

Health Screening Information

During the fall semester, hearing and vision screening was carried out for all PreK, Kindergarten, 1st, 3rd and 5th grades. This is mandated by the state of Texas. We also started 2nd and 4th grades and will finish screening those students over the next few weeks. If your child does not pass the hearing or vision screening test, you will receive a referral form requesting that you have him/her evaluated by a professional specializing in those fields. Please take this form with you for the evaluation and return the completed form to the school nurse.

Along with this screening, the 1st, 3rd and 5th graders are screened for Acanthosis Nigricans. This is a simple visual examination of the neck by trained screeners. We are looking for a black-brown velvety marker that usually appears on the back of the neck. In most cases, it has the appearance of a dirty neck. This sign is the result of too much insulin in the blood or insulin-resistance. It is a pre-diabetic condition and indicates risk for Type 2 Diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular problems and obesity.

Insulin is a hormone that is produced in the pancreas. Insulin is necessary for our cells to be able to utilize glucose for energy. The cells are not able to use glucose if there is not enough insulin produced or if the cells are unable to use the insulin that is present (insulin resistance). When the body senses that glucose is not getting into the cells, it signals the pancreas to produce more insulin, resulting in elevated levels of insulin in the blood. At the same time, glucose builds up in the blood and can lead to development of Type 2 Diabetes.

Factors that affect the development of insulin resistance include family history, being overweight and lack of physical activity. Losing weight and increasing exercise can help the body to utilize insulin more effectively and reduce the chance of developing Type 2 Diabetes and other chronic health problems. With Acanthosis Nigricans screening, we can identify those students who have insulin resistance and help them to make lifestyle changes that may prevent Type 2 Diabetes. This screening does not take the place of regular health care and check-ups. If we note this condition, you will receive a referral form requesting follow-up with your doctor. As with vision and hearing referrals, please return the completed form to the school nurse. Thank you!

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