

June is a month of safety

June 1st was the beginning of fireworks safety which runs through the month of July and with Independence Day just around the corner now is the time to stress to kids and kids at heart the importance of firework safety. Check out this website, www.fireworksafety.com/, for information about how to be safe and responsible with fireworks to prevent injuries and fires. June is also Home Safety Month; go to www.homesafetycouncil.org/homesafetymonth/homesafetymonth.aspx, for information on how to make your home safer for you and your family, because the five leading causes of home injuries are falls, poisonings, fires and burns, choking, and drowning. Remember, a safe home is in your hands.

Fats

In previous issues of the newsletter, we listed the six nutrients and identified carbohydrates, proteins, and fats as the ones that provide energy. After looking at carbs and proteins, this month we will examine fats. Fats get a bad wrap by people and are considered very unhealthy, but the truth is our bodies need some fat. Fats are the most concentrated form of energy available to us, providing 9 calories per gram, while carbs and proteins only provide 4 calories per gram. Fats are an excellent source of energy, but they also have other important functions to perform for the body. Fats carry vitamins A, D, E, and K through the body in the blood, are essential for growth and healthy skin, add flavor to food, and help satisfy hunger since they take longer to digest than carbohydrates and proteins. I know too many fats, especially saturated fats which are solid or semi-solid at room temperature, can lead to health problems such as heart disease, elevated blood pressure, and being overweight. The bottom line is fats need to be consumed in moderation; fats are needed by humans to be healthy, but over indulgence of them like so many other things in the world will cause people to have problems. Fats are going to be found pretty much in anything you eat, so it is wise to read the food labels and try to identify how many grams of fat are in some of your favorite foods. Remember, most fried foods are going to have more fat because of the oils and/or grease used to fry food gets soaked into the item during the frying process. How many fats do you need? Well that depends on some factors, such as, your age, whether you are a male or female, and your activity level. So check out, www.health.gov/DietaryGuidelines/, this website will provide the Dietary Guidelines for Americans which will enable you to develop a plan to eat fats in moderation.

From the Nurses' Desk

Since it is the summer, the nurses have some time off from the newsletter. So remember to check back next time as they will have to put their nose back to the grindstone.

Next time

We have now covered the nutrients that provide the body with energy and other needs, next we will look at vitamins, minerals, and water and the role they play in our body's daily activities. Also, keep a look out on local cable channel 10 for the 8th grade tobacco prevention skits that were written and acted out by students from each elementary school. We had three teams enter the contest, with the team from Maple Grove winning a \$50 gift card for each team member from Wal-Mart. Until then, keep up the efforts for a healthier you.