.

The first media hit — a national news conference — was held January 21 and focused on the research conducted by the



A news conference was held on January 21 to heighten awareness of physical inactivity as a serious health risk. Participating in the news conference were, from left to right: Dr. Nick Busing, President of the College of Family Physicians of Canada; Dr. Norman Gionet, Chairman of the Board of Directors, CFLRI; Ms. Cora Craig, President of the CFLRI; and Ms. Joyce Gordon, Executive Director of the Osteoporosis Society of Canada.

Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute (CFLRI) and published in the *1997 Physical Activity Benchmarks* report.

The conference presented the health impact of physical activity and highlighted the cost of inactivity to individual health and quality of life, as well as to Canada's health-care system. →

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The conference was hosted by the following respected third-party health organizations who are concerned about the low levels of physical activity among Canadians: the CFLRI; the College of Family Physicians of Canada; and the Osteoporosis Society of Canada.

The remaining pre-launch media hits are scheduled for implementation in February and March.

To date, development of the *Guide* has been a collaborative effort with the involvement, support and commitment of a broad cross-section of governments, national and provincial agencies and other stakeholders, all of whom share an interest in advancing healthy physical activity for Canadians.

## Guide Communications Strategy in Place

A comprehensive communications strategy is now in place to provide a framework for the planning and effective implementation of communications activities before, during and after the *Guide's* launch.

The Fitness and Active Living Unit of Health Canada contracted the services of an award-winning public relations firm to help develop the strategy.

The strategy is broken down into communications objectives and activities for three phases: Pre-Launch; Launch; and Post-Launch. The communications objectives for the current Pre-Launch Phase are:

- to generate anticipation for the launch of the *Guide*; and
- to build awareness of the health issues and health-care costs associated with physical inactivity.

The strategy includes the development of key tools to help organizations who, it is anticipated, will play a role in promoting and distributing the *Guide*.

## Some Key People in the Guide's Development

The *Guide* Steering Committee is made up of the following seven people who are responsible for overseeing the development of the *Guide*:

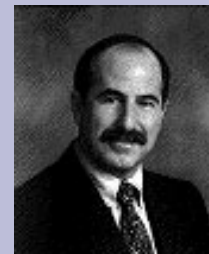
- Co-Chair Randy Adams, Fitness and Active Living Unit, Health Canada;
- Co-Chair Angelo Belcastro, Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (CSEP);
- Cora Craig, Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute (CFLRI);
- Joyce Gordon, Active Living Coalition for Older Adults;
- Bill Hearst, CSEP;
- Marj Keast, Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council; and
- Roger Passmore, Active Living Canada.

The following academic advisors have also played an important role:

- Dr. Claude Bouchard, Université Laval;
- Dr. Larry Brawley, University of Waterloo;
- Dr. Lise Gauvin, Concordia University; and
- Dr. Roy Shephard, University of Toronto.



Randy Adams, B.Sc., MBA,  
Co-Chair, Guide Steering Committee  
Fitness and Active Living Unit,  
Health Canada



Angelo Belcastro, Ph.D.,  
Co-Chair, Guide Steering Committee  
Canadian Society for Exercise  
Physiology



Graphic Designer  
Liz Wong is  
working on the  
final artwork for  
Canada's *Physical  
Activity Guide  
to Healthy Active  
Living*.

# Communications Tool Kit in the Works

In consultation with CSEP, Health Canada is preparing a communications “tool kit” for organizations to help promote and distribute the *Guide* that includes the following elements:

## “Launch News” Newsletter

To bring you the latest updates on the progress of the *Guide* project, *Launch News* will be published several times in the months leading up to the spring launch event.

## Feature Articles

Health Canada is preparing a series of feature articles suitable for use in newsletters and on Web sites as a way of getting the word out about the pending launch of the *Guide*.

The articles will cover the following themes: the release of the Physical Activity Benchmarks report from the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute; the development and launch of the *Guide*; the effects of inactivity on children and on older adults; as well as the impact of physical activity on the bottom line; and supportive physical and social environments for physical activity.

## A Partners’ Communications and Promotion Manual

This manual will help partners undertake their own communications initiatives and include sample news releases, fact sheets, and feature articles for inclusion in newsletters or bulletins. The manual would also contain case studies highlighting step-by-step successful communications activities.

Ultimately, the manual aims to help organizations identify opportunities for participating in *Guide* communications. The manual is scheduled for distribution around the same time as the launch of the *Guide* itself.

