



# Your School Health newsletter

## Happy Holidays

Hardeman County Schools Office of Coordinated School Health would like to wish you and your family a happy and joyous holiday season. Remember the reason for the season. Live well, eat healthy, and be merry.



## World AIDS Day

### What is AIDS?

AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) is caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which kills or impairs cells of the immune system and progressively destroys the body's ability to fight infections and certain cancers. The term AIDS applies to the most advanced stages of an HIV infection.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, at the end of 2005, an estimated 943,500 adults and 9,100 children younger than 13 years were living with HIV/AIDS in the United States. An estimated 4.3 million new HIV infections occurred worldwide during 2006, which equates to about 12,000 new infections each day. This indicates that the AIDS epidemic still rages out of control. There are 39.5 million people living with AIDS globally.

### How can AIDS be transmitted?

AIDS can be contracted through sexual contact, blood contamination, needles, and mother to infant.

However, there are many misconceptions about AIDS. While it is important to be cautious, there are many forms of contact that are harmless. AIDS cannot be spread in the following ways: saliva, sweat, tears, casual contact (like sharing utensils, bedding or towels), swimming pools, telephones, toilet seats, or biting insects (like mosquitoes).

## Dreaming of a Light Christmas

Ah, the holidays. Visions of sugarplums, cookie exchanges and company parties dance in our heads. Trouble is, we often find ourselves with several post-holiday pounds dancing around our hips. Research has shown that the average person gains nearly seven pounds between Halloween and New Year's Day.

The good news? You don't have to entirely give up your holiday favorites, including delicious desserts, in order to lighten up the season. There are a few simple ways to indulge without guilt.

"It's all about making good food choices," says Lisa Stollman, M.A., R.D., C.D.E., a nutritionist in private practice in Huntington, N.Y. "It's the holidays, and you should enjoy yourself -- but there's no reason you can't eat healthfully."

Simple changes easily reduce holiday calories and stress. Modifying your traditional recipes, planning healthy options for parties, and keeping a balance in your splurges are sure to spread the holiday cheer.

Follow these quick tips to make your holidays merry and light.

- Use non-stick cooking spray to grease the pan when cooking and baking.
- Use heart-healthy margarine spreads, rather than butter or shortening, for baking.
- Use 3 tablespoons of unsweetened cocoa powder to replace 1 ounce of unsweetened chocolate.
- Use equal amounts of marshmallow creme in frostings to substitute for butter or margarine.
- Try finely crushed cinnamon graham crackers instead of traditional piecrusts.
- Use two egg whites instead of one whole egg when baking.
- Use equal amounts of applesauce or baby food prunes to replace oil.
- Use equal amounts of fat-free plain yogurt to replace sour cream.

## Hand Washing Reminders

Since we are approaching the winter season, it is important to remember basic facts about staying healthy. An easy, yet neglected, way to ward off colds is through hand washing. Be sure to remind yourself, family and friends about hand washing to bring about a happy, healthy New Year.

### How often should I wash my hands?

Hands should be washed often - more frequently than most people do. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), hand washing is especially important when:

- preparing food.
- before meals.
- after using the restroom.
- after touching animals or animal waste.
- when hands are dirty.
- When someone around you is ill.

### The difference between cleaning and disinfecting:

Cleaning and disinfecting are two different things. Cleaning simply refers to using soap and water to remove dirt and most germs. Disinfecting, on the other hand, refers to cleaning solutions that contain ingredients that kill bacteria and other germs. Many surfaces look clean, but may be contaminated with germs. The CDC recommends the following when cleaning and/or disinfecting:

- Wear rubber gloves when cleaning up blood, vomit, or feces, and when you have cuts or abrasions on your hand that make it easy for an infection to enter the body. Even when using gloves, wash your hands after cleaning or disinfecting a surface.
- Read the directions on the cleaning product label, including the precautions.
- First, clean the surface with soap (or another cleaner)\* and water.
- Second, use a disinfectant on the surface, and leave it on for a few minutes, depending on the manufacturer's recommendations.
- Third, wipe the surface dry with a paper towel, and throw the paper towel away, or use a cloth towel that is washed afterward.
- Fourth, wash your hands thoroughly, even after wearing gloves.

\*Always store cleaning solutions and other household chemicals in their original containers and out of children's reach.

## Holiday Safety

As holiday breaks are quickly approaching, kids will have more time to play; this also presents more chances for injuries. Safe Kids Mid-South, led by Le Bonheur Children's Medical Center as part of an international campaign to prevent accidental childhood injuries, offers several Play Smart Tips for a safe and happy holiday season:

### Toy Selection

- Choose toys according to the child's age, interests and skill level.
- Look for well-made toys and follow safety information on the warning labels.
- Children under three can choke on small toys and toy parts.

### Supervision

- Supervise children while they play to avoid injury.
- A toy intended for an older child may be dangerous in the hands of a younger child.

### Interaction

- Join in your child's play.
- Your participation adds to your child's fun and development.

### Storage

- Teach children to put toys away after playing.
- Safe storage prevents falls and other injuries.

### Maintenance

- Check old and new toys regularly for damage such as sharp edges or small parts.
- Make any repairs or throw away damaged toys right away.

For more safety tips, call Safe Kids Mid-South at (901) 287-6730.

## Awareness Issues in Dec.

Safe Toys and Gifts Month- [www.preventblindness.org](http://www.preventblindness.org)

World AIDS Day- [www.unaids.org/en/default.asp](http://www.unaids.org/en/default.asp)

National Aplastic Anemia and MDS Awareness Week- [www.aamds.org](http://www.aamds.org)

National Hand Washing Week- [www.henrythehand.com](http://www.henrythehand.com)