



March 23rd, 2015

## March is Pharmacist Awareness Month – Prevention May Be Best

The pharmacist's traditional role of medication management specialist is expanding dramatically according to the Canadian Pharmacists Association. Pharmacists across Canada are delivering a range of innovative services from chronic disease management, to immunization services and wellness programs.

### Preventing Concussion

You think you're doing the best for your kids, protecting them. Then comes a study like this: football helmets are not protecting them from brain injuries or concussions! Helmets are designed to withstand a linear, straight-on force but many football hits are to the side of the head or involve a rotational force. Experts say there is not likely a way to make the helmets effective in these situations. While better than no helmet at all, this is still alarming!

### Recognizing Concussion

A medical team in the US has been gathering evidence to form guidelines for recognising concussion. They have found 4 symptoms that universally occur in the first 48 hours after a blow to the head: confusion or disorientation immediately following the event, impaired balance within 1 day of the event, slowed reaction time within 2 days of the event, and impaired verbal learning or memory within 2 days of the event. If any of these signs are seen, consult a physician.

### Headaches and Links to Food

Headaches have been noted to be triggered by a variety of stimuli... weather, stress, sleep disturbances, hormones, noise, scents (perfumes, smoke), lights (including video screens) and eye strain. Some foods seem to be associated as well, such as chocolate, cheese, caffeine and alcohol. Now another: chewing gum. An Israeli study uncovered the link and it is believed to be due to undue exertion on the temporomandibular joint (TMJ) of the jaw.

### Fluoride Use Still Wise

The use of fluoride for the prevention of cavities is controversial. The American Academy of Pediatrics recently announced its guidelines for fluoride use, based on those of the Centers for Disease Control. They call for the use of a very small amount of fluoridated toothpaste (think: grain of rice) as soon as teeth begin erupting; a pea-sized drop beginning at age 3. Dietary fluoride should only be considered where drinking water is not fluoridated.

Much of the information people find on the internet or in the news is not complete or specific enough. Many variables can influence individual health decisions – talk with your own health professionals, including your pharmacist, for a plan tailor-made for you.