## A Video

This 10 minute video will help those who work at the community level — such as health-care providers, recreation coordinators, fitness practitioners, employers and educators — to promote, use and distribute the *Guide* in their organizations and communities.

## A Promotional Poster

The poster will raise awareness about the *Guide* and feature its 1-800 number and Web site address.

# Just Ask Us!

Have a question about the production and launch of the *Guide* but can’t seem to find the answer? Just ask us! Send your questions or comments to “Just ask Us” by e-mail (Randy\_Adams@hc-sc.gc.ca) or fax (613-941-6666) and we’ll publish a selection of answers in the next issue of *Launch News*.

Speak up and speak out — your colleagues are listening. Here are a few examples to get you started:

## 1 How will the Physical Activity Guide help Canadians?

*Canada’s Physical Activity Guide* will provide Canadians with simple guidelines on how to achieve health benefits by being physically active. The *Guide* will reinforce the importance of active living — a way of life in which physical activity is valued and integrated into daily living — and clarify the health benefits of being active (as well as the risks of being inactive). It will be particularly targeted to help the inactive take the first steps towards making physical activity an important and enjoyable part of daily life.

## 2 What has been the process for developing the Guide?

Health Canada and the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology have developed the *Guide* in consultation with the provinces and territories, as well as many non-governmental agencies. Research indicated that Canadians were confused and that they wanted a valid, practical *Guide* similar to Canada’s Food Guide for Healthy Eating.

A *Guide* Steering Committee has been overseeing the development of the *Guide* to ensure that it is simple, relevant and readily available to Canadians. The content has been tested to ensure that it meets the needs of Canadians.

In addition, an Expert Scientific Review Process was carried out by a group of internationally-recognized Canadian researchers.



Prototypes were also evaluated through a national concept-testing phase, which included more than 20 focus groups across the country with citizens, health and fitness practitioners, and a survey of more than 150 public, voluntary and professional stakeholder organizations.

This type of consultative development took time, but it also ensures that the right tool reaches Canadians.

### 3 There has been a lot of information available to Canadians on the relationship between physical activity and health for over 20 years. How will the Guide encourage "couch potatoes" to change their behavior?

We now have statistical evidence that inactivity can cause premature death, chronic disease and disability. As well, new

research shows that even moderate physical activity can improve your health. Every little bit of activity makes a difference and most people can do it!

With the Guide, we are providing Canadians with the information they need to take care of their health. Physical activity is a key determinant of health and quality of life. Physical inactivity is as dangerous to your health as smoking a pack of cigarettes a day!

Obviously, no one can force the "couch potato" to become active, but it is important for every Canadian to understand the health benefits of being physically active and the consequences of inactivity. As well, the Guide provides the information they need to get started and become more active by building physical activity into their daily routines.

## Canucks are lazy, inactive: Study

OTTAWA — Two-thirds of Canadians are couch potatoes, according to a new health study. "We are a nation of sedentary people and we are caught in an unhealthy grip of inactivity," Dr. Nick Buring, president of the College of Family Physicians, said yesterday.

Too many Canadians are aging while they sit on the sofa, watching TV, surfing the Internet, playing video games or sitting at the computer, according to the study by the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, found 69% of Canadians are "inactive" — doing little or no daily exercise, and years this is a recipe for heart, blood and bone diseases, cancer, and ultimately, premature death.

**Women more inactive**

"If you are inactive, you are at a much greater risk of dying from heart disease, stroke, cancer, and other chronic diseases," said Dr. Buring. "The inactivity rate is higher among young adults than among older adults, according to the study."

## Most Canadians are unfit, study says

MARK KENNEDY  
OTTAWA

"Two-thirds of Canadians are unfit, according to a new study by the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute. The study found that 69% of Canadians are sedentary, meaning they do not get enough exercise to keep their hearts and lungs healthy. This is a major public health concern, as inactivity is a leading cause of heart disease, stroke, and other chronic illnesses. The study also found that inactivity is more prevalent among young adults and women. Dr. Nick Buring, president of the College of Family Physicians, said that the study highlights the need for Canadians to become more active to improve their health and quality of life."

