

# Injury Prevention Messaging

Injuries kill more Canadian children than all other causes combined.<sup>1</sup> Some consider injuries as ‘accidents’, a childhood right-of-passage, or something that happens to other people. The truth is that injuries happen at an alarming rate and a vast majority of injuries are preventable.<sup>1,2</sup>

While there has been a positive downward trend in the rates of childhood injuries over the last decade, serious trauma and life-long disability continues to create hardship for children, families and communities across BC. Preventable childhood injuries remain a leading cause of hospitalization and death.<sup>3</sup>

Evidence-based injury prevention strategies, such as child restraint seats, stair gates and window guards along with broad-based public education on these strategies, are required to support behaviour change.<sup>3</sup>

## Feature: A Million Messages (AMM)

### The Program

A Million Messages (AMM) is a childhood injury prevention program designed to support families, parents and caregivers, and to avoid feeling overwhelmed with ‘a million messages’ on child health and wellness. Northern Health provides AMM through Public Health Nursing by delivering simple, consistent and routine messaging to parents and caregivers on injury risk appropriate to their child’s age and developmental milestones.

### Delivery

AMM is distributed by public health nurses as part of their regular contact with families, parents and caregivers with children between 0-6 years of age. Embedded into routine public health contact, the program is delivered to families during maternity home visits and regular immunization appointments. With each interaction, parents and caregivers discuss and learn about their child’s developmental stage, associated injury risk factors, and key injury prevention strategies. Written resources specific to injury prevention messages are shared to supplement the verbal discussion.



The goal of AMM is to promote optimal childhood development by decreasing childhood injuries in the home through a consistent, simple education and awareness program. Any setting in which services are provided to families caring for young children will find success with this program.

### Partnerships

AMM was developed by Capital Health, Alberta (now Alberta Health) and is recognized by the Public Health Agency of



*“Because of the program, I am reminded to speak about safety at every interaction with parents.”*

- Public Health Nurse, BC

Canada as a Canadian Best Practice program.<sup>4</sup> Northern Health partnered with Capital Health and their graphic designer to adapt AMM to reflect the population across northern BC.

## Materials

AMM tools support those delivering childhood injury prevention messaging by providing staff with standardized reference guidelines, handouts and displays. The resources are easy to understand and give parents and caregivers clear suggestions on how to keep their children safe and injury-free. Northern Health modified the AMM materials to include appropriate literacy levels and up-beat, colourful graphics and caricatures representing the multicultural demographics of northern BC.

## Evaluation

Several evaluations, comprehensive literature reviews, and expert and parent consultations support AMM as a childhood injury prevention program that is simple to implement and meets the needs of the families, parents and caregivers working to keep their children safe.

Process and outcome evaluations of AMM were completed in the Alberta Capital Health region from 2003-2005. These evaluations identified:<sup>5</sup>

- » Repeated AMM messages are simple and reach the targeted audiences.
- » 94% of parents/caregivers surveyed reported receiving injury prevention messages during their previous clinic visit.
- » 60% of parents/caregivers who received AMM messages indicated they had learned something new and 46% reported that this information led to behavior changes.
- » 93% of nurses trained to implement AMM reported it to be an easy to use tool that allowed them to be more efficient in delivering consistent injury prevention messages.
- » 83% of parents/caregivers indicated they noticed information and materials about child injury prevention, especially in the clinic setting.
- » Operations managers did not experience difficulty implementing or operationalizing AMM.



## Resources

- » A Million Messages, Northern Health [Link →]
- » Public Health Agency of Canada's Canadian Best Practices Portal [Link →]
- » Safe Kids Canada's Child Safety Good Practice Guide: Good investments in Unintentional Child Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion - Canadian Edition, at Parachute Canada [PDF →]



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AMM is an evidence-based and best-practice program that successfully delivers injury prevention strategies to families, while streamlining the work process for staff.<sup>4-6</sup>

## References

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6. King WJ, LeBlanc JC, Barrowman NJ, Klassen TP, Bernard-Bonnin A-C, Robitaille Y, et al. Long term effects of a home visit to prevent childhood injury: Three year follow up of a randomized trial. *Inj Prev.* 2005;11:106-109.