



## Health for the whole family: a parent's guide.

As a parent, the health of your family is at the top of your priority list, and the fall season can challenge that — both mentally and physically. Kids face big adjustments when school begins, whether they're starting elementary school, entering a new grade, or going away to university. As temperatures drop, the likelihood of catching a cold rises,<sup>1</sup> and fewer hours of daylight leaves many working parents feeling in the dark.

With family members at different life stages under one roof, it's complicated to consider everyone's individual needs. To make things easier, here's a guide to cultivating health and happiness for the whole family this fall.

### Mental health

Fall features changes of scenery, from cloud cover to classroom, that can sometimes lower the mood. Follow these tips to help your family keep spirits up.



#### **Flex on flexible work.**

Parents, start by making the time to fill your own cup. A LifeWorks survey found that 34% of Canadian employees consider work flexibility “the most important action their employer has taken to support their mental health.”<sup>2</sup>

As more organizations facilitate this way of working, employees are recognizing the broader benefit to their wellbeing. Another survey showed a positive correlation between flexible work and quality of life, including diet, sleep, and exercise habits.<sup>3</sup>



### **Watch for back-to-school blues.**

In Canada, an estimated 1.1 million children and youth experience mental illness, and if they are not treated early, these disorders are likely to worsen and reoccur during adulthood.<sup>4</sup> Watch for signs of stress, anxiety, and low mood<sup>5</sup> as kids transition back to school, and don't delay seeking support and treatment.



### **Stay a step ahead of SAD.**

Young adults are at higher risk of seasonal affective disorder, a form of depression associated with winter conditions,<sup>6</sup> and this could hit harder for post-secondary students away from the support of home. Fall is the season to start a routine of physical activity and a habit of stepping outside at lunch, two of the best defenses against SAD.

## **Physical healthcare**

As nature heads into hibernation, we get cozier — but also more contagious.<sup>7</sup> Try taking these protective measures this fall.



### **Call the shots**

Children are often the first to face flu season when they exchange restful summer days for the challenges of school and the crowded playfields that go along with it. To ease the strain of seasonal illness on everyone, sign them up for their annual vaccination first.



### **Get in the know**

Parents can fall into the habit of putting their health second, but it's always important to have nagging symptoms checked out.<sup>8</sup> Learn your risk factors so you know when it's time for a regular appointment.



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