

Inform

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Season's greetings

As the last *Inform* of the year - and the Millennium - is published, we at the Health Promotion Agency hope you are still finding it useful. Inside you will find information about our most recent work and some of our plans for the year 2000. The new year looks like being as busy as ever with a lot of work already in planning and the prospect of new challenges ahead.

Our Millennium Babies project seems like a fitting way to start a new era, with a celebration of new life combined with support for families and a focus on the right of all children to be given every chance of living happy, healthy lives.

As we look forward to being part of the drive to meet the health challenges that lie ahead, this also seems a fitting time to reflect on past achievements. Thank you to everyone who has worked in association with the Agency over the years. Your expertise and professional input has been valued, as has your personal support and encouragement.

We have accomplished a lot as an organisation, but we believe it is only through continued collaboration and partnership with others that significant and sustained improvement in the health of people in Northern Ireland can be realised.

We wish you success and happiness - and a millennium bug-free New Year!

Best wishes for a happy and healthy New Millennium

Mission

To make health a top priority for everyone in Northern Ireland

Meningitis C Vaccine Launched

Health Minister, Mr George Howarth, launched the new meningitis C vaccination programme at the Agency on 1 November 1999.

At the Northern Ireland launch, the Agency announced details of its campaign to keep the public informed about the vaccination programme. The campaign included a television and radio advertisement, which was broadcast from 8 to 28 November. The advertisement stressed how important it is for the public to wait to be called for the vaccine. It also stated that an information leaflet had been produced which explains the facts about the vaccine and the immunisation timetable.

More than one million leaflets have been printed for the campaign. As well as being available from health centres and pharmacies, other distribution channels have been used including local newspapers and schools.

A factsheet for health professionals has been produced, which gives detailed information on the disease and the meningitis C vaccine. The factsheet has been sent to GPs, practice nurses, treatment room nurses,

pharmacists, paediatricians, health visitors and school nurses.

An information sheet entitled 'Meningitis C - key facts about the immunisation programme' has also been produced and distributed to staff working at the reception area of GP surgeries and health centres.

During this year-long programme, the vaccine will be made available to all children and young people under the age of 18. The following is a guide to the planned immunisation timetable:

- from 8 November, the vaccine will be offered to all 15 to 17 year olds;
- from 6 December, the vaccine will be offered to babies at 2, 3 and 4 months and 15 months as part of their routine immunisation programme;
- in the New Year, babies under one year will be called by their GP. Other pre-school children will start to be called at this time as part of a special catch up programme;
- after Easter, it is planned that all other school-aged children will be vaccinated.

Reduce the Risk:

Pictured at the launch of the meningitis C vaccination programme are, from left: Dr Henry McKee (GP); Dr Paul Jackson, Consultant Paediatrician, Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children and Dr Richard Smithson, Chairperson, Meningococcal C Vaccination Implementation Group.



Congratulations

The Agency would like to offer its congratulations to Dr Sam McGuffin, for the recognition of his contribution to an article entitled 'The healthy option - a review of activity on food and nutrition by UK schools involved in the European Network of Health Promoting Schools'.

The article was deemed to be the outstanding article in the Journal of Health Education (MCB University Press, Bradford) during 1998.

Dr McGuffin held the position of external evaluator for the European Network of Health Promoting Schools on behalf of the Agency and made a substantial contribution to the overall work of the project in Northern Ireland.

The winning article was first published in the July edition of Health Education 1998, (No. 4, pp. 135-141) and has since been published in the British Food Journal 1999, (Vol. 101, No. 9, pp. 610-619).

