



Health Is Academic

OFFICE OF HEALTHY SCHOOLS
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of Coordinated School Health ▪ Safe and Orderly Schools ▪ Office of Child Nutrition

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Fit, Healthy, & Ready to Succeed

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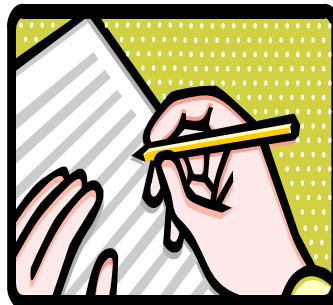
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I am a teenager who lives in the "fattest" state in the United States - Mississippi. This is a statistic that I am not very proud of due to the fact that our society is more interested in feeling good than looking good. Healthy choices are, or should be, very important to everyone. We don't always make wise choices in the things that we eat and behaviors that we engage in. As a teenager, I have witnessed my friends make wrong choices that are affecting their daily lives. Teenagers would rather engage in candy, fries, hot chips, and sodas instead of healthy foods.

Our eating habits have to change in order for us to lead a long healthy life. Childhood obesity and juvenile diabetes are just a couple of diseases that we can develop due to our poor eating habits. We have to learn to make better decisions. It is not something that we can change overnight. It is a long process that takes a strong support group both at home and at school. Our schools are trying to help us by serving at least 3-4 of the food groups each meal. Our Cafeterias are



substituting baked potatoes for fries, baked chicken and a nice selection of salads. Often times the problem stems from our homes. Because of our fast-paced lifestyle, eating out and microwaveable foods are contributing to our overweight society. We are so tired by the time we get home that we are allowing our bodies to get out of shape and become candidates for diseases like atherosclerosis, diabetes, and high blood pressure.

Many of the diseases that are affecting Americans can be controlled and lowered if we would get up and become more active. We are a generation of couch potatoes. The average American spends 1-2 hours a day on the computer or playing video games. This is one of the main reasons our disease rate is on the rise. We need to implement more physical activity into our daily lifestyle. If we start early during our teenager years then we will be accustom to it as an adult. If schools would start physical education during the elementary years then children would be excited about physical activity as they get older. This mindset could be carried over into their adult years. I don't think teenagers think about the future when making healthy choices. They believe that they are immune to these dreaded diseases. We need to educate more people so they have a longer lifespan. If we do this we can be assured to live longer than our parents and grandparents. Wouldn't that be a great thing!

It is my belief that we can all do something to have a healthier lifestyle. The choices that we make will have a lasting affect on us, and our future generation. We deserve to have a long, and fulfilling life. Hopefully, I will be able to make good decisions with the help of my family and community. It is my desire to gain as much knowledge as possible to make better choices for my family and myself. This will allow me the opportunity to lead a drug-free and healthy life.

Toni Nichols is a 8th grader at Whitten Middle School in Jackson, Mississippi. She is the winner of the 2009 Mississippi Health Awareness Day essay contest sponsored by the Community Outreach for Health Awareness (COHA), www.Cohainc.org & The Mississippi Department of Education's Office of Healthy Schools.



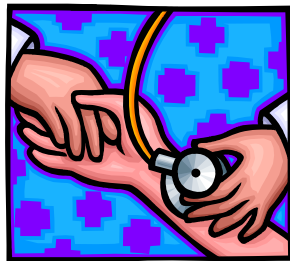
July 22-24 at Ridgeland High School in Ridgeland, MS. This 3-day conference will focus on assessment, instructional practices, and integrating technology into physical education classes. For information visit:

www.healthyschoolsms.org

Tying it All Together – A Doctor’s Perspective

It is important to remember that, for most, developing risk for heart disease, stroke and other cardiovascular diseases doesn’t begin in adulthood. It is very important for parents and teachers to set good examples (i.e. eating nutritious meals and enjoying physical activity) not only for their own health but also to prevent their children and students from experiencing health problems.

The promotion of healthy dietary and physical activity habits, as well as maintaining a healthy weight, are major ways to help your child’s healthy development early in life in order to bring lifelong benefits. In addition, there is a correlation often seen between nutrition and fitness at home and school performance.



