

# this is PUBLIC HEALTH

The average lifespan of Canadians has increased by more than 30 years since the early 1900s, and 25 of those years are attributable to advances in public health.

Canada is well known worldwide for its safe and high-quality food. In 2008, an international review of food safety ranked Canada fifth among 17 member countries of the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development.

## SAFER AND HEALTHIER FOODS

### MILESTONES

- 1920**—The Food and Drugs Act came into effect regarding the production, import, export, transport across provinces, and sale of food, drugs, contraceptive devices and cosmetics.
- 1934**—The Canadian Public Health Association launched the first formal training program in food inspection in Canada.
- 1942**—Canada's first food guide was introduced, endeavouring to prevent nutritional deficiencies and improve the health of Canadians.
- 1997**—The Canadian Food Inspection Agency was created to enforce federal food safety policies and standards.

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## GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS



### MILESTONES

- 1926**—A toxoid to immunize against diphtheria was introduced in Canada.
- 1955**—The Salk Polio Vaccine was licensed, with provisions made for its free distribution.
- 1969**—A vaccine against clinical mumps was introduced.
- 1975**—The combined measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine was introduced.

One hundred years ago, infectious diseases were the leading cause of death worldwide. In Canada, they now cause less than 5% of all deaths—thanks to immunization programs. Immunization has probably saved more lives in Canada in the last 50 years than any other health intervention.

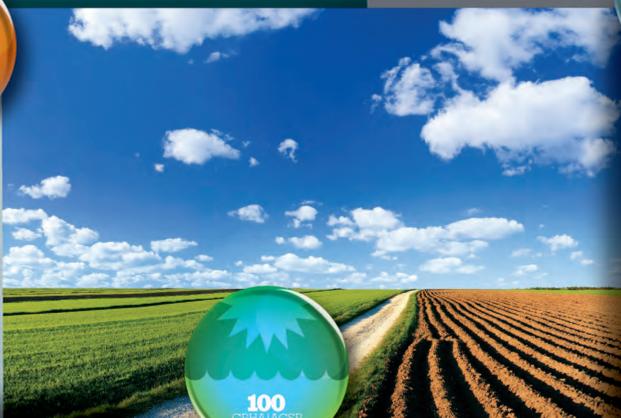
## VACCINATION



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## HEALTHIER ENVIRONMENTS

Canadian environmental policies have helped to increase the community's health and to dramatically reduce toxic emissions such as lead and mercury. Air and water quality have improved in some areas, despite population and economic growth.

### MILESTONES

- 1945**—Canada's first community water fluoridation trials began in Brantford, Ontario, leading to improved oral health.
- 1968**—Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality were published by Health Canada.
- 1971**—The first automobile emission control regulations were established in Canada.
- 2002**—Toronto began its Green Bin composting program, taking everything from table scraps to diapers and pet waste to be turned into compost—one of the most successful waste diversion programs in North America.

Since public health officials began to actively pursue adequate sanitation and clean water systems in Canada, water-borne diseases such as cholera and typhoid have largely been controlled.

### MILESTONES

- 1894**—Regulation and treatment of sewage and control of water supply started in Quebec.
- 1910**—The Canadian Public Health Association was founded in an effort to strengthen communicable disease control and prevention and later established as an Act of Parliament in 1912.
- 1919**—The federal Department of Health was created with a focus on more effective control of infectious diseases and the regulation of vaccines to prevent them.
- 1927**—The School of Hygiene was established at the University of Toronto, a key priority of which was the preparation of professional public health personnel to staff new full-time health units.
- 2004**—The Public Health Agency of Canada and the position of the Chief Public Health Officer were established primarily in response to SARS but with a mandate that encompasses all of public health.



## MOTOR-VEHICLE SAFETY



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In 1998, Canada's road fatality rate was ranked ninth among the 29 member countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. Alcohol-related collisions decreased substantially and seatbelt use increased, resulting in many lives saved and injuries prevented.

### MILESTONES

- 1969**—Breath tests became compulsory for anyone suspected of drinking and driving in Canada.
- 1976**—Ontario became the first jurisdiction in North America to make seatbelt usage mandatory.
- 1990**—Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD Canada) was formed to create a national network to stop impaired driving.
- 2003**—Newfoundland and Labrador became the first province to ban the use of hand-held cell phones while driving.

