

SCHOOL NURSE *Newsletter*

Respiratory Illness

Stay healthy and keep others safe.



Encourage staff and students to practice healthy habits to help stop the spread of germs and protect against respiratory illness:



Stay up-to-date with immunizations.



Stay home when you are sick and call your healthcare provider if symptoms worsen or do not improve.



Clean surfaces regularly.



Wash your hands. Use sanitizer when soap and water are not available.



Cover your coughs & sneezes with a tissue or your elbow.



Take steps to make the air cleaner.

Check out the [CDC's website](https://www.cdc.gov) for more information and guidance on Respiratory Illness including Flu, COVID-19, and RSV.



If you feel sick, stay home.

Stay away from others until 24 hours after your:

Symptoms improve.

You're fever-free. (without meds)

Take extra precaution for 5 more days.

More steps to stay safe:

- Wear a mask.
- Get tested.
- Avoid crowded spaces.
- Follow posted guidance.

FREE MIND YOUTH CAMPAIGN



CDC developed the **Free Mind** campaign to help prevent and reduce drug use and overdose among youth. The campaign was created through research and real conversations with youth, parents, and caregivers.



Youth may use substances to help them cope with mental health challenges like stress, anxiety, and depression, and ongoing use can lead to a substance use disorder. Substance use can lead to worsening mental health and contribute to the development of some mental health conditions.

Breaking the stigma surrounding mental health and substance use can help prevent overdose deaths and encourage more young people to seek the support they need. Recognizing that substance use disorders can co-occur with mental health conditions, it is essential to provide youth with the tools to navigate these challenges.

RESOURCES TO TAKE ACTION:

[Facts About Substances](#)

[Information for Parents & Caregivers](#)

[Free Mind Materials](#)

Backpack Safety

Being loaded down with textbooks, gym equipment and school supplies can make backpacks heavy and hard to wear. If they're not worn properly, backpacks may cause back, neck and shoulder pain in children and teens. Starting good habits can decrease back strain and pain.

Here are some helpful tips to share with students:

Wear a backpack the right way

- Use both shoulder straps
- Make sure the bottom of the backpack rests in the curve of the lower back

Lighten the load

- Clean the backpack weekly and take out unneeded items
- Store items in locker when possible
- Take only what is needed to school

Find more helpful tips [here!](#)

Sports-Related Injuries

In the U.S., an estimated 30 million children and teens participate in some form of organized sport and/or recreational activity. Each year, more than 3.5 million injuries are experienced by these participants, and over one-third of school-age children will sustain an injury severe enough to be treated by a doctor or nurse. While most of the injuries are common, (sprains & strains), some are more serious and can even be fatal.

Concussions

In schools, **concussions** most commonly happen during activities like PE class, playground time, or school-based sports. Students may also get a concussion when doing activities outside of school. Concussions should be taken seriously because they can produce changes in a child's brain, body and behavior.

The facts:

- All concussions are serious.
- Concussions can have a more serious effect on a young, developing brain.
- Most people who have concussions do not lose consciousness after the injury.
- Quick and correct response to concussions can help recovery and prevent further injury.
- Those who have had a concussion have a higher chance of getting another concussion.



Get the [Fact Sheet](#)

The CDC's HEADS UP campaign has created a fact sheet for school nurses to help recognize a concussion, what to do if one occurs, how to support students while recovering from a concussion, and provide steps to prevent concussion in school.



Sudden Cardiac Arrest

Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA), is what happens when the heart stops beating, suddenly and unexpectedly. SCA does not just affect adults, it takes the lives of thousands of students every year and is the #1 cause of death of student athletes.