Because overweight children are more likely to be overweight adults, the American Heart Association recommends that “preventing or treating overweight in childhood may reduce the risk of adult overweight and this may help reduce the risk of heart disease and other diseases.” Recommendations for maintaining weight should include regular physical activity and careful attention to diet to avoid too many calories. The healthiest way to change weight is gradually. Reaching and maintaining an appropriate body weight at all ages is important. That’s why recommendations that focus on small but permanent changes in eating may work better than a series of short-term changes that can’t be sustained for children or adults.

Again, the best way to lead a child to a healthy lifestyle is to set a positive example! Parents’ involvement in modifying risks for poor health (i.e. overweight) in children’s behavior is vital. Parents and teachers in Mississippi who model healthy eating and physical activity can positively influence the health of our children!

Chad A. Rhoden, MD, Ph.D.
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The HIV Prevention Education Program will be offering HIV Prevention training for Health Educators. HIV/AIDS prevention education consists of developing awareness, knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will reduce infections and the impact of HIV. The mission of this program is to provide health education teachers professional development on skill- and theory-based HIV prevention education. CEUs will be offered for attendance at this course. Requests for HIV Prevention Education resources can also be made to the HIV Prevention Education Coordinator by calling the Office of Healthy Schools at 601.359.1737 or by email to scmatthews@mde.k12.ms.us. Please join us on the path to ensure that our youth are *fit, healthy and ready to succeed*.

2008 Governor’s Awards Ceremony

The 2008 Excellence in Physical Education Certification Program Awards Ceremony was held March 12, 2009 at the Governor’s mansion in downtown Jackson. The ceremony and reception was attended by Governor Barbour. Thirty-seven schools were recognized for their outstanding service in promoting health and physical education in seventeen school districts across the state. The Governor’s Commission on Physical Fitness and Sports sponsored this annual event. We encourage all Mississippi schools to submit an application for the 2009 school year. Information including the 2009 application will be posted to the Office of Healthy Schools Web site once it is available. To view images from the 2008 awards reception visit http://www.healthyschoolsms.org/ohs_main/initiatives/2008GCPFSAwardsReception.htm

Mississippi Schools Go “Fry-less”

For the 2008-2009 school year, 14 school sites in 14 districts have been selected to participate in the Nutrition Integrity Project and will be installing 28 combination oven steamers. The installation of these ovens is expected to impact over 10,000 students providing healthier, more nutritious foods. The Nutrition Integrity Grant Project has been a great start-up for schools across the state. This grant has provided funds to purchase the ovens and data that supports the theory that combination oven prepared foods are not only more nutritious but also highly delectable in the school cafeteria setting.

It has been exciting to see schools take on the “fry-less” food challenge and to respond to the need to provide students with healthier food choices. Since 2006, the beginning of the Nutrition Integrity Project, a total of 104 combination oven steamers have been purchased in 41 districts impacting approximately 64,900 children. The overall goal of this grant is to replace deep fat fryers with combination oven steamers in school kitchens, thereby making a substantial difference in the number of calories and fat intake of children at school. Improving the nutritional quality of school meals will help students perform better academically and encourage them to adopt healthier eating habits.

Opportunities for Success

When you think of education what first comes to mind? Hopefully, those thoughts include Mississippi's children. As you ponder this, your thoughts may wonder how we are going to ensure their success. Did you realize that 19 percent of males and 38 percent of females reported a feeling of hopelessness every day for two weeks or more causing a break in normal activity? Did you think about the fact that if we continue at the current rates of type 2 diabetes and heart disease, this is the first generation of kids that will not outlive their parents?

In order to provide opportunities for success, we must reduce disparities and ensure possibilities for every boy and girl. So now you're thinking - where do we start?



The school, the family and the community each have unique resources; each can reach children in ways the others cannot; each influences young people's behaviors in different ways. Supportive families and social support within communities contribute to students' success. When children feel valued they are more likely to make healthy choices, avoid risky behaviors and remain in school. When parents are involved, students are higher achievers regardless of socio-economic status, ethnic/racial background, or their parents' education level. As parent involvement increases, student achievement increases and negative behaviors, such as alcohol and substance abuse, violence, and antisocial behaviors, decrease.

As we continue to think about putting children first, there are many things we can mandate, remove or provide, but one thing that none of these things can instill is PASSION. When parents, teachers, administrators, law enforcement officials, community leaders, business leaders, elected officials, transportation/facilities directors, food service staff members, counselors, school nurses, faith based leaders and others share a passion for children, then each and every child has the opportunity to be *fit, healthy and ready to succeed*.

