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December 2017 HEALTH OFFICE NEWSLETTER

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MEDICATIONS:

Several reminders regarding medications:

- If any over the counter (OTC) medication was given prior to the school day, please call your school's nurse and inform her so if your child needs to be medicated again we know when the appropriate time would be.
- Cough drops are not supplied in the health offices. A child may bring their own cough drops to school, but they need to be kept in the health office. We find that children sometimes like to eat them like it is "candy".

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EXTREME COLD

Whenever temperatures drop dramatically below normal, staying warm and safe can become challenging. In general, your risk of health effects like windburn and frostbite increase at wind chill values below -16°F . The wind can make cold temperatures feel even colder. The wind chill index measures what the temperature feels like on exposed skin based on the speed of the wind. A wind chill can cause your body to lose heat faster and your skin to freeze very quickly.

What is Frostbite

When the temperature drops below 32°F , blood vessels close to the skin constrict to protect the core body temperature. When your body is exposed to the cold for a long period of time, blood flow to your hands, feet, nose, and ears can be severely restricted. The combination of poor circulation and extreme cold can lead to frostbite.

Frostbite generally occurs in body parts furthest from the heart:

- Hands • feet • nose • ears

Mild frostbite (frostnip) makes your skin look yellowish or white but it is still soft to the touch. Your skin might turn red during the warming process, but normal color returns once the area is warmed.

Severe frostbite can cause permanent damage to body tissue if it is not treated immediately. Nerve damage occurs and frostbitten skin becomes discolored and turns black. After some time, nerve damage becomes so severe that you will lose feeling in the affected area and blisters will occur. If the skin is broken and becomes infected, gangrene can set in which can result in loss of limbs.

How to treat frostbite

Mild frostbite (frostnip) can be treated in two ways:

Passive warming - move to a warm room, wrap yourself in blankets or reheat your body by skin-to-skin contact with another person.

Active warming - this can be done along with passive warming. Add heat directly to the frostbitten area. The idea is to thaw the injured skin as quickly as possible without burning yourself. Thawing frostbitten skin is very painful so the injured skin should be placed in water that is just above body temperature. Do not rub, massage or shake the injured skin because that can cause more damage.

Severe frostbite requires immediate medical attention. While you are waiting for help to arrive begin treating it with passive and active warming.

REDUCE YOUR RISK

Protect yourself from extreme cold conditions by following these tips: Wear appropriate clothing • Always wear clothing appropriate for the weather. Synthetic and wool fabrics provide better insulation. • Dress in layers with a wind resistant outer layer. You can remove layers if you get too warm (before you start sweating) or add a layer if you get cold. • Wear warm socks, gloves, a hat and scarf in cold weather. Be sure to put a scarf over your nose to protect it. If you get wet, change into dry clothing as soon as possible. You lose heat faster when you're wet. • On sunny days wear sun glasses, lip balm and sunscreen to protect your skin from UV rays and keep it moisturized to help prevent windburn. • Wear a face mask and goggles if you are participating in winter activities such as skiing, snowmobiling and skating to protect your face from frostbite and windburn. • Keep moving (especially your hands and feet) to keep your blood flowing and maintain your body heat.

Vision Screening

Vision screening was completed at all the elementary schools recently. If your child did not pass the vision re-screen day a letter has been sent home requesting further follow-up by an eye doctor. If you have any questions regarding the vision screening results, please do not hesitate to contact your school's nurse. We will complete vision re-screens at SMS by mid-January.

If you received a referral letter, please let us know if your child was seen by the eye doctor and the results of the exam. Because vision can affect learning, it is important that students who need glasses wear them while in school.

Vision screening programs are intended to identify children who may have undetected vision problems. If the screening indicates a vision problem, they are referred for further evaluation. However, a vision screening cannot be relied on to provide the same results as a comprehensive eye and vision exam.