Causes:

- Congenital heart problems
- Postoperative cardiac repairs
- Abnormalities of the electrical system that controls the heart
- Abnormalities with the heart muscle structure
- Heart disease like myocarditis
- Chest trauma
- Drug use

Signs:

- Chest pain or discomfort
- Fainting or extreme dizziness during or just after exercise
- Racing heart or palpitations
- Unexplained shortness of breath or excessive fatigue during exercise
- Change in exercise tolerance

Response:



Prevention:

- Regular well-child visits
- Pre-participation exams, or sports physicals
- Heart screenings
- Genetic testing if family history of conditions

[More info on SCA](#)

YOUTH SPORTS SAFETY ALLIANCE



Every three minutes a child is seen in an emergency room for a sports-related concussion.



Sports injuries account for 20% of all injury-related emergency department visits for children ages 6-19.



Sudden cardiac arrest is the leading cause of death in exercising young athletes.



Players with one or more previous injuries have 2-3 times greater risk of re-injury compared to those without previous injury.

Tips for Toy Safety

Includes:

- Safety Tips
- Promoting Safe Play

Age appropriate



- Check manufacturer's age recommendations.
- Keep in mind child's age, interests, and skill level.

Play it safe



- Read warning and safety labels on packaging.
- Avoid sharp edges or points.
- Cords and strings can become choking hazards.

Nontoxic



- All paint should be lead free.
- Look for crayons and paints labeled non-toxic ADTM D-4263.
- Materials should be flame resistant.

Easy to use



- Instructions for assembly and use should be included.
- Fabrics should be washable and hygienic.

Strong and Sturdy



- Parts should be attached securely.
- Battery cases should be closed securely with screws.

Think big



- Small parts can be choking hazards.
- Avoid marbles, coins, and other small pieces.

More Toy Safety Information here



RADON

What Everyone Needs to Know

WHAT IS RADON?

Radon is a naturally occurring, invisible, odorless gas that comes up from the natural radioactive breakdown of uranium in soil, rock, and water.

Radon can seep into homes through foundation cracks and other



openings. It is present in Chautauqua County homes.

TESTING IS EASY & FREE!

Homes should be tested- that is the only way to know if the home has a high radon level.

FREE TEST KITS AVAILABLE AT THE CCHD



HARMFUL EFFECTS

Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer among nonsmokers, and the second leading cause of lung cancer deaths overall.

SEASONAL SPIKES

Radon levels spike in the winter months when windows are kept closed preventing heat (and radon) from escaping.

1 in 15



US homes are estimated to have high, dangerous radon levels according to the EPA.

Lead Poisoning Prevention

LEAD PAINT POISONS KIDS! Lead poisoning can cause permanent learning and behavior problems, but lead poisoning is **100% PREVENTABLE**.

Test Homes

Over 85% of homes in Chautauqua County were built prior to 1978. Our children are at high risk for lead poisoning.

We can test your home if:

- Your home was built prior to 1978
- Children under 6 spend more than 6 hours a week in the home
- A pregnant woman resides in the home
- **This includes:**
 - Rental units
 - Homeowners



Call 716-661-8243 to schedule a FREE test today!

Test Kids

Children should be tested for lead

- At ages one and two
- Anytime it is believed they have been exposed to lead
 - Recent home renovations
 - Relocating to a new apartment or home

Where can children get tested?

- Contact the child's doctor to schedule a blood lead level test
- No doctor? Call us for testing options at 716-753-4708 .

If a child tests high for lead:

The CCHD is here to help! Our Lead Poisoning Prevention Team **will work with families to FIND and FIX the source** of lead poisoning, and get that blood lead level down as quickly as possible.

We are required by New York State Department of Health to do a home visit when a child tests high for lead, and will call families to schedule. But, families don't have to wait for that call! As soon as they are notified that their child's lead level is high, they can **call us to get started: 716-661-8243**

What We Do

Our Lead Poisoning Prevention Team will check for lead paint in any pre-1978 built home in Chautauqua County where a child under 6 spends 6 or more hours per week for lead paint.

Landlords, homeowners, and tenants can request this FREE testing! We check the interior and exterior for lead paint, and help to get it fixed BEFORE a child becomes poisoned.

Homes that test high for lead receive paint and other free supplies, along with training to do the work safely.

