

Spring 2016

PRICELESS

CKChild

Your Source for Pregnancy & Parenting in Chatham-Kent



Welcome to the 2016 Spring Issue of

CK Child!

CK Child is a hip, local parenting magazine for those raising their children in Chatham-Kent. Our goal is to unite our community by offering various viewpoints on topics relating to all stages of parenthood.

CK Child also highlights the many valuable locally-run businesses in our region & local family-friendly events occurring in C-K. Be sure to check out our new website at www.ckchild.ca

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Letter from the Editor

I just love the Spring issue! It always means that the end is near for the frigid temperatures and soon we'll finally be able to open our windows and feel the warm breeze blowing once again.

So now that the temperature is starting to rise, grab the kids and enjoy the great outdoors again! Make a commitment to get your kids outside a minimum of 30 minutes every day.

Go outside with them when you can and remember what it's like to be a kid. Show them the things you used to do when you were their age. And make it a goal to discover something new to do in C-K. There are some well-hidden gems in the local area so make it your mission to find at least one of them!

Warmest Regards,

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Opinions expressed in the CK Child magazine and website are the personal opinions of the original authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor and Abstract Marketing.

CK Child is printed 4 times a year – Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall

About the Cover

Don't let April showers dampen your playtime – check with your local recreation centres, gyms, and the municipality to see who offers free play.

This photoshoot took place at Pure Dance Academy, with the help of Madison, Bailey, and Jayden. They were a blast to work with!

Cover photography by:

Mark Requena Photography | markrequena.ca

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Dad Around Town

STAR WARS
CK STYLE: THE
OBSESSION
AWAKENS



We are smack dab in the middle of something completely epic. A few months ago, one of the most anticipated movies in decades was released on the big screen, and soon it will be available on DVD for home viewing. The world has been Star Wars crazy since the release of *The Force Awakens*, the seventh installment of the sci-fi saga. People who are addicted to this franchise observe May 4th as Star Wars Day because it allows for the play on words of "May the Fourth Be With You" to be its catchphrase. Hard-core fans do not need a special reason to celebrate, but this upcoming May 4th could be the most epic Star Wars Day ever. This will be the first day since its inception in 2011 when a movie was released a few months beforehand, giving the fans something new and fresh to commemorate. Star Wars has a history stretching back to the first trilogy from 1978-1983 and the second trilogy from 1999-2005. What goes around, comes around; everything old is new again with the third trilogy kicking off in 2015.

I'll try not to get all sci-fi nerdy, but Star Wars has become a bit of an obsession for my two sons, Ethan and Jonah, similar to my own fixation when I was a kid. They have completely embraced Star Wars and it all happened quite naturally; I did not force the Force upon them. It started last summer at a Star Wars birthday for one of Ethan's friends where they received lightsabres (a well-done DIY project from pool noodles and duct tape) and Jedi robes (another easy DIY with felt and twine). At this party, Ethan caught wind of this movie coming out and learned there were other ones before it. Once they saw *A New Hope*, they wanted to see more and more. So I obliged.

After watching the first six movies, our everyday lives seemed to incorporate the characters, the weapons, the ships, the droids, and the planets. Lightsabre battles with the foam blades were a daily occurrence. Jonah developed a particular interest in Darth Vader. It became normal to hear him humming the Imperial March that

accompanies Darth Vader in the movies, instead of the main theme song that most people recognize.

A neighbour's front yard became the Dagobah system, another is the icy planet of Hoth. Ethan and Jonah "fly" to these planets on their bikes to visit Yoda or battle an AT-AT walker. Not only has our neighbourhood become a Star Wars galaxy, but it has extended to other parts of the city. Our car is often converted to the Millennium Falcon, taking us to galaxies far, far away. The Ewok village is the park next to Memorial Arena. The play area at McDonald's has been renamed Cloud City. The flat parking lot of a nearby school is the desert landscape of Tatooine. Every day something new from around town becomes part of their Star Wars world. Even though we have mountains of Star Wars toys, it is their imaginations that have transformed our surroundings into a realm of fantasy.

Lying in bed the night before we went to *The Force Awakens*, Ethan said, "Tomorrow is going to be the best day of my life." I knew he was excited, but even I was surprised at his superlative. We talked earlier about when the first movie came out when I was a kid and he asked, "Did you feel the same way when you were seven, like it was the best day of your life?" Images of my wedding and the birth of my sons flashed through my head. I did not want to let him down by saying that seeing Star Wars may seem awesome, but there will be more meaningful and memorable things that happen in life. I'll let them have this level of excitement for now.

