

Message from the Medical Officer of Health

The annual State of the Region's Health reports highlight important health issues and trends affecting over one million residents in the Region of Peel. The 2005 report describes overweight and obesity in adults in our communities and related health consequences. Overweight and obesity have also been identified as an important public health issue by Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health in 2004.

Understanding the issues contributing to overweight, obesity and related health consequences is essential in addressing this important health issue. A variety of factors such as individual behaviours, environmental factors, and genetics, play a role in overweight and obesity. Much of the focus for prevention has been on healthy eating and physical activity at the individual level; however, more recently, environmental factors have been identified as another important way through which overweight and obesity concerns can be addressed. There is growing recognition that overweight and obesity in our society are being driven by environmental factors that affect our eating and physical activity behaviours. Addressing these issues through urban planning, schools, workplaces, families, communities and a variety of other institutions that influence individual behaviours, will help to improve efforts to prevent overweight and obesity in both children and adults.

The latest health indicators, summarized in the section titled *Peel Health Facts* continue to tell us that the Region's population enjoys relatively good overall health by provincial and national standards.

The Region of Peel works with individuals and organizations in the public and private sectors to prevent illness and promote good health. The information in this and other Peel Public Health status reports is intended to help chart a course to better health for everyone in Peel.



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