

Notes From The Nurse



H1N1 and Seasonal Flu: As you may know, flu (seasonal and H1N1) can be easily spread from person to person. Baltimore County Public Schools has a plan to help reduce the spread of flu and to keep our schools functioning as usual but we need your help in doing the following:

- Please talk to your child about the importance of washing their hands and covering their coughs and sneezes.
- Observe for sign or symptoms of the flu such as: fever (100 degrees or higher) with cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. Some people may vomit or have diarrhea.
- Sick children need to stay home for at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever (**without** the use of fever reducing drugs). Keeping a child with a fever home helps reduce the spread of flu.
- If your child has a health condition that places him/her at risk of flu complications, contact your health care provider at the first sign of illness.
- Plan now for your children's care at home if your children become ill with the flu.
- Stay informed about flu in our area. We encourage you to visit www.flu.gov For more information on what our school system is doing or about flu in our community, visit www.bcps.org and www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/health.

Medication Policy: Baltimore county policy states: If your child needs to take a medication during school hours (prescription **and/or** over the counter medication) the medication must be brought to school by an adult in its original container. **In addition,** a written order from the physician must be brought in with the medication in order for it to be administered in school. The label on the bottle does not serve as a written order from the doctor. Students are not to carry medication to school or self-administer medication during school hours.




Emergency information: Please keep the information on your child's emergency cards up to date. It is very important that I have correct and current phone numbers in order to reach you in case of an emergency. Please call me at 410-683-8351 with any changes.

Fluoride Program: Our fluoride program is up and running. This program is offered to our students (in grades 1-5) whose source of home drinking water is an underground well. It is most beneficial to those who do not already receive daily fluoride tablets at home. Please contact me at 410-683-8351 if your child is not signed up to

receive the fluoride treatment at school and you would like to have them be part of the program. Also, please note that fluoride treatments should not be performed within 2 weeks of the placement of braces or the adhesive used to glue the braces will not work to its fullest potential.

Head lice: Sharing; Not always a good thing!

Children like to share but sharing is not always a good thing! Head lice are an ongoing problem in school age children. For this reason I thought it would be a good time to review a few facts about head lice:

- Head lice are wingless insects about 1/8 to 1/4 inch long, or about the size of a sesame seed.
 - They cannot hop, fly, or jump.
 - Head lice must have human blood in order to survive and cannot thrive on pets.
 - They live about 30 days on a human and will starve to death in 2-3 days if not on a human.
 - Nits (louse eggs) are yellowish white to tan, smooth, oval shaped structures smaller than sesame seeds and are attached at an angle to the side of the hair shaft. They can usually be found behind the ears or at the neckline where it is warm and dark. The discovery of nits always confirms infestation with head lice.
 - Lice are spread by personal contact or by touching any surface or item that has been in contact with an infested person, including bedding, hats, combs, sports helmets etc.
 - Symptoms: The first symptom of head lice is persistent itching or scratching at the back of the head or around the ears. Repeated scratching of his/her head may be a sign that the child has head lice. It is also very common for other members of the household to become infested with head lice. Screen all family members and treat **only** if lice or nits are found. Contact the school nurse if you would like her to screen your child (or other family member) for head lice.
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- Detection: If your child is observed repeatedly scratching his/her head, check the hair shafts and scalp closely for head lice or their nits (eggs). It is important to check for head lice in good daylight and with a magnifying glass, if needed. ****If your child has head lice contact the school nurse so she can screen close contacts of your child.** Make arrangements to have your child screened by the school nurse **before** returning to school.
 - Treatment: Permethrin based medications (such as Nix) are the treatment of choice and may be purchased over the counter. Follow package directions closely. Some lice and nits can still be alive when treatment is finished, **it is extremely important to remove ALL of the lice and nits from the hair.**
 - Treating the environment: Spraying classrooms or homes with insecticides is **not** recommended. Vacuum floors, rugs, pillows, and upholstered furniture. Wash

hats, scarves, clothing, towels, and bed linen in hot water and dry using high heat for at least 20 minutes. Dry clean or tie up non-washable items in a plastic bag for 2 weeks. Soak combs and brushes for 1 hour in rubbing alcohol (or another disinfectant), or wash with soap and hot water (130 degrees F)

The American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Association of School Nurses and the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene do not support excluding students with nits: they recommend schools admit students with nits but no live lice. For more information regarding this policy go to <http://www.bcps.org/offices/sss/health/> or feel free to contact me at 410-683-8351.

Lice are not a health hazard, they do not spread diseases, and their presence is not a sign of un-cleanliness. It is not a disgrace to get head lice because they are not selective who they infest – they can be acquired by anyone. So, if you find that a louse has chosen your family to visit this school year follow the advice given above and most of all be patient and keep your sense of humor. For more information you can visit www.headlice.org.

H.E.L.P.S. CPR Classes

CPR HEARTSAVER AED classes will be held at the following locations this fall. Cost is \$40.00 (includes book) for non-BCPS employees and \$30.00 for BCPS employees. Please contact Doris Eller R.N. 410-683-8351 to register. Space is limited so register early!

- Prettyboy Elementary School : Monday Sept. 21, 2009 4:30 – 7:30 pm
- Padonia Elementary School: Thursday Oct. 1, 2009 5:30 – 8:30 pm
- Carroll Manor Elementary School: Thursday Oct 8, 2009 4:30 – 7:30 pm
- Pinewood Elementary School: Wednesday Oct 14, 2009 4:30 – 7:30 pm
- Sparks Elementary School: October 28th 4:30 – 7:30 pm