

## COLUMN / CHRONIQUE

# Consumer health information

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### Canadian Health Network (CHN) update

CHN has had a makeover! When you go to [www.canadian-health-network.ca](http://www.canadian-health-network.ca) now, you will see some featured resources on the right-hand side. As of 4 April 2007, the highlighted resources are the following:

- (1) Subscribe to Healthlink (a bimonthly newsletter conveniently sent to you by e-mail)
- (2) Public Health Agency of Canada
- (3) Handy checklist for finding trustworthy health information on the Internet
- (4) Healthy Lunches to Go tour
- (5) New Food Guide
- (6) Healthy Pregnancy ([www.healthypregnancy.gc.ca](http://www.healthypregnancy.gc.ca))
- (7) Physical Activity Guide for Children and Youth

Please note that the October 2006 launch of the special youth area, which I reported in an earlier column, was delayed. If you are interested in learning more about CHN's quality assurance standards, I will be doing a poster on this topic with Doris Rankin, CHN Senior Information Specialist, at the CHLA / ABSC 2007 Conference.

### MedlinePlus

Customer feedback and extensive usability testing have lead to a redesign of the Health Topic pages. They now feature images, summaries, synonyms, a new category labelled "Start here", and a redesigned table of contents.

### Health literacy: recent report

*State of learning in Canada: No time for complacency.* Ottawa: Canadian Council on Learning; 2007. Available from <http://www.ccl-cca.ca/CCL/Reports/StateofLearning/StateofLearning2007.htm>.

More than four in 10 Canadian adults cannot read, write, do arithmetic, or solve problems at the level required to participate fully in today's economy. This report examines Canada's state of learning in early childhood, at school, through adulthood, in the workplace, and for aboriginal peoples, with a special feature on literacy.

### Notable new publications and Web sites

*The flu pandemic and you: A Canadian guide.* By Vincent Lam and Colin Lee. Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2006. CAN\$14.95. ISBN 0-385-66277-7.

This book explains how to assess your level of risk of contracting influenza and provides practical advice on how to prepare for a pandemic. Yes, the coauthor is the same Vincent Lam who's an emergency physician at Toronto East General Hospital and author of the Giller Prize-winning novel *Bloodletting & Miraculous Cures*.

*When panic attacks: The new drug-free anxiety therapy that can change your life.* By David D. Burns. New York: Morgan Road Books, 2006. CAN\$34.95. ISBN 0-7679-2071-6.

Burns is a clinical professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at the Stanford University School of Medicine and author of the bestselling *Feeling good: The new mood therapy*. His "elegant writing style, compassion, and humor translate powerful psychotherapy methods into accessible, practical, and helpful tools for the vast number of individuals who struggle with anxiety".

*Winter blues: Everything you need to know to beat seasonal affective disorder.* Rev. ed. By Norman E. Rosenthal. New York: The Guilford Press, 2006. CAN\$21.50. ISBN 1-59385-116-2.

Rosenthal is a clinical professor of psychiatry at Georgetown University and author of *The emotional revolution*. This revised edition covers the substantial changes in treatments for seasonal affective disorder (SAD). It includes SAD in children and adolescents and advice for families and friends of those with SAD.

*The bone-building solution.* By Sam Graci, Carolyn DeMarco, and Letitia Rao. Toronto: John Wiley & Sons Canada, 2006. CAN\$21.99. ISBN 0-470-83891-4.

The authors — a nutritional researcher (Graci), a physician specializing in women's health (DeMarco), and a calcium researcher (Rao) — have teamed up to provide a broad perspective on what you can do to improve your bone health. The book includes the pros and cons of medication and nondrug treatments for osteoporosis.

*Is it safe to eat? Enjoy eating and minimize food risks.* By Ian Shaw. Berlin: Springer, 2005. CAN\$46.95. ISBN 3-540-21286-8.

Shaw, a Ph.D. researcher, provides evidence about the effects of chemical and biological contaminants of food and foodborne pathogens in the context of life's risks. The book covers bacteria in food (good or bad?), mad cow disease,

natural toxins in food, agrochemical residues in food, and genetically modified food.

*Help for worried kids: How your child can conquer anxiety and fear.* By Cynthia G. Last. CAN\$18.95. New York: Guilford Press, 2006.

Last is a clinical psychologist specializing in cognitive behavioural treatment for anxiety disorders in children and adolescents. She provides caring, practical advice on common disorders, such as separation anxiety disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, social anxiety disorder, and specific phobias. The book includes a list of treatment centres, Web sites to locate practitioners, associations and organizations, books, and a checklist and worksheets.

*Nutrition and the eye: A practical approach.* Edited by Frank Eperjesi and Stephen Beatty. CAN\$107.00. Edinburgh: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2006. ISBN 0-7506-8816-5.

Unlike most texts focused solely on research, this book provides “in a readily accessible way, a comprehensive guide and up-to-date reference source so as to enable the frontline eye care professional to give patients sound, evidence-based nutritional advice”.

## Healthy Canadians

[www.healthycanadians.ca](http://www.healthycanadians.ca)

How many health sites does Canada need? This site, launched in February, was “developed to provide Canadians easy access to Government of Canada health-related promotional campaigns” and will be updated regularly as new campaigns are launched. It states that is a shared initiative

led by Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada. As of 2 April 2007, it includes information about physical activity, healthy eating, healthy pregnancy, and secondhand smoke campaigns.

## Consumer health services

Klinke K. Needs assessment for a consumer health library service, Part one: the planning process. *MLA News*. 2007 Mar:13.

This brief but useful article includes recommended print resources and continuing education opportunities for those who will be setting up a consumer health information service. “Needs assessment for a consumer health library service, Part two: implementation and analysis” will appear in the May 2007 issue.

Li G. The median age technique for assessing currency of consumer health information monographic collections in public libraries. *J Med Libr Assoc*. 2007 Jan;95(1):89–90.

Consumer health information (CHI) collections need to be current to be of value to consumers making health care decisions. This article looked at 56 libraries in the Suffolk County, New York, cooperative library system; approximately 42% of the analyzed titles were less than or equal to 5 years old. While 5 years is the generally accepted cut off date for currency in a CHI collection, there are exceptions. For example, complementary and alternative health resources discuss techniques and treatments that do not change as readily as Western medicine and have a longer retention date. Some areas, such as women’s health, cancer treatment, and HIV/AIDS, experience a lot of change in recommended treatment and should be weeded more frequently; retaining material 2–3 years old is a better guideline.