

Wellness Articles

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If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca. You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

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Stay active and safe while heading back to school

Back-to-school is right around the corner for many families across the province. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to talk with their kids and teens about active and safe ways to travel to school. Active travel can boost physical health, build independence and encourage kids and teens to spend time outside.

Here are some practical ideas to get kids and teens safely active this school year.

Help your child plan for active travel.

- Talk with your child or teen about ways they can walk or wheel to school such as riding a bike, scooter or skateboard.
- For younger children, map out the route and practice it together.
- For older children and teens, help them think through the details, such as the route they'll use, and the time it will take to get there. They may need your advice to avoid busy, high-speed roads.

Keep safety top-of-mind.

- Talk with your child or teen about gear, such as bright reflective clothing, that will help them stay safe when they're wheeling to school.
- Help them make sure their helmet fits properly. For a how-to checklist, go to MyHealth.Alberta.ca and search "bike helmet yes test."
- Talk with your child or teen about staying alert when walking or wheeling to school. Remind them to put their phones and ear buds away so they can be aware of what is going on around them.
- Role model safe active travel. For example, if you are walking to school with your child, cross the road only at marked intersections or crossings. Explain traffic signs and lights. If you are biking to school together, be sure to wear your helmet too.

Support safe active travel in your community.

- Find out if there are active travel groups or events at your local school, such as clubs or walking school buses. Help your child connect with other kids who walk or wheel to school. It can be motivating, social and fun for them to travel together.
- Listen to your teen's ideas about how to make active travel more appealing. For example, help them advocate for more pathways or bike, scooter, or skateboard storage racks in public places, or take part in community clean-ups or outdoor art projects. For ideas, click on the "Healthy Places" tab at healthiertogether.ca and then find the "Alberta Healthy Communities Hub."