On our way to see *The Force Awakens*, Ethan said, "I know why they make these movies at the theatre. So we can figure out if we like them enough to watch at home." In a six-year-old's mind, it was more important to get a preview of the real movie to determine if it was worth watching it hundreds of times on DVD. That will come in time, but our only viewing so far at the theatre has left a lasting impression that has transformed our lives a bit. With the movie

coming out in December, it was front of mind around Christmas, and Ethan went so far as to slide in Star Wars references into Jesus' birth story. The three wise men that visit Jesus in the stable at our nativity scene are not wise men at all, but rather Jedi knights, not bringing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, but the power of the Force. That's how it plays out in our house anyway. Jonah does not relate so much to the light side; since the new movie, he has substituted his interest in Darth Vader with an unsettling desire to imitate Kylo Ren with his lightsabre. I'm not really worried about where his mind is at, I think he just likes his characters in black.

Not to forget about my wife, she has a very important role in this mania. Every time a DVD is watched at home, she must be present as the official reader of the opening words that scroll across the galaxy to get us in the right frame of mind. The movie cannot start without her reciting this introduction, and may the Force be with her for playing along with us boys.



Darin is a freelance writer who works and plays in Chatham-Kent, and is becoming a Dad around town by taking in children's entertainment and family-oriented attractions with his wife, Jennifer, and their sons, Ethan and Jonah. Share in more of his experiences at www.darincook.ca

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Theme 1 Run. Jump. Play. Every Day.

This theme encourages physical activity through a mix of active play, active transportation, sports, and structured physical activity.

Active Play

Active play comes in many forms and varies with age. Active play is any unstructured, child-directed movement that children do for fun - playground games like tag, skipping, or ball games for instance. The energy spent in play varies - it may be more or less vigorous than organized sports, but a child tends to do it longer, choosing for themselves when to rest. And it's not just great for a child's growing body - it has social and mental health benefits too.

Active Transportation

Active transportation is any way that children move from A to B using their own power. Besides walking and running, it includes things like biking, in-line skating, and skateboarding.

Sports and other structured Physical Activity

Children who take part in some form of organized physical activity are more likely to meet Canada's physical activity guidelines. Ontario children in grades 1 to 8 are required to get at least 20 minutes of sustained moderate to vigorous daily physical activity each school day. Elementary and middle school students have physical education classes. Structured physical activities might also occur out of school, including participation in sports teams, martial arts, and dance.

Canada's Physical Activity Guidelines

Physical activity is any form of regular movement. For kids of all ages, it should include bouts of moderate to vigorous activity that raises their heart rate. The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines set out levels of activity for children as they grow:

- **Infants (less than 1 year)** should be physically active several times daily - particularly through interactive, floor-based play.
- **Toddlers (1-2 years) and preschoolers (3-4) years** should get at least 180 minutes of physical activity at any intensity spread throughout the day. This should increase towards 60 minutes of energetic play each day by 5 years of age. Encourage different activities that develop movement skills.
- **Children and youth (5-17 years)** should enjoy moderate to vigorous physical activity adding up to 60 minutes daily.

At least 3 days a week kids should:

- Do vigorous activity that makes them breath hard and start to sweat, like playing tag, soccer, swimming, or cycling.
- Do things that strengthen muscles and bone, like hopping, skipping, running, gymnastics, playing and swinging on playground equipment, or volleyball.

Reducing the time that children spend sitting

"Sedentary behaviour" means doing things that require very little movement while in a sitting or reclining position, like watching TV, playing passive video or computer games, travelling by car, or spending time in strollers or high chairs. Research suggests that children with high levels of sedentary behaviour have greater

health risks, no matter how active they are at other times. The Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines recommend these limits for sedentary behaviour in children:

- Infants and toddlers under 2 years: Limit time in strollers or high chairs to no more than one hour at a time. No screen time is recommended.
- Children 2-4 years: Limit screen time to one hour per day.
- Children and youth 5-17 years: Limit recreational screen time to no more than 2 hours per day.
- Children of all ages: Limited motorized transport, extended sitting, and time spent indoors throughout the day.

Why 'Run. Jump. Play. Every Day?'

