

School Health

Hendry & Glades School
Health Advisory Council

School Health

March 2019

ALLERGIC CONJUNCTIVITIS (red eyes)

Many children come to the nurse's office with red, irritated, itchy eyes .

Realize that at this time of year, most cases of "pink eye" are actually due to allergies, not infections, and are therefore are not contagious.

How do I tell if it's allergies or infection?

- **Bacteria** – when the eyes are red with yellow or green drainage oozing or crusting in the eye throughout the day and night, then bacteria are usually the culprit. The eyelids may also be swollen. Affects one or both eyes.
- **Virus** – when the eyes are very red, but there is no drainage, or only a small amount of drainage or crusting upon waking up, then it is probably viral conjunctivitis. Usually affects both eyes.
- **Allergy** – allergic conjunctivitis is usually seasonal, mostly in the spring. The eyes are usually red with increased tears, perhaps a small amount of white drainage, and unusually itchy. Usually affects both eyes.
- **Foreign body** – a piece of sand or dirt stuck under the eyelid can cause redness, tearing, pain and drainage. Usually affects one eye.

How do I treat allergic conjunctivitis?

- **Cool compress** – hold a cool, wet washcloth against the eye and gently wipe away any drainage.
- **Saline eye drops** – or artificial tears can sooth the eye, whatever the cause. These can also be used to flush out any pollen that accumulates in the eye.
- **Medication**
Allergy eye drops – there are several prescription drops that can help alleviate eye allergies. There is also an over-the-counter antihistamine eye drop that can help. You may want to consult your healthcare provider to determine what kind of eye drops are right for you or your family.

Do I need to see the doctor for this?

If the symptoms are mild and controlled with the above treatments, then you may not need to see your doctor. If the symptoms are severe, or not improving with these treatments, then see your doctor.

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SHAC Meeting

A School Health Advisory Council meeting will be held on Wed., Mar. 27, at 3:30 p.m. at the Hendry Convent Care Center conference room in La-Belle

Please join us!



THE IMPORTANCE OF BRAIN BREAKS

For students to learn at their highest potential, their brains need to send signals efficiently from the sensory receptors (what they hear, see, touch, read, imagine, and experience) to memory storage regions of the brain. The most detrimental disruptions to traffic along these information pathways are stress and overload.

Brain breaks are planned learning activity shifts that mobilize different networks of the brain. These shifts allow those regions that are blocked by stress or high-intensity work to revitalize. Brain breaks, by switching activity to different brain networks, allow the resting pathways to restore their calm focus and foster optimal mood, attention, and memory.

THE NEUROSCIENCE OF BRAIN BREAKS

For new information to become memory, it must pass through an emotional filter called the amygdala and then reach the prefrontal cortex. When students' brains become anxious, highly confused, or overwhelmed, the activation of the amygdala surges until this filter becomes a stop sign. New learning no longer passes through to reach the prefrontal cortex and sustain memory. Even if students are not stressed by the pace or content of new learning, a point arises when the amygdala exceeds its capacity for efficient conduction of information through its networks into memory.

Brain breaks can be planned to restore the emotional state needed to return the amygdala from overdrive into the optimal state for successful information flow.

BRAIN BREAKS RESTORE BRAIN SUPPLIES

Neurotransmitters are brain chemicals that carry messages from one nerve cell to the next, across gaps between the cells called synapses. These message carriers are necessary to keep one's calm, focused attention and maintenance of a new memory. Neurotransmitters are in limited supply at each synapse and can deplete after as little as 10 minutes of continuing the same type of learning activity (attentive listening, practice drills, note-taking).

Brain breaks, by switching the type of mental activity, shift brain communication to networks with fresh supplies of neurotransmitters. This intermission allows the brain's chemicals to replenish within the resting network.

TIMING

Brain breaks should take place before fatigue, boredom, distraction, and inattention set in. Depending on students' ages and focus development, brain break frequency will vary. As a general rule, concentrated study of 10 to 15 minutes for elementary school and 20 to 30 minutes for middle and high school students calls for a three- to five-minute break.

BRAIN BREAK STRATEGIES

Brain breaks do not require disruption in the flow of learning. Simply stretching, moving to a different part of the room, or singing a song can revitalize the brain. Use your learning goals and students' responses to guide you in selecting the best type of brain break. You might decide to use the time to boost mood or motivation, as well as restore the brain's peak performance.

MOOD

To restore the emotional state needed to bring the amygdala back from overdrive, help students build habits of emotional self-awareness and mindfulness. Prepare them for successful self-calming brain breaks by demonstrating and providing practice times as they build experience using mindful breathing or visualizations.

Neuroscience has yielded information on activities that increase restorative neurotransmitters such as dopamine. Some of these activities, such as laughing, moving, listening to music, and interacting with peers, make great mood-boosting brain breaks:

- Read aloud from a relevant and engaging book.
- Introduce physical activity such as jumping rope, singing a song with movements, or tossing a beach ball while students ask and answer questions to review the topic—these are all great dopamine boosters. They also increase the blood flow and oxygen supply to the brain.
- Have students move in ways that they think a character in literature or person in history would at a designated event. Or move to imitate a biological, physical, or mathematical process.

MOTIVATION

Especially when topics of study are necessary foundations but are not of high personal relevance to students, brain breaks can enhance their motivation to attend to a potentially tedious subject.