Winter Season Is Here

And you know what that means – Outdoor Recess!! Please make sure you are sending your children to school properly dressed for the weather. This includes a warm coat, snow pants, hats, mittens or gloves and boots. All clothes should be labeled. We have outside recess every day except when weather is not permitting.



Extra Clothing

A request from the health office: Please send extra clothing to school with your elementary student. At this time of the year we have many accidents due to various reasons: wet snow, spilling of beverages and the occasional urine or BM accident. Thank you in advance!



Colds versus Flu: How to Tell the Difference

Are you coming down with a cold? Do you have the flu?

Look below to see some differences and similarities between colds and flu.

Differences Between Colds and the Flu	
WITH A COLD:	WITH THE FLU:
Symptoms are usually less severe than flu symptoms	Symptoms are usually more severe than cold symptoms
Symptoms develop gradually over a few days.	Symptoms come on quickly and severely.
You rarely have a fever.	You almost always have a fever .
You feel sick mostly in your head and nose.	Your entire body feels sick.
Body aches, headaches and pain are usually mild if you have them.	Body aches, headaches and pain are common and can be severe.
You may or may not feel tired and weak.	Tiredness and weakness are common.
There is no vaccine to protect you.	You can get vaccine to protect yourself.
Colds generally do not result in serious health problems, such as pneumonia, bacterial infections, or hospitalizations.	The flu can result in serious health problems, such as pneumonia, bacterial infections, or hospitalizations.
Similarities Between Colds and the Flu	
WITH A COLD:	WITH THE FLU:
Caused by a virus.	Caused by a virus.
Affects the body's breathing system (nose, throat, windpipe and lungs).	Affects the body's breathing system (nose, throat, windpipe and lungs).
Usually goes away on its own.	Usually goes away on its own.
You should contact your doctor if symptoms change or get worse.	You should contact your doctor if symptoms change or get worse. There are antiviral medicines, by prescription, to treat the flu.

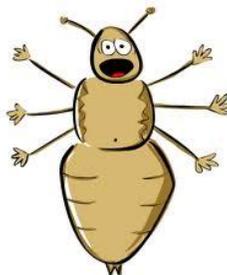


Head Lice

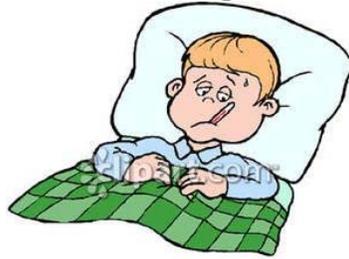
Head lice are spread most commonly by direct head-to-head (hair-to-hair) contact. However, much less frequently they are spread by sharing clothing or belongings onto which lice have crawled or nits attached to shed hairs may have fallen. The risk of getting infested by a louse that has fallen onto a carpet or furniture is very small. Head lice survive less than 1-2 days if they fall off a person and cannot feed; nits cannot hatch and usually die within a week if they are not kept at the same temperature as that found close to the scalp.

The following are steps that can be taken to help prevent and control the spread of head lice:

- Avoid head-to-head (hair-to-hair) contact during play and other activities at home, school, and elsewhere (sports activities, playground, slumber parties, camp).
- Do not share clothing such as hats, scarves, coats, sports uniforms, hair ribbons, or barrettes.
- Check your child's hair frequently.
- Braid long hair every day or pull it back in a pony tail.
- Do not pile jackets and backpacks into one heap. Keep items hung up separately.
- Do not share combs, brushes, or towels. Disinfest combs and brushes used by an infested person by soaking them in hot water (at least 130°F) for 5-10 minutes.
- Do not lie on beds, couches, pillows, carpets, or stuffed animals that have recently been in contact with an infested person.
- Machine wash and dry clothing, bed linens, and other items that an infested person wore or used during the 2 days before treatment using the hot water (130°F) laundry cycle and the high heat drying cycle. Clothing and items that are not washable can be dry-cleaned OR sealed in a plastic bag and stored for 2 weeks.
- Vacuum the floor and furniture, particularly where the infested person sat or lay. However, spending much time and money on housecleaning activities is not necessary to avoid reinfestation by lice or nits that may have fallen off the head or crawled onto furniture or clothing.
- Do not use fumigant sprays or fogs; they are not necessary to control head lice and can be toxic if inhaled or absorbed through the skin.