Regular physical activity is so important for children's development, not just physically, but also socially and mentally. Being active can help children:

- Improve cardiovascular fitness (heart and blood flow)
- Build strong muscles and bones
- Learn coordination, movement control, and confidence
- Maintain a health body weight
- Have less risk of chronic disease in later life
- Improve self-esteem and have less depression, anxiety, and emotional distress
- Improve learning and attention span, and achieve more at school.
- Have more chances to express themselves, learn new skills, and have fun
- Build social skills such as cooperation, respect for others, problem solving, athleticism, fair play, and teamwork

How do you get involved

Stay in touch with your Health Kids Community Challenge Project Manager: superkidsck@chatham-kent.ca

Learn more about healthy behaviours for our kids at www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/healthykids



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**RUN. JUMP.
PLAY.
EVERY DAY.**

**RUN. JUMP.
PLAY.
EVERY DAY.**



Playing keeps the magic in life and the magic in life comes from playing.

Most of us forget we were ever children. What's more, we also find it difficult to see that other adults were ever children. When my father was dying of throat cancer, I remember looking at him and even wondering that he too must have been a child. I think many people feel that way about their parents at one time or another. Remember when you were in school and you believed that your teacher was only a teacher and nothing else? That she never was or could be a mom, dad, sister, brother, etc. It was hard to see him or her in any context other than being in a classroom, let alone that they must have experienced childhood. As we get older, childhood can become a distant memory.

For some people, childhood isn't worth remembering because it wasn't the promise of wonderful experiences. For others, it was a time of wonder and creative experiences. For some, childhood is very magical. For me, I certainly experienced a lot of magic, figuratively and literally. Figuratively because it was a time of carefree learning and exploring. Literally, because in my later childhood I learned to become a magician. I love magic and, I think, so do many adults. Magic and illusions take us back to a childlike state - something we as adults don't often experience regularly. Children, on the other hand, inherently know how to suspend their disbeliefs. Another magician once told me that it is harder to trick kids. If you cut and restore a rope they actually believe it's possible, because they do this in their imaginary world. They know how to "make believe." They know how to play. Children have a carefree air about them. However, as they age, they become more responsible and, with that, their imagination becomes entangled with rules and explanations. This, in turn, crowds or drowns the creative side. It becomes more difficult to be happy or carefree.

As children transform into adults it seems harder to maintain that carefree nature because "life gets in the way." We become stifled with our responsibilities and forget how to breathe the air of

childhood. We try to pick up or find ways to feel carefree. If you're lucky you never lose hold of it, if you're not so lucky you have to learn to play again. As adults we sometimes recapture that feeling when we watch a movie, go to live theatre, or watch a magic trick. But we don't do it regularly and in unique ways. When we do, we are uplifted in that moment. Our spirit changes, albeit briefly.

That's why I believe everyone should have a hobby... something they are truly passionate about... Something that makes them get up early in the morning to do it... Something they have trouble putting down at night so they have to go to sleep because it's too late... My daughter doesn't like sleeping because she says sleeping is boring... most kids are like that. Most adults are not.

Entertaining hobbies or activities help give life a spark. They ignite a drive and vitality that is contagious. The more sparks you have, the more you enjoy life and live with zeal and passion. With an ignited passion, all other areas in your life can't help but be transformed. Your work is more enriching, as is your home life, and most importantly, your relationships. What do you do regularly to ignite the passion so you can get into a childlike state?

For the adults who may not have had a playful childhood, had a difficult one, or have merely forgotten what it was like, I encourage you to explore and try to imitate childhood enthusiasm, and get to that childlike state. Find or explore new hobbies and activities. If you can't think of one, experiment... that's what kids do all the time. Move away from the TV, computer, and video games and get involved. TV and computers, and even most video games, are two-dimensional, and are not interactive. You are not using most of your senses. You are not creating. You need to use all of you to experience all of you. People say to me they don't have time to do other things, but if you truly looked at your day you would be surprised at how much of it is wasted doing non-crucial things. The average person

in North America watches five hours of TV each day. Look at the time you may waste by moving a little slower on a task or between tasks. Do you ever notice how fast you get something done if you have to be somewhere at a certain time? Tighten up your day, find and shave off a few minutes each day to create something new. I guarantee you can find 30 minutes each day to do something unique and fun. If you can't, you aren't looking hard enough for those few lost minutes.

To make things somewhat easier, I've compiled a very incomplete list of things you could try... you might find something that makes you breathe like a child again.

