

The last month has been a trying time for all schools, students, and parents because of the staph/MRSA scare. Information about staph was sent home with students in Clay County or made available at the school, but I am going to relay more general information about it this month. MRSA has been around a long time and at any one time as many as 2.3 million Americans are walking around with it. It is the third most commonly reported disease in Tennessee behind STDs chlamydia and gonorrhea and it is often mistaken for spider bites. You may ask, "How do I keep Staph infections from spreading?" The answer is quite simple if you follow these procedures, 1) Wash your hands with soap often or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available 2) Keep your cuts and scrapes clean and cover them with bandages 3) Do not touch other people's cut or bandages 4) Do not share personal items like towels or razors 5) Consider staying home if a wound will not quit draining 6) Wash and machine dry athletic clothing frequently 7) Last, but certainly not the least, do not take unneeded antibiotics and if you are taking them, take them completely following the doctor's directions. Remember, the majority of staph infections are minor and usually easily treated, so if there is a question about a skin condition, contact your doctor.

November is American Diabetes Month. What is diabetes? Diabetes is a disease in which the body does not produce or properly use insulin. Insulin is a hormone that is needed to convert sugar, starches and other food into energy needed for daily life. There are two types of diabetes, Type 1, which is a genetic disorder found in juveniles and is not preventable. Type 2 is a disorder in which the cells do not use insulin properly and the pancreas gradually loses its ability to produce insulin and the chance of getting are increased with poor health/nutrition practices. For me Tennessee is a wonderful place to live, but the bad news is that Tennessee is ranked 48<sup>th</sup> in the country in overall health status and 8.5% of the population has diabetes and 62% are overweight. In 2000, diabetes was the sixth leading cause of death listed on U.S. death certificates. Check out the American Diabetes Association's website for more info at [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org). It is important to note that a proper diet and exercise can stave off diabetes or aid in the treatment if diagnosed.

Ah yes, we have come to that part everyone (including myself) hoped I had forgotten, how much we eat during the holidays. The following will be tips to use during the next few weeks as many of us spend times with our families and extended families to celebrate the holidays and enjoy (hopefully) each other's company. Here we go, first plan ahead. Think about how you will handle nosey relatives who may make comments about what you are eating or your weight loss efforts. Second, be a picky eater, we all have particular foods that we love and others that we may eat simply because they're there and be sure to remind yourself that the holidays are not a license to overindulge. Third, do not save your appetite for the big family meal. If you allow yourself to get to hungry you will appreciate everything in sight with little regard to the portion size. Lastly, that brings us to portion size. Many portion sizes are measured in ounces or cups, I do not know about you, but I do not carry measuring utensils for my food. So here are some suggestions to help with portion size. First, you may practice measuring items with a cup and pouring it on a plate to see how much space it takes up. Second, here are some handy dandy serving portion ideas: 1) vegetables or fruit, about the size of your fist, 2) pasta, about the size of a scoop of ice cream, 3) pretzels or chips, a cupped handful, 4) potato, the size of a computer mouse, 5) cheese, the size of your thumb, end to base, and 6) meat, size of a deck of cards or the palm of your hand (can't use your fingers, just the palm). On the meat issue, I believe I will use my palm, because I know it is bigger than a deck of cards. Hope these tips help you make it through the holidays without busting the button off your pants.

In closing, I will not mention exercise this month due to the piece about staph other than stay say on task and utilize any time that you can if your routine gets disrupted. Also, Clay County Schools hired two new nurses, Tiona Young and Amanda Spivey. After Thanksgiving, our current nurse Teia Adams will be at Celina K-8 full-time, with Amanda at CCHS, and Tiona at Hermitage Springs. Maple Grove will continue to be visited weekly on Wednesday morning by one of the nurses. So if you are visiting the schools drop in and say hello to our nurses and look for an item in upcoming newsletters titled 'From the Nurse's Desk', until then enjoy the holiday season.

