

NURSES' NOTES

Spring Issue

Editor Jane Petrofsky, RN
Co-Editor Johnnye Farrell, RN

Who is Responsible for the Health of our Youth?

Pat Wilson RN MSN/Ed



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Schools can make a difference by promoting and implementing programs that address healthy eating and exercising.

Health professionals and agencies are well aware of the increasing size of American youth and adults. Possible theories for this trend are lack of exercise, increased sedentary time, unhealthy eating habits, decreased recess and playtime and elimination of decreased Physical Education classes. Children spend a large part of their time in school. Schools are now beginning to address the health and wellness of all students. "Health and success in school are interrelated. Schools cannot achieve their primary mission of education if students and staff are not healthy and fit physically, mentally, and socially" (National Association of State Board in State Education Standard, 2004).

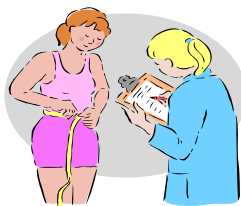
Schools cannot solve the problem, or become the solution to the problem. Schools can make a difference by promoting and implementing programs that address healthy eating and exercising. Research from many different organizations has documented the relationship between physical activities, good nutrition, a well-rounded physical education program and academic performance. Students need to understand the connection in order to maintain healthy lifestyles.

The School District of University City is aware of the mentioned relationships. The Board of Education voted to integrate Dr J's Nutrition and Fitness program into the physical education classes. This program enhances and

assists physical education instructors' current curriculum. The nurses work with the PE instructors to provide health and nutritional tips. A DVD is distributed to all participants that can be used at home to encourage family participation. Height and weight are monitored annually and used as a tool to monitor students' health and progress. Parental consent is required for participation and discussion in this program. The University City High Fitness program is scheduled afterschool. This includes a fitness instructor and nutrition counseling. Dr J's Weight Loss program is implemented in other area schools, community, and faith-based organizations.

There are no perfect solutions to childhood and adult obesity and it is proving to be one of the biggest millennium challenges. School districts are faced with tackling the problem and educating youth. Education is more than testing performance. It is preparing students to become healthy independent productive adults. This can only be done with cooperation and teamwork. This program's primary goal is to educate our youth on proper nutrition and health with physical education teachers focusing on fitness.

Wechler, H., McKenna, M. and Dietz, W. (2004) The State Education Standard.





If you crank up the volume to 80% of the maximum you must limit your listening time.

Can you hear me now?

Joanne Fehling RN MSN
U-City High school

Using MP3 players, iPods, headphones & turning up the tunes could damage your hearing. Studies have shown that those of us who did not use earphones, and turned up the volume now have hearing damage. Interviews with current rockers will find that a lot of them have hearing impairments.

The bottom-line - the higher the volume, the more you should limit your listening time.

How long and how loud?

According to Cory Portnuff, audiologist, if you listen in the range of 10-50 % of the volume you can listen as long as you want. If you crank up the volume to 80% of the

maximum you must limit your listening time.

- Ear buds (iPod) 1.5 hrs
- Sound isolating headphones 50 minutes
- Over the ear headphones 5 hours

The bottom line if you turn up the volume, you will eventually have irreparable hearing loss.

Some of the popular listening devices have controls that can set the volume. Consider using these settings.

References: WebMD, Inc 2006

Health Fair U City

Johnnye Farrell RN



Free Immunization

Come be informed, mark your calendars for Saturday, June 7, 2008 Attend a community health fair hosted by the School District of University City school nurses. We have invited health and community vendors from the public and private sectors, as well as University City's finest, Police and Fire departments.

We plan to have representatives from Healthcare USA, Mercy Health Plan, Harmony Health Plan, health screening from St. Louis County Department of Health, The American Red Cross, Nurses for Newborns, Dr J's Family Weight Loss Program, The

Dairy Council and more.

Check the district web site at www.u-cityschools.org for updates or check with your school nurse.

This is our first health fair and we hope to make it an annual event, but we need your support and presence.

The event will begin at 9:00 AM and end at 1:00 PM, and will be held at Julia Goldstein Early Childhood Education Center, 737 Kingsland Ave, near the Delmar loop. Come and bring the family, there will be something for all to enjoy.

The Role of the School Nurse

Jane W. Petrofsky, R.N.

The birth of school nursing started in 1902 in New York City. The initial role of the school nurse was to decrease the rate of absenteeism of students by addressing health needs associated with communicable diseases. The school nurse supports the success of students by providing health care assessment, intervention, and follow-up for all children in the school setting. School nurses come from a multitude of specialty areas and function in numerous roles and practice settings. In other words, **it's not just giving out band-aids and safety pins.**

What is the role of a school nurse? The National Association of School Nurses published an issue brief in 2002 describing the role of school nursing in relationship to school health services.

The school nurse provides direct health care to students and staff.