- Try telling a joke
- Join Toastmasters/ public speaking (and you don't need a toaster for that)
- A bike ride (don't forget your helmet)
- Parachuting (don't forget your diaper if you are afraid of heights)
- Hang gliding (don't forget to take lessons)
- Sewing
- Needle point
- Grow a flower
- Try Origami
- Try some interior decorating at home or at your work space
- Juggle
- Take photos
- Write a story
- Keep a diary
- Try scrap booking
- Build a water fountain
- Build a ginger bread house
- Paint
- Sing
- Dance
- Learn a new language
- Relearn your current one
- Travel to a new territory, state, or country
- Try cooking if you don't do it (I was surprised how much fun it can be, but eating was more fun)
- Try baking, it's different than cooking (and more fattening)
- Make a candle
- Try a new arts and craft project
- Try sculpting
- Learn a magic trick
- Show a magic trick
- Act out a story to a child
- Try to imitate a character or actor
- Read a novel or short story
- Make a model airplane or car
- Learn chess or checkers
- Try water skiing (wear a life jacket)
- Try fishing
- Play a board game
- Try making something from wood
- Learn to use a new tool

I think instead of asking people, "Hi... so what do you do?" it should be, "What do you love to do?" And everyone should have an answer to this: "I'm really passionate about..."

What do you enjoy that you could get up two hours earlier than you



already do because you are excited about doing it? When was the last time you woke up early because you wanted to and not because you had to? Just because you were excited about doing something unique that gave you joy?

I have a good friend who said to me, "You know, I don't have any hobbies." I was quick to remind him that he used to love photography and writing, and he said, "Oh yeah, with life being so busy I forgot."

Don't worry about succeeding. When you see young kids they very seldom know how well they are creating or imagining. They are too busy playing and exploring. They aren't measuring their success; that's not a prerequisite. Playing is an exploration in "doing" and being in the moment. Learn to play well alone but don't forget to play with others. Play with your kids, play with your spouse, or play with your friends. Find your passion and create more. Learn to play. It will not only show you the creative vitality of life, but will also add a spark of magic to your life.

Dr. Chawla

Dr. Lalit Chawla, MD, CCFP, FCFP
A highly sought after International Speaker, Family Physician in Chatham, Ontario, and an Adjunct Professor at the Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry in London, Ontario.



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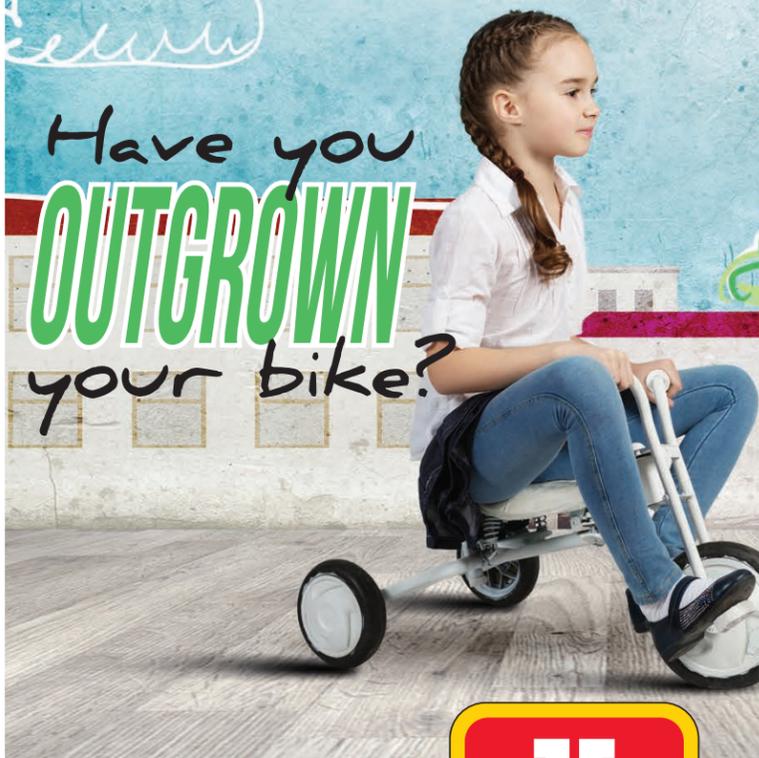
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Should my
child have
his tonsils
removed?



Dr Yammine checking her young patient for tonsillitis.

Removing tonsils (AKA tonsillectomy) is not as popular as it used to be. Today, Ear, Nose, and Throat surgeons (E.N.T.) follow specific criteria to decide if a child should undergo a tonsillectomy.

Tonsils are glandular tissue seen at the back the mouth. Tonsillitis (infection of the tonsils) occurs often in children older than 2 years. Children younger than 2 years old rarely get tonsillitis. Streptococcus species of bacteria are responsible for bacterial tonsillitis in children age 3 to 15. Viruses can also cause tonsillitis, typically in young children.