Short course programme

February and March see the Agency's short course programme step up a gear with several new courses taking place. In keeping with Agency practice, this year's training programme has been designed to meet the assessed needs of health professionals. The latest series covers a wide range of topics and where possible, professional accreditation has been gained for selected courses. To promote wider accessibility, the Agency is continuing to subsidise course fees where appropriate. Forthcoming courses in this series include:

- **Partnerships, Funding & Sustainability**
Two day course running on 1-2 February 2000
Cost £50.00
- **Current Issues in Health Promotion: Training for Trainers**
Two day course running on 24-25 February 2000
Cost £95.00 (includes accommodation, meals and a copy of 'Current Issues in Health Promotion: A Training Manual for Northern Ireland')
- **Drugs and the Family**
Two day course running on 2-3 March 2000
Cost £80.00
- **Sexuality & Learning Disability: Developing Policy & Procedures**
One day course running on 23 March 2000
Cost £30.00

For further details on these, or any other courses run by the Agency, please contact Claire Hind at the Health Promotion Agency to request a copy of the latest training prospectus.

Alternatively, details of all training courses, as well as the necessary booking forms are available on the Agency's Website at:

<http://www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk>

Delegates are advised to book early to avoid disappointment.

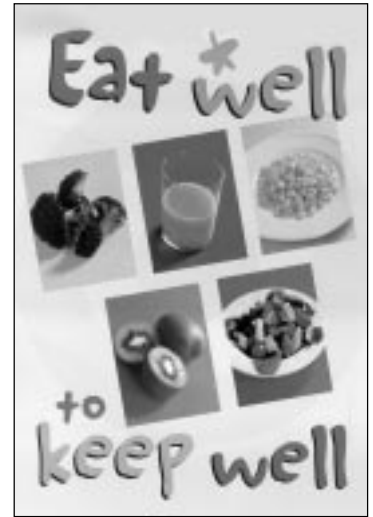
Public information campaigns

Eat well to keep well

October saw the Agency re-run its healthy eating campaign 'Eat well to keep well'. The campaign highlighted the importance of eating five portions of fruit and vegetables every day, which research suggests can reduce our risk of developing cancer by as much as 20%.

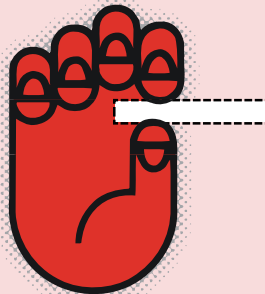
Research conducted by the Agency following the initial launch showed that, while the campaign achieved high awareness and recall, there was a little confusion over what constituted a portion of fruit or vegetables. It is hoped that this second screening will help to clarify the message.

Leaflets were produced to support the television campaign, which ran for four weeks from 25 October. For further information on this campaign, please contact Margaret Slane at the Health Promotion Agency.



No Smoking Day 2000

cut it out



with
no smoking day

The slogan for the No Smoking Day campaign on Wednesday 8 March 2000 will be 'Cut It Out With No Smoking Day'.

Pretesting was conducted to

help decide on the campaign's slogan and image. This took the form of focus group discussions with smokers. When presented with six alternative slogans and images for the campaign, this concept came tops among the groups.

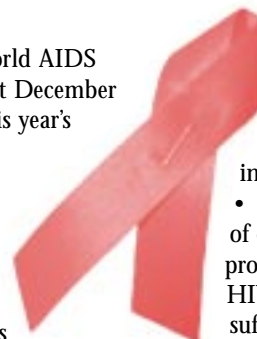
The groups thought 'Cut It Out' was not only appealing but simple, straightforward and unambiguous.

Research conducted among health professionals involved in organising local activities for the event, also concluded that the selected image and slogan was very versatile and could be applied to a wide range of activities to highlight No Smoking Day 2000.

World AIDS Day

This year marks the 12th World AIDS Day, which takes place on 1st December every year. The theme for this year's campaign was 'Children and Young People: Listen, Learn, Live'. The theme was chosen to reflect the following ideas:

- Listen to children and young people, hear their views



and concerns, and understand what is important in their lives;

- Learn from one another about respect, participation, support and ways to prevent HIV infection;
- Live in a world where the rights of children and young people are protected and where those living with HIV/AIDS are cared for and do not suffer from discrimination.

