

# **APPLEGARTH ELEMENTARY HEALTH OFFICE**

## **Newsletter from Bonnie Essig, Applegarth School Nurse**

Welcome back Applegarth parents and students! I hope everyone had a terrific summer. As we are entering a new school year here at Applegarth Elementary, we all would like for the entire student population to have a healthy and happy school year. I put together this fact sheet on prevention tips as health reminders for how we can all work to keep this school year a healthy one! Please feel free to contact the health office with any questions or concerns at 609-655-0604, ext. 3.

Thank you,  
Bonnie Essig RN, MSN, CSN  
Applegarth School Nurse

### **Nutrition and the Health of Young People**

#### **Benefits of Healthy Eating**

- Proper nutrition promotes the optimal growth and development of children.
- Healthy eating helps prevent high cholesterol and high blood pressure and helps reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, and diabetes.
- Healthy eating helps reduce one's risk for developing obesity, osteoporosis, iron deficiency, and dental caries (cavities).

#### **Diet and Academic Performance**

- Eating a healthy breakfast is associated with improved cognitive function (especially memory), reduced absenteeism, and improved mood.

### **Handwashing: Clean Hands Save Lives**

Keeping hands clean through improved hand hygiene is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Many diseases and conditions are spread by not washing hands with soap and clean running water. If clean running water is not accessible, as is common in many parts of the world, use soap and available water. If soap and water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol to clean hands.

### **Flu Prevention**

CDC recommends a three-step approach to fighting influenza (flu). The first and most important step is to get a flu vaccination each year. If you get the flu, there are prescription antiviral drugs that can treat your illness. Early treatment is especially important for the elderly, the very young, people with certain chronic health conditions, and pregnant women. Finally, everyday preventive

actions may slow the spread of germs that cause respiratory (nose, throat, and lungs) illnesses, like flu. Below are informative facts about information about everyday preventive actions.

### **How does the flu spread?**

Flu viruses are thought to spread mainly from person to person through droplets made when people with the flu cough, sneeze, or talk. Flu viruses also may spread when people touch something with flu virus on it and then touch their mouth, eyes, or nose. Many other viruses spread these ways too.

People infected with flu may be able to infect others beginning 1 day **before** symptoms develop and up to 5-7 days **after** becoming sick. That means you may be able to spread the flu to someone else before you know you are sick as well as while you are sick. Young children, those who are severely ill and those who have severely weakened immune systems, may be able to infect others for longer than 5-7 days.

- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you or your child get sick with flu-like illness, CDC recommends that you (or your child) stay home for at least 24 hours after the fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. The fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.
- While sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, germs spread this way.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs like the flu.
- If an outbreak of flu or another illness occurs, follow public health advice. This may include information about how to increase distance between people and other measures.

### **Head Lice Prevention**

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 that may have fallen out. 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.

- 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.