Care may involve treatment of health problems, communication with parents for treatment, and referral to other providers. The school nurse evaluates care for students with chronic health conditions. This care should begin with the development of an individualized health care plan with an emergency action plan for acute cases. The school nurse is responsible for medication administration and health care procedures that are ordered by a licensed health care provider. The school nurse's body of knowledge grows through personal professional development to keep up with the ever-changing practice and technology.

The school nurse provides leadership for the provision of health services. The school nurse must take into account the nature of the school environment, including available resources. As the health care expert within the school, she/he delegates appropriate care within applicable laws.

The school nurse provides screening and referral for health conditions.

The school nurse assesses the overall system of care and develops a plan for assuring that health needs are met. This leadership role includes responding to emergencies and disasters, and training of staff to respond appropriately.

Screening is done to address and recognize potential health problems that may cause barriers to learning or underlying medical conditions. District and state policy, available community resources and student population requirements determine screening guidelines.

The school nurse promotes a healthy school environment.

The school nurse collaborates with counselors and social workers to provide a safe emotional school environment for optimum learning. The nurse monitors immunizations, reports communicable diseases as required by law and excludes infectious students per state law and school district guidelines. They educate staff and students in universal precautions for blood borne pathogens and other infectious diseases.

The school nurse promotes health.

The school nurse provides age appropriate health education to individual students, groups of students, or classes. They may also provide programs to staff, families, and the community on health topics. Other health promotion activities may include health fairs, consultation with other school support staff such as food service personnel or physical education teachers regarding healthy lifestyles.

The school nurse serves in a leadership role for health policies and programs.

The school nurse should play an active role in the development and evaluation of school health policies. The school nurse promotes nursing as a career, serves as role model, and as a preceptor for student nurses or as a mentor for incoming school nurses. They participate in outcome research, and advocate for programs and policies that positively affect the health of students or impact the profession of school nursing.

School nursing came into existence in 1902, more than 100 years ago.

The school nurse serves as a liaison between school personnel, family, community, and health care providers.

The school nurse participates in Individualized Education Plan and 504 teams and on student and family assistance teams. The nurse communicates with the family and with community health providers and community health care agencies. A few school nurses serve on community coalitions to promote the health of the community.

Healthy children are successful learners. The school nurse has a multi-faceted role within the school setting. They work as part of a team to support the physical, mental, emotional, and social health of students and their success in the learning process.

National Association of School Nurses (2002), *School Health Nursing Services Role in Health Care*. Issue Brief (Edited version of the issue Brief)

The Support Team's primary focus is to support the educational process. Everyone has an important role in the education of our students. Remember your school nurse May 7 on school nurses' day.

Spring is Asthma and Allergy Season

Pat Wilson RN MSN/Ed

Itchy watery eyes, sneezing, and stuffy runny nose are typical midwestern spring seasonal allergy symptoms. Most individuals treat the symptoms with over-the-counter allergy medicines, plenty of fluids and avoiding the allergens by staying indoors. People with asthma find this season to be especially difficult. The inhaled allergen can bring on an attack. Allergies are the most common cause of asthma attacks in teenagers and children over two (Woolston, 2008).

Typical causes of an asthma attack are animal dander, dust mites, molds and fungus, pollen from grass, weeds, and trees and food allergies. Tobacco smoke is the worst offender. Additional causes of attack are exercise, colds or viruses and emotional distress.

Asthma attacks seem to come out of nowhere. A person can feel fine and the next minute experience chest tightness, shortness of breath and wheezing. The cause of these symptoms is inflamed airways. This inflammation causes narrowing of airways and wheezing. When an allergen irritates the airways the wheezing becomes worse. Irritants can be wood-burning smoke, perfumes, household cleaners, hairsprays, cold air, changes in temperature and humidity, airborne particles such as talcum powder and sulfites to preserve fruits and vegetables. Also, invasion of the airways from upper respiratory viruses, colds and heartburn (reflux) can trigger symptoms.

Strong emotional feelings can make the disease more difficult to manage. Best to stay calm when an attack occurs. Fits of laughter has been known to trigger an attack.

Symptoms

Mild: Feeling out of breath, first noticed with light exercise such as walking.

Moderate: Shortness of Breath, not able to complete a sentence, tightness in chest, loud wheezing or coughing, any activity will make the shortness of breath worse.

Severe: Call 911, not able to speak, flared nostril, sitting hunched over, rib retraction, tight neck muscles, bluish lips or nail beds.

Treatment

The best treatment is to have a plan, relax, take deep breaths and use the prescribed emergency inhaler with a spacer as soon as symptoms start. Respiratory distress is frightening and panicking makes the symptoms worse. Follow the physician's direction on the action plan and go to the emergency room or call 911 for worsening symptoms. Asthma can be control with the right treatment plan, using the rescue medication correctly and taking prescribed allergy and asthma control medication, avoiding allergens, taking rescue medication prior to any exercise (exercise-induced asthma), and use rescue medication to treat coughs for colds or viruses. Attend asthma classes to learn more about your disease and control symptoms.

Woolston, C (2008). What Triggers an Asthma Attack, *Caremark Health Resources*.
healthresources.caremark.com/topic