The Northern Ireland Physical Activity Conference - Physical Activity and Public Health

The second biannual Physical Activity Conference organised by the Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland took place at the Slieve Donard Hotel, Newcastle on 10 and 11 November 1999. The conference formed part of the implementation of the Northern Ireland Physical Activity Strategy.

The conference provided an opportunity to consider the contribution that physical activity could make to a number of public health issues, such as mental health, nutrition and workplace health and to identify examples of good practice in these areas.

A secondary aim of the conference was to produce recommendations for the Strategy group, which would enable future activities to be developed. These recommendations are an invaluable resource for the Physical Activity Strategy as it continues to promote an intersectoral approach to reducing the high levels of inactivity in Northern Ireland.

A total of 202 delegates attended over the two days. The feedback received, both verbally and from evaluation forms, was extremely positive. Conference participants included GPs, recreational professionals,



voluntary and community sector personnel and educationalists. The attendance of such a broad selection of delegates was made possible by the structure of the conference. By breaking it into several separate sessions, delegates could attend the specific areas that interested them.

The conference attracted extensive coverage on television and in the local press. A claim made by Professor Roy Shephard, one of the main speakers at the conference, that a lifetime of inactivity will cost us our independence 10 to 20 years ahead of our fitter counterparts, reinforced the physical activity message to the public.

Physical Activity takes off at Aldergrove. A morning seminar, which focused attention on the promotion of physical activity among people with disabilities, was the latest step in the Agency's campaign to get Northern Ireland active.

The seminar took place in the Aldergrove Airport Hotel and was offered in support of the Disability Millennium Festival. The theme for the festival, organised by Disability Action was 'Celebrating Change'. The festival ran from mid-November to early December.

Ain't no mountain high enough: Pictured at the recent Northern Ireland Physical Activity Conference, from left: Mr Walter Radar, New Opportunities Fund; Dr Brian Gaffney, Chief Executive, The Health Promotion Agency and Dr Henrietta Campbell, Chief Medical Officer for Northern Ireland.

Staff test body and mind at Gortatole

The Agency closed its doors from Monday 25 to Wednesday 27 October, while staff attended a teambuilding course at the Western Education and Library Board's Gortatole Outdoor Education Centre, Co. Fermanagh. The course was funded by a £5000 prize, which the Agency received for winning the '1998 Health and Personal Social Services Opportunity 2000 Annual Award' for its policy on 'Special Leave for Domestic, Personal and Family Reasons'.

On day one of the programme, events centred on activities designed to promote trust, communication and cooperation among staff members. A range of physical and intellectual challenges were presented to aid the development of the staff's problem-solving skills. These skills were put to the test by a night-time orienteering exercise in the 60 acre grounds of the Gortatole Centre.

Day two continued the theme of developing trust and cooperation. Staff members were free to choose from a range of physical activities. While some members took part in an adventure walk, others visited the White Father's caves, where they

swam in an underground river. Meanwhile, a third group decided on the only other course open to them, by taking to the ropes! In each case staff were given the responsibility of ensuring each other's safety.

The Agency has experienced rapid growth over the past few months with the appointment of seven new members of staff. The experiences gained at Gortatole occurred at an ideal time, giving new staff members an opportunity to get to know their colleagues better. Judging by the photographs, this newly gained knowledge proved most interesting!



We're in this together: Members of Agency staff lend each other some firm support.

Drugs Seminar

The Agency is pleased to present a seminar titled 'Young People: Substance Misuse and Risk Factors' which takes place between 2.30-4.30pm at Malone House, Belfast on Monday 6 December 1999.

Professor J David Hawkins of the University of Washington, Seattle, a key practitioner in this field, will lead the seminar.

Professor Hawkins has been at the forefront of the development of risk-focused prevention in respect of problem drug use and young people.

During this seminar he will concentrate on the risk-focused approach and how it can be developed in practice to tackle the misuse of alcohol, tobacco or illicit drugs. In addition to this central theme, the twin concepts of risk and protective factors will also be addressed in detail.