Shane McNeill, Director
Office of Healthy Schools



HealthierUS Challenge Begins in Mississippi

On February 24th, the John D. Bower, MD School Health Network had an opportunity to learn about the HealthierUS Challenge from Claire Miller, Bower Foundation Nutrition Consultant. Food and Nutrition Service HealthierUS School Challenge offers schools the opportunity to be recognized for excellence in both nutrition and physical activity. Schools are judged on their lunch menus, their nutrition education efforts, their physical education efforts, their competitive food plan and their school food policies and practices to include vending.

Participation in the HealthierUS Challenge application process has been set as a benchmark for the Bower 1 and 2 Network Schools. We look forward to seeing these 20 Mississippi schools recognized on a national level for their excellence in food and nutrition service!

Teachers Impacted by Health Education Institutes

Eighty-two teachers from across the state are taking advantage of the opportunity to become endorsed in Health Education because of the Health Education Institutes. The institutes were offered in three regional settings across the state. Mississippi Department of Education's Central Office, University of Southern Mississippi, and Mississippi University for Women have been the host sites for institutes offered in November, January and February. Session Five will be held for all participants on July 17th at The Mississippi Department of Education.

The goal of the institutes has been to provide instruction in developing a quality health education program and offering qualified teachers an opportunity to become certified in Health Education, thus strengthening health education across the state.

Mouth Injuries in Contact Sports: Does Your School Play It Safe?



Did you know that dental injuries are the single most common facial injury in contact sports? The Mississippi State Department of Health reports that every athlete involved in a contact sport has about a 10 percent chance each season of sustaining an injury to the mouth or teeth. The cost to replant a tooth and the follow-up dental treatment is typically \$5,000. Victims of knocked-out teeth who do not have a tooth properly preserved or replanted may face lifetime dental costs of \$15,000 to \$20,000 a tooth, hours in the dental chair, and the possible development of other dental problems such as gum disease.

The MSDH Office of Oral Health encourages your school to play it safe with sports. Avoid accident and injury to your teeth by wearing a mouth guard in all sports.

For more information on dental injuries, call the MSDH-Office of Oral Health at (601)576-7500 or visit us on the web at www.HealthyMS.com/dental



Planting Seeds of Wellness

Fresh fruits and vegetables are packed with nutrition that helps children be healthy, do well in school and feel great. All across Mississippi, School

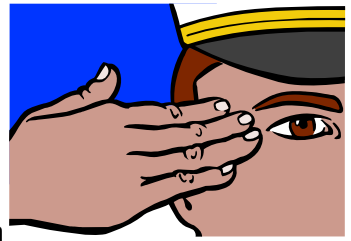
Food Service Directors are being trained on *Planting Seeds for Wellness in Mississippi Schools*. Topics include nutrition needs of children, health and wellness issues, and the relationship of school meals.

Plant your own seeds for wellness by trying some of the fruits and vegetables that grow fresh right here in Mississippi. Check out your local farmer's market or U-pick farm, serve a fruit or vegetable you have never tried before or try a family project this spring by raising your own fruit or vegetables in a garden or large pot!

The Mississippi Prevention Data Improvement Project (MPDIP) is pleased to announce the upcoming release of a new feature to the Snapshots Web site. Registered users will soon have the ability to create student behavioral data reports by county, consumption/associated risk, age of onset, and demographic. Continue to visit the Web site for reports and web resources. www.snapshots.ms.gov

Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC)

JROTC has been added as a component of the Office of Healthy Schools. The mission of the JROTC program is to “instill in students in United States secondary educational institutions the values of citizenship, service to the United States, personal responsibility and a sense of accomplishment.” The JROTC units in our schools provide wellness and physical fitness instruction, support healthy life style choices, and support student behaviors that contribute to safe school environments. In addition to the physical fitness activities that are included in the JROTC curriculum, many students also participate on JROTC athletic competition teams. JROTC has a positive impact on the health and well being of our students!



Commander Mike Curry, United States Navy Reserve (Retired), manages the JROTC programs in the Office of Healthy Schools. He can be contacted at (601)359-1816 or mcurry@mde.k12.ms.us

The Office of Healthy Schools would like to thank the MS School Districts who participated in the 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Data from this survey is invaluable for future planning and funding opportunities.



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