Tonsillitis is sometimes complicated by an abscess that may form around a tonsil, called a peritonsillar abscess. An abscess causes

severe sore throat, difficulty swallowing, a muffled voice (called a hot potato voice), difficulty opening the mouth, fever, and tender lymph nodes in the neck.

If your child has recurrent tonsillitis or a peritonsillar abscess, then your child may be a candidate for a tonsillectomy and should be assessed by an E.N.T. These are the criteria that E.N.T. surgeons follow:

- If your child has 7 episodes of tonsillitis in a year, or
- 5 episodes each year for 2 years, or
- 3 episodes annually for 3 years then your child is likely a candidate for a tonsillectomy and should be assessed by an E.N.T

Another common reason to remove the tonsils (and sometimes the adenoids) is if your child has sleep disordered breathing. Sleep disordered breathing refers to a range of problems from snoring to obstructive sleep apnea. Removing tonsils for this reason is becoming more common as sleep medicine and sleep research better understand how lack of sleep or disrupted sleep contributes to behaviour difficulties, growth, school performance, and even bedwetting. Many of these symptoms improved when children with sleep disordered breathing underwent a tonsillectomy or tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy (removing both the tonsils and adenoids).

There are other less common reasons to remove the tonsils such as unequal tonsils, or when a cancer is suspected. Tonsillectomy is also considered as adjunct treatment for Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcal infections often called PANDAS, when medical treatment alone is not successful.



Surgery always has risks of complications and a surgeon proceeds with surgery when the benefits of surgery are thought to outweigh the risks. The most common risks associated with tonsillectomy are infection and severe bleeding.

Tonsillectomy is a surgical procedure that is performed under general anesthetic and lasts 30-45 minutes. Children with sleep apnea, very young children and children with excessive bleeding or vomiting are admitted overnight following surgery, otherwise children are sent home once they have recovered from the general anesthetic. Most children take 1 to 2 weeks to recover. Here are some considerations post tonsillectomy:

- Pain and pain management: This is a painful surgery; following the pain management plan given to you by your surgeon is very important to keep your child comfortable.
- Fluid intake: Fluids are likely the most important requirement for recovery after a tonsillectomy.
- Eating: Children are usually on a soft diet during the recovery time.

- Activities: During recovery, it is recommended to avoid very strenuous physical activity, a gradual return to normal activity level is encouraged. Travel on a plane or to remote areas away from a hospital is not recommended for 2 weeks following surgery.
- Bleeding: If bright red bleeding occurs, you and your child should get to the nearest emergency department.



Dr. Yammine is an Otolaryngologist (Ear, Nose & Throat Specialist) serving the Chatham-Kent and broader South-western Ontario communities providing both general and laryngology services (treating voice and swallowing disorders). She may be contacted at info@ontarioent.com or 519-397-1721



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VACCINATION . . .

Wow ... this is a word that elicits a whole range of responses. It's become such a polarizing word! On one hand, it's common knowledge that vaccines are powerful medications that can prevent serious or life threatening disease. We rally behind charities and organizations that bring vaccines to impoverished countries where children get very little health care. Yet a lot of us get squeamish when we think about vaccinating our own children. I thought about how bizarre my behavior was one day, after stuffing some money into a donation box for an international children's charity. I was willing to pay for someone else's child to be vaccinated, yet felt guilty and reluctant to vaccinate my own! Even more bizarre is that I confidently vaccinate pets everyday, knowing these pets and their families will be safer and healthier because of it. But as a veterinarian I see the anxious, guilty look on the fur-parents face as they ask "Are these vaccinations safe? Are these shots necessary?." The same look I have on MY face as I ask my family doctor the same questions about vaccinating my kids.

So, maybe it's not that bizarre, but actually really complicated. Vaccinology (my made up word for the decision to vaccinate) is not an exact science, but an attempt to balance risks and benefits. If a vaccine was 100% safe all the time, in every patient, and the disease it prevented was life threatening and really common – than giving the vaccine would be a really easy decision, a no-brainer. However, most of the times it's not that cut and dry. The vaccines I recommend for my cat and dog patients have been rigorously tested for safety. However, certain individuals within the pet population may still have sensitivity to that vaccination (that sensitivity might be a result of something in the vaccine itself, or another illness or treatment that pet is going through). Also, the diseases I recommend vaccinating

for are a serious threat, some even life threatening. But due to the success of widespread vaccination, several of the diseases have now become pretty uncommon.