- Tell a true anecdote about the author, historical persona, or scientist when they were the same age as your students. This will personalize the topic and boost interest and engagement.
- Use dopamine boosts from personal connections and personal relevance by inviting students to share with partners something about how the learning relates to their lives or interests.

After just a few minutes, students' refreshed brains are ready to return to the next learning activity with a subdued amygdala and full supply of neurotransmitters. Both they and you will reap the benefits of this restoration.

Reminder: Be Active!

Being physically active is just as important to health as eating right. Children need 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play every day to grow up to a healthy weight. If this sounds like a lot, consider that 8–to 18–year-olds devote an average of 7.5 hours watching TV and movies, using computers and cell phones, and playing cell phones. Only one-third of high school students get the recommended levels of physical activity.

To increase physical activity, children need physical education, safe routes to walk and ride their bikes to school, parks and access to playgrounds and community centers. Children need access to sports leagues and dance or fitness programs that are exciting and challenging to keep them engaged.

In addition to being fun, regular physical activity strengthens bones and muscles, increases self-esteem, and provides many other health benefits. Physical activity, along with eating healthy foods, can help children live healthier lives and perform better in school.



Tanning—Beware!

A tan is actually a response to injury from the sun. It's your skin's way of trying to protect itself from further damage. When exposed to UV rays, your skin makes a pigment, or color, called melanin, which gives skin a tanned appearance.

Some people use tanning beds to get tan. This is called *indoor tanning*. Tanning beds give off powerful levels of UV rays.

It's best to avoid indoor tanning altogether because every time you tan, you increase your risk of getting skin cancer, as well as, other types of skin damage like wrinkles and age spots (flat, brown, gray, or black spots on the skin).

Sunless tanning lotions, sprays, and wipes use a chemical called dihydroxyacetone, or DHA, to give your skin a tanned look. If you decide to use a sunless tanning product, be careful not to accidentally inhale it or let it get in your eyes, nose, mouth, or ears.

Sometimes, you might feel pressure from the media (Facebook, Instagram, movies, or TV), friends, or even family members to change the natural appearance of your skin and get a more tanned look. It's important to remember that healthy skin is beautiful skin, and your natural skin tone is what makes you uniquely you!

Obesity by the numbers

Over the past three decades, childhood obesity rates in America have tripled, and today, nearly one in three children in America are overweight or obese. The numbers are even higher in African American and Hispanic communities, where nearly 40% of the children are overweight or obese. If we don't solve this problem, one third of all children born in 2000 or later will suffer from diabetes at some point in their lives. Many others will face chronic obesity-related health problems like heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, and asthma.



How Did We Get Here?

Thirty years ago, most people led lives that kept them at a healthy weight. Kids walked to and from school every day, ran around at recess, participated in gym class, and played for hours after school before dinner. Meals were home-cooked with reasonable portion sizes and there was always a vegetable on the plate. Eating fast food was rare and snacking between meals was an occasional treat.

Today, children experience a very different lifestyle. Walks to and from school have been replaced by car and bus rides. Gym class and after-school sports have been cut; afternoons are now spent with TV, video games, and the internet. Parents are busier than ever and families eat fewer home-cooked meals. Snacking between meals is now commonplace.

Thirty years ago, kids ate just one snack a day, whereas now they are trending toward three snacks, resulting in an additional 200 calories a day. And one in five school-age children has up to six snacks a day.

Portion sizes have also exploded- they are now two to five times bigger than they were in years past. Beverage portions have grown as well- in the mid-1970s, the average sugar-sweetened beverage was 13.6 ounces compared to today, kids think nothing of drinking 20 ounces of sugar-sweetened beverages at a time.

In total, we are now eating 31 percent more calories than we were forty years ago—including 56 percent more fats and oils and 14 percent more sugars and sweeteners. The average American now eats fifteen more pounds of sugar a year than in 1970.

Eight to 18-year old adolescents spend an average of 7.5 hours a day using entertainment media, including, TV, computers, video games, cell phones and movies, and only one-third of high school students get the recommended levels of physical activity.

Now that's the bad news. The good news is that by making just a few lifestyle changes, we can help our children lead healthier lives—and we already have the tools we need to do it. We just need the will.

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A Healthy Child is Ready to Learn



**Preparing Tomorrow's
Leaders Today**

Glades County Schools

Maple Apple Baked Oatmeal

3 cups old-fashioned oats
2 teaspoons baking powder
1-1/4 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
2 large eggs
2 cups fat-free milk
1/2 cup maple syrup
1/4 cup canola oil
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 large apple, chopped
1/4 cup sunflower kernels or pepitas



Preheat oven to 350°. In a large bowl, mix the first five ingredients. In a small bowl, whisk eggs, milk, syrup, oil and vanilla until blended; stir into dry ingredients. Let stand 5 minutes. Stir in apple.

Transfer to an 11x7-in. baking dish coated with cooking spray. Sprinkle with sunflower kernels. Bake, uncovered, 25-30 minutes or until set and edges are lightly browned.

Nutrition Facts | piece: 305 calories, 13g fat (2g saturated fat), 48mg cholesterol, 325mg sodium, 41g carbohydrate (20g sugars, 4g fiber), 8g protein.

HAPPY

SPRING