### MILESTONES

- 1920**—The Canadian Red Cross provided funds in "a most energetic movement" to reduce infant mortality throughout Canada.
- 1944**—The family allowance began, which was Canada's first universal welfare program. It was a monthly payment to Canadian families with children, regardless of income.
- 1971**—The Canada Labour Code was amended to implement a paid maternity-leave policy.
- 1998**—Canada's Prenatal Nutrition Program was established to provide long-term funding to community groups to develop or enhance programs for vulnerable pregnant women.

In the early 1900s, many major health threats were associated with poor maternal and infant health. Today, the health of mothers and children in Canada is among the best in the world.

## HEALTHIER MOTHERS AND BABIES



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## SAFER WORKPLACES



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Well into the 1900s, many diseases or injuries were associated with unsafe workplaces or hazardous occupations. The rate of work-related injury has been steadily declining since 1988—from 40 injuries among every 1,000 workers in 1988 to 20 per 1,000 in 2006.

### MILESTONES

- 1914**—Under Ontario legislation, workers were eligible for guaranteed no-fault benefits from a system that was wholly funded by employers; in exchange, employers were freed from legal liability.
- 1978**—The federal government established the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety to promote health and safety in the workplace.



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## DECLINE IN DEATHS FROM CORONARY HEART DISEASE AND STROKE

Cardiovascular disease death rates have been declining steadily in Canada since the mid-1960s. The 1997 death rates were almost half those of 1969.

### MILESTONES

- 1971**—ParticipACTION was launched and nudged Canadians to make physical activity a part of everyday life.
- 1986**—The Canadian Heart Health Initiative was launched as a federal/provincial strategy to tackle the major cause of death, heart care costs and disability in Canada.
- 1999**—The Canadian Hypertension Education Program was introduced and significantly increased awareness of high blood pressure as a "silent killer."



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## RECOGNITION OF TOBACCO USE AS A HEALTH HAZARD

Canada has made more progress in tobacco control in recent years than most other countries in the world and has seen a dramatic decline in tobacco consumption, along with a pervasive shift in attitudes.

### MILESTONES

- 1974**—The Canadian Council on Smoking and Health and the Non-Smokers' Rights Association were formed.
- 1988**—Federal legislation banned indoor smoking in federal government workplaces, banned all forms of tobacco advertising and strengthened the warnings on cigarette packages.
- 2001**—Ottawa and Victoria were the first cities to ban smoking in all workplaces and public spaces with no allowance for designated smoking rooms.



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## UNIVERSAL POLICIES

Universal policies that reduce socio-economic disparities have reduced the risk of poor health for many Canadians. Since income and education have a direct effect on health status, Canada's universal access to health care and education helps Canadians maintain a high standard of health.

### MILESTONES

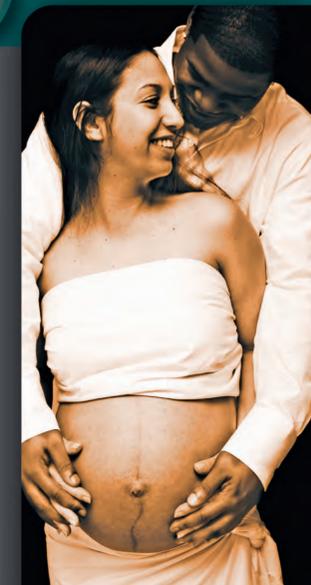
- 1941**—The Unemployment Insurance Act came into effect, intended to temporarily help people who were between jobs.
- 1952**—The Old Age Security Act came into force as one of the cornerstones of Canada's retirement income system.
- 1966**—The federal government introduced the Medical Care Act to provide publicly funded medical insurance plans in provinces on a cost-shared basis.
- 1979**—The Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care recommended that the undefined annual check-up be replaced with a series of age-specific periodic health assessments.

## FAMILY PLANNING

Women have long been attempting to control when to have children through birth control and other techniques. Waiting until the mother is at least 18 years old before trying to have a child improves maternal and child health and it is healthier to wait at least two years after a previous birth before conceiving the next child. In 1969, all forms of contraception were legalized in Canada.

### MILESTONES

- 1932**—The first birth-control clinic was started in Hamilton, Ontario.
- 1960**—Canada approved the sale of the birth control pill for "therapeutic purposes."
- 1971**—The federal government started to provide funding for birth-control information and services across Canada.



# CPHA 1910-2010

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