When we come to check the home we offer:

- **Free diapers**
- **Free smoke/carbon monoxide detectors**
- **Free cleaning supplies**

Lead Poisoning Can Cause:

- ADHD
- Aggressive behavior
- Slow growth
- Poor appetite
- Sleep problems
- Hearing problems
- Learning delays
- Brain damage

Did you know? It only takes this much lead dust to poison a child.



The CCHD Lead Program is located in Jamestown at: 200 E. 3rd St. Jamestown City Hall- 3rd Floor 716-661-8068

[Click or scan to learn more:](#)



National Handwashing Week

National Handwashing Awareness Week is an annual public health initiative observed in early December to promote the importance of hand hygiene in preventing the spread of germs and illnesses like the flu and other infections.

Stay healthy by washing your hands:

- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before eating food
- After using the bathroom
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After changing a diaper or touching a child who is sick
- After touching an animal or animal waste
- After touching a dirty or contaminated surface



Coping with a Pet's Death

Whether sudden or due to illness or age, a pet's passing can be heartbreaking for both children and adults. Pets are often beloved companions and feel like members of the family. It's no surprise coping with a pet's death can cause intense loss and grief.

Here is some advice from the Humane Society:

Coping with grief

-  Acknowledge your grief, and allow yourself to cry. Suppressing feelings of sadness can prolong grief.
-  Focus on the life you shared with your pet instead of dwelling on their final days—especially if they were dramatic.
-  Reach out to others who understand how much you miss your pet. Resources and support groups may be helpful.
-  Memorialize your pet through a bereavement ritual.

Helping children understand pet loss

Losing a pet is often a child's first encounter with death. They might blame themselves, others, or feel guilty, sad, or scared about losing loved ones.

Showing your own grief can help reassure them that it is okay to feel sad. Children may also find comfort in age-appropriate mourning activities like drawing pictures, writing letters, or sharing happy memories of their pet.

Getting another pet

Rushing into this decision is not fair to you or your new pet. Each animal has their own unique personality, and a new animal cannot replace the one you lost. You will know when the time is right to adopt a new pet after giving yourself time to grieve.



WNY Social Care Network

The Integrated Care Social Care Network links Medicaid recipients, both as individuals and as families, with essential resources that address the social factors impacting health, such as housing, employment, food, and transportation.



Using the Integrated Care Navigation Hub, a referral enrolls a Medicaid member to be screened and navigated to eligible services.

Services available:



Housing



Transportation



Employment



Nutrition



Education

To learn more about services available in our community, visit wnyscn.org or call 716-431-5100

Healthy Futures

Healthy Futures, an Alternative-to-Suspension program, is geared for students who have been caught using cannabis or tobacco products, and/or for any students that are interested in trying to quit.

MY Healthy Futures

The MY Healthy Futures Course is a 40-60 minute self-paced course for students to do on their own.



OUR Healthy Futures

OUR Healthy Futures Curriculum has two versions: a two- and a four-hour version.



Data Dashboard for Educators & Administrators

A new data dashboard has been launched for educators, where they can see, in **real time**, anonymous student survey responses related to curriculums and interventions they are implementing.

Community-Level Youth Development Evaluation (CLYDE) Survey

The CLYDE Survey is an anonymous youth survey that collects feedback from school-age youth. The survey asks students about themselves, their family, their school, and their community. The survey also collects self-reported data on youth substance use and risky behaviors (e.g., drinking and driving).



8 schools in Chautauqua County participated this year, including over 1500 students from 8th, 10th and 12th grades.

Click [here](#) for the survey data dashboard



CLICK TO SUBMIT TOPICS

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



PLEASE SHARE THE:

QUICK TIPS *for parents*

In this issue, parents will receive information on radon and its health risks, tips on coping with the loss of a pet, and details on how the Chautauqua County Health Department helps with lead poisoning prevention.

[Download and Share](#)

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.



LHDSchoolSupport@chqgov.com



716-753-4491