

# FEBRUARY NURSE NEWSLETTER

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## February is Heart Health Month!

Did you know your heart is about the size of your fist and beats around 100,000 times every single day? That's pretty amazing! During Heart Health Month, we are celebrating ways to keep our students' hearts strong, healthy, and happy.

The good news is that heart health starts with small, everyday habits – and it's never too early to begin!

### Move That Body!

Children need at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day. This doesn't mean running laps (unless they want to!). Riding bikes, playing tag, dancing in the living room, shooting hoops, or even helping shovel snow all count. When kids move more, their hearts grow stronger.

### Eat a Rainbow

Encourage your child to "eat the rainbow" by choosing fruits and vegetables in many different colors. Red strawberries, orange carrots, green cucumbers, purple grapes – each color provides important nutrients that help protect the heart. Limiting sugary drinks and offering water or milk instead is another heart-smart choice.

### Sleep is Heart Power

Growing hearts need rest! School-age children typically need 9–12 hours of sleep each night. Good sleep helps regulate mood, energy, and overall health.

### Feelings Matter Too

Heart health isn't just physical – it's emotional, too. Stress and big feelings can affect the body. Encourage your child to talk about their day, practice deep breathing, and ask for help when needed.

### Family Challenge!

Try one of these this month:

- Take a 20-minute family walk after dinner
- Add one extra vegetable to dinner three nights this week.
- Have a family dance party!
- Practice 5 minutes of quiet breathing before bed.

Healthy habits learned in childhood can last a lifetime. Let's work together to keep our students' hearts beating strong!

### Upcoming Events

- 5<sup>th</sup> grade tobacco and vaping education February 4th

# THE COMMUNITY HEALTH CORNER

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## Color Blindness Awareness

Color blindness, also called color vision deficiency, is more common than many people realize. Statistically, there may be at least one student with color blindness in every classroom. About 1 in 12 boys and 1 in 200 girls are affected. The most common type makes it difficult to distinguish between red and green shades.

Early signs of color blindness include difficulty identifying certain colors or frequently mixing up colors when drawing or completing schoolwork. For example, a child might color tree leaves purple, have trouble telling the difference between red and brown or blue and purple, or struggle to identify red and green colored pencils. Some children may have difficulty reading worksheets that use colored print or color-on-color designs. Others may say their eyes or head hurt when looking at certain color combinations, such as red on a green background. Interestingly, some children with color blindness are very good at spotting patterns or “seeing through” camouflage.

Lighting can also make a difference. Distinguishing colors may be more difficult in dim lighting or when working with small areas of similar colors. Natural daylight often makes colors easier to tell apart.

If you suspect your child may have color blindness, schedule an appointment with an optometrist for a formal evaluation. While regular eye exams are important for all children, color vision testing is not always included, so be sure to specifically request a color vision test. Many providers use the Ishihara test to screen for color blindness.

A professional diagnosis is important because it helps schools provide appropriate classroom support. It can also be helpful later in life, as certain careers require accurate color vision.