



WHAT'S NEW...

FAVOURABLE REVIEW FOR *EXPOSURE*

The U.S. magazine *Feminist Collections* recently reviewed *Exposure: Environmental Links to Breast Cancer*, a film that raises awareness and draws connections between environment, health and disease prevention. The reviewer recommended, "...Exposure [is] a good choice for class, community-group, or individual use, especially if further research by viewers is desired or anticipated." To order a copy of the film (now in DVD format) and accompanying resource guide, or to request a workshop for your group, visit our website at www.womenshealthyenvironments.ca.

PROGRESS ON OUR FUTURE HOME AT ARTSCAPE'S GREEN ARTS BARN

The historic Wychwood TTC streetcar barns at St. Clair and Bathurst are set to be transformed into a 61,000 sq. ft. multi-tenant arts and environmental centre. This creative space will support affordable housing, artist studios, and space for non-profit arts and environmental organizations such as **WHEN**. The buildings will showcase sustainable energy-efficient design principles. The stormwater harvesting system cistern has now been installed, which will collect rainwater for reuse on site, diverting it from the City's sewer system. It is estimated that the project will save a total of 39.4% of potable water volume. Future construction plans include a geothermal heating and cooling system and the incorporation of low-flow faucets, low-flush toilets and waterless urinals.

BOOKMARK *WHEN'S* NEW WEBSITE

If you haven't been to our new website yet, take a look at www.womenshealthyenvironments.ca. This inviting and informative site is the place to go to find out more about **WHEN**, what projects we are involved in, and how you can *Take Action for Prevention!*

WHEN SUPPORTS COMMUNITY RIGHT TO KNOW CAMPAIGN

A campaign led by the Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA) aims to get the City of Toronto to pass a bylaw to give the public the right to know what toxic chemicals are used, stored and released in our city. To learn more, go to www.torontoenvironment.org.

Calendar of Events

CANCER: IT'S ABOUT PREVENTION. IT'S ABOUT TIME (MAY 24-27, 2007)

OTTAWA, ONTARIO

Prevent Cancer Now (www.preventcancernow.ca) is staging a four-day conference to raise awareness and funds that will be dedicated to cancer prevention initiatives. The conference will be held at the University of Ottawa, and will bring together some of the finest advocates for cancer prevention in the world, including many outstanding scientists. Featured speakers include Dr. Sandra Steingraber, renowned biologist, author and cancer survivor, and Dr. Devra Lee Davis, author and Director of the Center for Environmental Oncology, University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute. There will be 18 workshops and almost 40 speakers, focusing on issues such as toxic substances in the workplace, environmental justice, healthy homes and electromagnetic radiation.

Toxic Trespass, a new documentary about children's health and the environment, will be screened at this conference. Check our website in the coming months for future Toronto screenings at www.womenshealthyenvironments.ca.

RUN, WALK & ROLL FOR CANCER PREVENTION (MAY 26-27, 2007)

OTTAWA, ONTARIO

Concurrent to the conference *Cancer: It's About Prevention, It's About Time* is the annual event Run, Walk and Roll for Cancer Prevention. The goal is to raise \$150,000 to help educate all Canadians about the full scope of the cancer threat, share viable strategies, and urge action on all fronts. If you are going to Ottawa and would like to join **WHEN's** team, contact us at office@womenshealthyenvironments.ca

Taking Action for Prevention

Promoting Wholesome Food Choices for Children

By Sharilynn Wardrop

When my son was born, concerns about childhood obesity, increasing incidence of childhood illnesses and environmental crisis all left me pondering how to give him the best start in life. One priority I set was promoting a positive attitude towards wholesome foods. Making his food myself became a key step on this path. I understand why easy and readily available commercial foods are so popular to new parents with too much to do already. However, there are profound reasons to avoid those little jars. Here are some of them:

1. You know and can control what's in homemade food.

Though commercial baby foods must meet strict nutrition standards, be aware that many contain added sugar. If you use commercial food, be sure to read labels. Pureed sweet potato should contain nothing but sweet potato.

