

FEBRUARY 2024

# SCHOOL NURSE *Newsletter*




## Respiratory Illness

Respiratory viruses commonly cause illness such as flu, COVID-19, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), especially in the fall and winter. There are actions you can take to protect yourself and others. Use the information provided here as a reminder and share with school staff to inform others.

### RSV

The CDC recommends the RSV vaccine to infants under 19 months, pregnant women (during weeks 32-36) and people over the age of 60. Although the vaccine is not recommended for school-aged children at this time, it is good to encourage students to practice everyday prevention measures to help reduce the spread of RSV and other respiratory illnesses.

#### Where to get RSV vaccine:

- Pediatrician's offices ~ parents should check with their provider.
  - Local pharmacies carry the vaccine for 60+.
- Those interested in receiving the vaccine should check with their pharmacy for availability and cost/insurance coverage.

### Respiratory Illness FAQs

[Learn about RSV symptoms, care, and treatment](#)

## Sexual Health

It is crucial to shed light on potential dangers associated with gonorrhea and chlamydia, and other sexually transmitted infections (STI) among school-aged teenagers. Both gonorrhea and chlamydia can have serious consequences on the reproductive health of adolescents, leading to pelvic inflammatory disease, infertility, and an increased risk of contracting other STIs. The silent nature of these infections, often asymptomatic, further emphasizes the importance of proactive education and prevention measures.

Promoting awareness about the significance of condom use and abstinence are key strategies in curbing the spread of gonorrhea and chlamydia among teenagers. Condoms serve as a barrier method that not only reduces the risk of STI transmission but also provides protection against unintended pregnancies. By emphasizing the correct and consistent use of condoms, we empower teenagers with the knowledge and tools to make responsible choices about their sexual health. Simultaneously, promoting abstinence as a valid and healthy choice reinforces the importance of delaying sexual activity until individuals are emotionally and physically ready, ultimately reducing the likelihood of STI transmission. Through comprehensive education on these preventive measures, we aim to empower teens to make informed decisions that safeguard their sexual health and well-being.

Is your school in need of condoms? [Contact us today for free condoms](#)

### 2023 Reported Cases in Chautauqua County 11-19 Year-Olds

Chlamydia

124

Gonorrhea

19

February is

# AMERICAN HEART month



## School programing

For nearly 50 years, the American Heart Association has been partnering with educators in elementary, middle and high schools across the nation to help educate students about healthy living.



American Heart Association.  
**KIDS HEART CHALLENGE** | **AMERICAN HEART CHALLENGE™**

The Kids Heart Challenge and American Heart Challenge are service-learning based fundraising programs that give students the opportunity to feel good, while doing good. It's a way for students to better their life – all while changing someone else's.

Students, families and staff will also learn valuable life skills, including how to make smart food choices, the importance of avoiding vaping/tobacco and the lifesaving skill of Hands-Only CPR.

[Learn more](#)

## Learn CPR

Many people who survive a cardiac emergency are helped by a bystander. The American Red Cross has a short 3-minute video, to help you learn how to perform Hands-Only CPR so that you can help deliver life-saving care until professional responders arrive. Learning this simple process can help save a life!

[Watch this short 3-minute video to learn hands-only CPR.](#)

The [American Red Cross](#) and locally, the Safety Village in Lakewood offer certified CPR course trainings for those looking for a more in-depth and certified training course.



**American Red Cross**

## Info for nurses & all adults!

We believe that encouraging a heart-healthy lifestyle involves a multifaceted approach, addressing elements such as stress reduction, balanced nutrition, and regular physical activity. One pivotal aspect to highlight is the significance of stress management in maintaining a healthy heart. Chronic stress has been linked to adverse cardiovascular effects, making stress reduction strategies crucial. Consider incorporating mindfulness practices, such as deep-breathing exercises or meditation, into your daily routines.

Another key focus area is promoting a balanced and nutritious diet, with a special emphasis on incorporating whole grains. Discover easy-to-implement dietary changes, like substituting refined grains with whole grains. Eating less saturated fat, like creamy sauces and gravy, and cutting down on sodium intake will help keep your heart healthy.

Advocating for regular physical activity is integral to a heart-healthy lifestyle. As school nurses, finding indoor walking routes within your school environment or exploring local yoga classes can be encouraged. Physical activity not only strengthens the heart but also positively influences mood and overall well-being.



## De-escalating/managing behaviors in the school

### The lesson of ABC's

When asked to write an article regarding “de-escalating/managing behaviors in the school” a wide variety of interventions came to mind; most importantly being that of the nervous system, brain, how we take in, process and express information. Behaviors are caused by a variety of reasons, including both external and internal factors. Our nervous system responds to over 11 million bits of information every second. Some come from a more internal place or pattern of thinking, some are “hardwired this way”.