Other illness we are seeing in the health offices:



Pink Eye: Conjunctivitis, commonly known as pinkeye, is an inflammation of the conjunctiva, the clear membrane that covers the white part of the eye and the inner surface of the eyelids.

Pink eye is an eye infection that may cause redness and discharge from the eye, sometimes with pain or itching. It can be caused by bacteria or viruses.

Symptoms can vary from child to child. One of the most common symptoms is discomfort in the eye. A child may say that it feels like there's sand in the eye. It can also cause discharge from the eyes, which may cause the eyelids to stick together when the child awakens in the morning. Some kids have swollen eye lids or sensitivity to light. A clear watery drainage is common with viral and allergic pinkeye. When the drainage is more greenish-yellow (and there's a lot of it), this is likely bacterial pinkeye. Cases of pink eye that are caused by bacteria or viruses are contagious. A child can get pink eye by touching an infected person or something an infected person has touched, such as a used tissue. Also, someone who has pink eye in one eye can inadvertently spread it to the other eye by touching the infected eye, then touching the other eye. Bacterial pinkeye is typically treated with antibiotic eyedrops or ointment to clear the infection. Most viral pinkeye cases have no specific treatment — you just have to let the virus run its course.

To reduce pain and to remove the discharge of bacterial or viral pinkeye, use a cold or warm compress on the eyes. Make sure to use a different washcloth for each eye to prevent spreading any infection. And use clean washcloths each time. Clean the eye drainage by wiping from the inside to the outside of the eye area. Tylenol or ibuprofen also might make the child feel more comfortable. Make sure you read the package for age appropriate dosages or consult with your medical provider.

With bacterial pinkeye, you can usually return to school 24 hours after antibiotics have been started, as long as symptoms have improved. With viral pinkeye, you are contagious as long as the symptoms last. Check with your doctor to be certain!

If you or your child has pinkeye, avoid touching the eye area, and wash your hands frequently, particularly after applying medications to the area. Never share towels and throw away tissues after each use. Change linens and towels daily. Disinfect all surfaces, including countertops, sinks, and doorknobs.

Strep: Strep throat is a contagious disease. It is caused by infection with group A streptococci bacteria. The symptoms of strep throat include sore throat, fever and stomach pain, along with red and swollen tonsils. The bacteria that cause strep throat are spread through person-to-person contact. You usually can't get strep by touching schoolbooks, tables, or other surfaces that an infected person has touched. The bacteria that cause strep throat tend to hang out in the nose and throat, so sneezing, coughing, or shaking hands can easily

spread the strep infection from one person to another. That's why it's so important to *wash your hands* as often as possible.

If you have strep throat, your doctor will give you a prescription to take antibiotics for 10 days. You will begin to feel better about 24 hours after starting the medication. Even if you don't feel sick anymore, it's important to take the antibiotics for the full 10 days.

To prevent getting other people sick, it's important to *stay home for at least 24 hours* until the antibiotics have had a chance to work. Wash your forks, spoons, plates and cups in hot soapy water after you use them. Don't share food, drinks, napkins, tissues or towels with other people. Cover your nose and mouth when you sneeze or cough to prevent passing fluid droplets to someone else.

And let your school know that your child has been diagnosed with strep throat.

The importance of washing your hands!!

Keeping our hands clean is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others.

When should you wash your hands?

- Before, during and after preparing food
- Before eating food
- Before and after caring for someone who is sick
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After using the toilet
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- After touching an animal, animal feed or animal waste
- After handling pet food or pet treats
- After touching garbage

How should you wash your hands?

- **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from the beginning to the end twice.
- **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
- **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