## Les Canadiens sont trop sédentaires

Plus de 63% de la population affiche une piètre condition physique, révèle une étude

JULIE RICHER  
OTTAWA

« Plus de deux tiers des Canadiens sont sédentaires, c'est-à-dire qu'ils ne font pas assez d'exercice pour maintenir leur santé physique et mentale. Cette situation est préoccupante car l'inactivité est une cause majeure de maladies chroniques telles que les maladies cardiovasculaires, le diabète et l'obésité. L'étude a également révélé que les jeunes adultes et les femmes sont plus susceptibles d'être sédentaires. Les chercheurs appellent à une prise de conscience collective pour encourager les Canadiens à adopter des habitudes plus actives et à intégrer l'exercice dans leur routine quotidienne. »

## Les enfants sont les moins actifs

OTTAWA — Le rapport commandé par l'Institut canadien de la recherche sur la condition physique et le mode de vie révèle que les enfants québécois sont les moins actifs au Canada et que cette tendance peut avoir un effet négatif sur leur développement.

Le rapport, publié par l'Institut canadien de la recherche sur la condition physique et le mode de vie, indique que les enfants de moins de 17 ans ont le plus faible taux d'activité physique au Canada. Les chercheurs ont constaté que les enfants passent en moyenne plus de temps devant les écrans qu'à l'extérieur. Cette tendance inquiète les experts, car l'inactivité chez les enfants peut entraîner des problèmes de santé à long terme, tels que l'obésité et le diabète de type 2.

## Canadians shirk regular exercise

BY MARK KENNEDY  
THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

Two-thirds of Canadians are endangering their health by not getting enough exercise, a major new study has found. The report, released yesterday by the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, found the problem will only worsen as baby boomers age and require more medical care. Just as alarming, researchers found obesity is rising among the current generation of children. They said today's kids are distracted by modern technology — from video games to home computers — and aren't getting enough exercise. "This really is a wake-up call," said research institute spokesman Craig Craig, who issued an urgent plea to all Canadians to get more active. "The study shows that inactivity is a major public health concern, and it's time for us to take action. We need to encourage Canadians to move more and live healthier lives."

## Regarder la télé et fumer la cigarette : même résultat

OTTAWA — Bien installés dans leur fauteuil en train de regarder la télévision ou de surfer sur Internet, deux Canadiens sur trois sont dangereusement inactifs. Et dans les faits, l'inactivité a sur la santé les mêmes effets qu'un paquet de cigarettes par jour, prévient l'Institut canadien de la recherche sur la condition physique et le mode de vie.

« L'inactivité est aussi dangereuse pour la santé que fumer une cigarette par jour », a déclaré le Dr. Nick Buring, président du conseil d'administration de l'Institut. « Les deux comportements entraînent une augmentation du risque de maladies cardiovasculaires, de diabète et d'obésité. Il est crucial de reconnaître que l'inactivité est un problème de santé publique majeur et de prendre des mesures pour encourager les Canadiens à adopter des habitudes plus actives. »

## Canuck 'inertia' deadly, say docs

Couch potatoes told to get fit or die young

BY SEAN DURKAN  
Parliamentary Editor

Two-thirds of Canadians are sedentary, according to a new study by the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute. The study found that inactivity is a leading cause of heart disease, stroke, and other chronic illnesses. The study also found that inactivity is more prevalent among young adults and women. Dr. Nick Buring, president of the College of Family Physicians, said that the study highlights the need for Canadians to become more active to improve their health and quality of life.

## Actualités

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## 'Couch potato' life called health risk

Le pays

Grouille, grouille... !

JULIE RICHER  
OTTAWA

« Depuis les années 1980, les Canadiens ont tendance à devenir plus sédentaires. Cette tendance est préoccupante car l'inactivité est une cause majeure de maladies chroniques telles que les maladies cardiovasculaires, le diabète et l'obésité. L'étude a également révélé que les jeunes adultes et les femmes sont plus susceptibles d'être sédentaires. Les chercheurs appellent à une prise de conscience collective pour encourager les Canadiens à adopter des habitudes plus actives et à intégrer l'exercice dans leur routine quotidienne. »

## Les Canadiens sont encore trop sédentaires

Le rapport commandé par l'Institut canadien de la recherche sur la condition physique et le mode de vie révèle que les enfants québécois sont les moins actifs au Canada et que cette tendance peut avoir un effet négatif sur leur développement.

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January's news conference releasing the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute's 1997 Physical Activity Benchmarks report generated a great deal of television, radio and print coverage warning that inactivity is a major health risk for many Canadians. Your organization can play an important role in pre-launch communications also. Please include some of the feature articles sent to you in the same package as this newsletter in your own print and electronic communications vehicles to prepare people for the launch of Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living.

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