When dealing with difficult situations in a classroom setting, we need to be asking ourselves as the expert in the situation “Am I hearing what they are saying? Or am I responding from my own place of trigger?” As well as “Am I relaying my message or replying in a way that is being heard and understood?”. Root-cause analysis isn't always a quick or easy act to engage in, as it requires repeated patience and persistence on our part.

In relation to behaviors and children, let's talk about children who have experienced trauma. Children who have experienced traumatic events tend to have a nervous system that can be more easily kicked into overdrive; these children may initially require less stimulation when attempting to understand their emotions and relay their thoughts through behaviors. Root-cause analysis allows us to dive deeper into look at the behavior as “is it willful or survival-based exhibits of behaviors?”. It is important we know when certain behaviors are a child's coping mechanisms learned through survival.

It is important to also give ourselves grace and develop a plan for redirection to occur with the help of others. Behavior always seeks an outcome. We need to look at the ABC's more closely; the antecedents, or what comes before the behavior?; the act of the behavior itself and the outcome or consequences of those actions. What is it they are seeking? Once we look at the patterns we can then see more clearly at the true cause of the behaviors being exhibited.

We all falter at giving ourselves patience with certain things, children are no different. We need to have patience with ourselves but more importantly those with whom we are working. Behavior modification does not happen overnight and the less patience we have the longer it will take. Teaching children to learn, understand and correctly label their emotions and feelings can help them better understand where the fuel for the behavior is coming from and better self-regulate their emotions which in turn better regulates their behavior. When we reward the child for self-regulation or proper behavior modification it reinforces the positive instead of punishing for the negative. This allows us to be more preventative instead of reactive.

In summary- remember the importance of the ABC's, (antecedent's behaviors and consequences) and that it is being communicated in a language the child understands.

Some great tools in our toolbox include utilizing a behavior tracking system and rewards given for goals achieved. For example, when a certain number of stickers are given for positive behaviors shown, a child can then be rewarded for that achieved goal instead of negatively reinforcing the behavior in the form of a punishment or consequence. We can't wait for the negative behaviors to occur and then correct them. We have to be reinforcing the positive and in turn dissolve the negative prior to its occurrence. Take a close look at your child's personality type as well. Is it a child who enjoys being the head of class or taking the lead? Could we reward them with simple acts such as passing out test papers? Or the child who needs more quiet time with 10-minute session in a calming area with fidget toys or soothing music.

Some resources with more in-depth information include TherapistAid.com; PESI.com, ABC Charts and Data Collection from the National Autistic Society and Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS) through the Department of Education.



*This article provided by:*



**CLICK TO SUBMIT TOPICS**

Please tell us what topics or emerging issues you would like to see covered in future newsletters.

## Self-Care

In the demanding field of nursing, prioritizing self-care is not just a luxury but a necessity for sustaining physical, mental, and emotional well-being. The World Health Organization defines self-care as the ability for individuals, families, and communities to promote health, prevent disease, maintain health, and cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a health-care provider. This holds true for school nurses who play a vital role in promoting the health of their students. Understanding the diverse facets of self-care is crucial, and you can embrace a holistic approach to maintain your overall well-being.



Physical self-care forms the foundation for a nurse's vitality. Encouraging regular exercise, a balanced diet, and ample rest are pivotal in ensuring physical well-being. Meanwhile, psychological self-care involves fostering personal and professional growth. Practices such as meditation, journaling, and digital detox can serve as effective tools for mental rejuvenation. Emotional self-care emphasizes the importance of mindfulness, gratitude, and seeking help when needed, acknowledging and addressing the emotional aspects of the nursing profession.

Social self-care underscores the significance of building and nurturing relationships. School nurses should prioritize quality time with friends and family, set boundaries, and strike a balance between personal and professional life. Professional self-care involves maintaining a healthy work-life balance, organizing workload, and being honest about one's capacity. Environmental self-care encourages creating conducive surroundings by decluttering work and home spaces, establishing designated workspaces, and fostering a comfortable atmosphere. Spiritual self-care, not limited to religion, can involve activities like prayer, connecting with nature, or seeking guidance from a spiritual advisor. Lastly, financial self-care advocates for responsible money management, including tracking accounts, building an emergency fund, and developing a S.M.A.R.T. financial plan. By incorporating these diverse self-care practices, you can not only enhance your personal well-being but also contribute more effectively to the health and vitality of the school community.

[Click for more information on self-care](#)

## Resources for Parents

Throughout the school year, we will provide you with resources you can share with parents.

**In this issue called 3 Quick Tips for Parents, we provide resources for:**

- Share love
- Learn hands-only CPR
- High blood pressure

[Download, print, and share  
3 Quick Tips for Parents](#)



*We are excited to continue our work with you! Please contact us with questions or ideas on how we can effectively assist you in your very important role serving our community as a school nurse.*