The Guelph Family Health Study

The Guelph Family Health Study (GFHS) aims to identify early life-risk factors for chronic disease and test family-based strategies to promote healthy behaviours early in life. The study has launched successfully and now includes a cohort of 130 families. To increase the number of families and length of follow up, we are looking to raise $2,000,000.

Impact Statement:

There is growing evidence that prevention of obesity and chronic disease for children needs to be family-focused rather than child-focused. There is currently no other active family cohort study that tests strategies to help families develop healthful eating, activity, and sleep behaviours.

The results of the research done by the GFHS will provide a sustainable model for early-life obesity and chronic disease prevention, leading to long-term improvements in health and reduction in costs to the health care system across Canada and internationally.

Policy makers and healthcare professionals will use our findings to make recommendations and create approaches for families with young children, to entrench skills and behaviours leading to long-term improvements in quality of life, reducing the risk of chronic health conditions.

Goals:

Our goal is to follow up to 1,000 families for 30 years, creating the largest longitudinal study of its kind in Canada.

Support for this study includes:

- A Research Chair in Early Childhood Nutrition
- Sponsorship for participating families
- Undergraduate summer research assistantships
- Graduate scholarships

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