The seminar is likely to be of interest to a wide range of professionals. It should prove especially useful to individuals involved in developing and implementing drug prevention programmes, particularly those focusing on the needs of young people. Professionals working in education, health promotion, the health and social services and within voluntary and community sectors are also likely to find the seminar useful.

Safe Drinking Campaign

The Agency is planning to launch a public information campaign in February 2000, which will focus attention on the units of alcohol contained in common alcoholic drinks as well as the recommended weekly limits for men and women.

Representatives from the drinks industry have been contacted and it is hoped that this information will be distributed through pubs, clubs and off-licences during the year.

For information on specific areas of the Agency's work contact:

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Publications and resources



Millennium Babies
The Agency is celebrating the new millennium by giving the first 2000 babies born in

Northern Ireland a very special welcome. The mothers of these babies will be presented with a special pack full of health information as well as an assortment of goodies to help them get their babies off to the best start in life.

The pack will include a copy of the following Agency publications:

- 'Weaning Made Easy - Moving From Milk to Family Meals' - a weaning guide for parents;
- 'Protect Your Child - Be Wise Immunise' - information about immunisation;
- 'Meningitis: Reduce the risk for children and young people' - information on the new meningitis C vaccination;
- 'Eat Well to Keep Well' - information on the benefits of healthy eating;
- 'Get a life, get active' - information on the benefits of regular physical activity.

It will also tell first time mums where to get their copy of 'Birth to Five' produced by the Agency in association with the Health Education Authority. This book is full of great information and advice about looking after your baby from birth to the age of five years.

Packs will be distributed to maternity units across Northern Ireland in advance of the launch, which takes place on 6 January 2000. The initiative is expected to run throughout January with 2000 births anticipated for this month.

Promoting Health

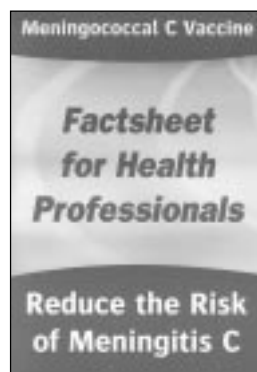


'Health in the 21st Century' is the title of the latest issue of 'Promoting Health', the Agency's quarterly journal for health professionals. It includes articles on many of the Agency's priority areas for health promotion, for example: smoking, alcohol, drugs, physical activity, nutrition, sexual health and mental health, as well as international examples of work being conducted in these fields.

Among the contributors are Dr Henrietta Campbell, Northern Ireland's Chief Medical Officer, who presents 'The health of the public in Northern Ireland' and Professor John Catford, editor of 'Health Promotion International', who asks whether we are entering a new era for health promotion.

Inform readers who would like to receive a copy of 'Promoting Health' should contact Ann Marie McCann at the Agency.

Meningitis C Vaccine



An information leaflet has been produced for parents and young people to explain the facts about the new meningitis C vaccine and to provide details of the immunisation timetable. It has been widely distributed to the public but is also available from the Central Health

Promotion Resource Services in each Health and Social Services Board area.

An (A3) poster and factsheet have also been produced for health professionals. The factsheet provides detailed information about the disease and the vaccine, to help health professionals deal with the concerns of parents.

NIPAIG News



The Agency has published a newsletter reporting on the first year's implementation of the Northern Ireland Physical Activity Strategy. NIPAIG News charts the progress made by the organisations involved in implementing the Strategy Action Plan.

This group includes Northern Ireland Government departments, the Health and Social Services Boards and the Health Promotion Agency. Future plans for the strategy are also included. For further information about the Physical Activity Strategy or NIPAIG News, please contact Frank Kelly or Siobhan Weir at the Agency.

Website: www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk

The Agency's Website features a range of information about the Agency and its work. The site will be regularly updated to provide a current source of information for anyone with an interest in health promotion. Any comments you may have or suggestions for additional information you would like to see there, will be very welcome.
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