There is a concept called HERD IMMUNITY - where if a high enough percentage of a population is vaccinated than the chance of two animals that are unvaccinated and sick coming in contact with each other is really rare. Basically it means even when a pet is unvaccinated it is effectively protected against disease – because enough pets around them ARE vaccinated. Different factors will influence what the percentage is of animals that need to be vaccinated to achieve herd immunity, but it's usually around 70%. If the number of vaccinated animals gets too low (below the herd immunity percentage) than the chance of animals getting sick, or even an outbreak, increases.

So all the pets in Chatham-Kent could be considered part of a herd. When making vaccination recommendations, veterinarians, like myself, consider the severity of the disease, how common it is



(factoring in health of the whole herd), and how well the vaccine works. Then, for each individual pet, I must also understand their overall health and lifestyle (example farm dog vs. city dog), as many different factors will impact how likely they are to be exposed to different diseases.

So that process is not very exact and requires judgment. It can also cause a lot of anxiety and confusion for pet owners.

Here's the good news - when it comes to one particular disease, the decision is very straightforward.

RABIES is a fatal disease in wildlife, pets, farm animals, and people. In Canada, bats, foxes, and skunks are the most common transmitters of the disease. Even scarier - it cannot be diagnosed until after the victim has died. Rabies vaccine is safe and will protect your pet AND your family. Fear over unnecessary and over-vaccination has caused the validity of rabies vaccination to be questioned. This creates a very real (and unnecessary!) danger to pets and the human family with whom they live. Owners wanting to spare their pet the potential risk of a vaccine-related reaction not only put their pets' life in danger, but their own (and their family, and the community).

Any controversy that surrounds the risks and benefits of vaccinations for pets should not apply to RABIES and here's why.

RISK – Any risk is too much risk. Rabies, fortunately, is not a very common disease, which means the chance of your pet getting exposed is low. Alarmingly though, there have been cases of a few different strains in South Western Ontario, just in the last couple months. In Hamilton, at least four rabid raccoons have been identified with a strain that has not been seen in the province in 10 years. One of these raccoons was diagnosed after fighting with two dogs from the same household and biting their faces. These dogs were not vaccinated and will live in quarantine, away from their family, for several months, at least, until it has been determined if they contracted rabies. In January, a cow in Perth County was also diagnosed after it was found dead.

Do we really know how much Rabies is out there? Although it is law that Rabies cases be reported to the federal government, the task of testing and managing suspected cases has been cast off to municipal health units. Testing for Rabies is expensive and, in Chatham-Kent, animals are generally only accepted for testing if there has been a human exposure. Very likely, the recently reported cases only represent a portion of the number of rabies-infected animals in Ontario. Pets of all lifestyles are at risk: city pet, farm pet, even those that live in apartments or strictly indoors. Bats often get into houses and buildings, and have tested positive for rabies more than any other animal. No effective vaccine program exists for this species. City life is very successful for skunks and raccoons, putting city pets at risk in their own backyard.

HERD IMMUNITY will not reduce your pets' risk of exposure like some other diseases, because the most likely source of infection is wildlife, not a dog or cat. So even if all the other pets in your neighborhood have been vaccinated, your pets' risk of contracting rabies stays the same.

Another very important feature of rabies vaccine to consider, which makes it different from the others... It is the LAW! A law that

successfully made rabies an uncommon disease in Canada, through vaccination of pets and vaccine bait programs for wildlife.

Your veterinarian is going to be the best source of information regarding the safest and most effective vaccination protocol for YOUR pet. If you have concerns about your pets' risks with vaccination or rabies exposure, you ARE asking the right questions – and discuss them with your veterinarian. Different vaccine strategies can be an option for pets with a high risk of exposure or vaccine sensitivity. For more information on rabies and the incidence in Canada, visit ontario.ca or inspection.gc.ca



Dr. Emily moved from Saskatchewan to Chatham-Kent in 2003. Dr. Emily recalls, "I moved here to be part of a fantastic team at this exciting progressive veterinary hospital. And now we love it here! The people are friendly and have small town values. It means a lot to be able to raise my children in a place where they can benefit from both rural and urban community."



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1ST MONTH
FREE





Saturday, June 4, 2016

11:00am - 3:00pm

Tecumseh Park, Chatham

Activities include Inflatables & Face painting

Free Admission

For more info visit: www.chatham-kent.ca/recreation



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