2. Homemade foods are more nutritious.

It is no more harmful for your baby to occasionally have commercial food, than it is for you to eat frozen dinners occasionally. However, those processed dinners are never as nutritious or delicious as their homemade counterparts. It will become difficult to provide adequate nutrition if your child eats only processed food.

3. Homemade foods are less expensive

The cost of commercial baby food is substantial, especially for organic varieties. With mounting evidence linking pesticides to human health concerns, it is advisable to buy organic varieties of those foods with the highest pesticide residues (e.g. apples, bananas, blueberries, nectarines, pears, peaches, potatoes.) It is much more affordable to purchase these items fresh and puree yourself. This also allows you to freeze small, individual portions to avoid waste as much as possible.

4. Homemade foods have more variety.

Commercial foods contain only about 10 different types of fruits or vegetables. You can add variety to your baby's diet by offering things like avocado, beets, melon, nectarines, parsnips and zucchini. Making your own food allows you to add some zip (with a little cinnamon, a dash of curry powder, a bit of olive oil).

5. Babies generally transition more easily to table foods from homemade foods.

Making your own food gives you control over the texture and variety of foods you offer. Once your baby is accustomed to textures, you can begin to offer table foods. My son, at 9 months, already eats sprigs of broccoli, pasta, cheese, bread, muffins, whole soft fruit, bits of harder fruit, tomato, hummus with pita, peas, beans, and more! Commercial foods are well pureed, great for those first few meals but it is a huge transition from such soft bland food to foods from your plate.

On tough days I keep going by reminding myself that the fresh, organic food I make helps set healthy eating habits for the rest of my son's life. I feel rewarded to see how he enjoys what I make, and how quickly he has learned to accept textures. It is also important to allow yourself to offer commercial food when you need to. As parents we aren't superheroes, we just do our best!

Some helpful resources:

- ❑ www.wholesomebabyfood.com includes amazing recipes, nutrition information and alternatives to common allergens like wheat and egg.
- ❑ **Foodshare Toronto** provides free baby food making workshops. Visit their website at www.foodshare.net or call 416 363-6441 x. 221.

Taking Action for Prevention is a regular feature where volunteers and friends of WHEN can share their experiences. If you would like to contribute to a future issue, contact us at office@womenshealthyenvironments.ca.

Toxic but Beautiful? Making healthy choices in personal care products

by Mahalia Freed, ND

Our bodies are inherently self-healing. As a Naturopathic Doctor, my role is to guide and support people in identifying and removing “obstacles to cure” that are hindering their bodies from maintaining a healthy balance. Hormone disruptors and carcinogens present in our cosmetics, even in those labeled “natural”, qualify as obstacles to cure. For example, the far-too-common parabens, such as methylparaben, which I discovered in my own health-food store-purchased moisturizer. Surprisingly, only 11% of the 10,500 ingredients found in personal care products are tested for safety even by the industry's own internal review panel. And, unlike the European Union, where substances known to be carcinogenic, mutagenic or reproductive toxins have been banned since 2004, in Canada and the US there is no federal regulation governing ingredients in cosmetics and personal care products.

Here are a couple of things you (and I) can do to maintain optimal health, and help change these dangerous practices:

- ❑ **Investigate.** Have a look at Skin Deep, a Web resource from the US-based Environmental Working Group: www.cosmeticdatabase.com There, you can check your personal care products for their safety, and learn more about individual ingredients of concern. For more information about the US-based Campaign for Safe Cosmetics and a list of safer companies, go to www.safecosmetics.org.
- ❑ **Speak out.** WHEN is a signatory to the Canadian campaign for safe cosmetics, spearheaded by Breast Cancer Action Montreal. Go to www.bcsm.ca for details on their letter-writing campaigns, including form letters and where to send them.

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