

School Health Screenings

Students are weighed and measured each year to make sure that they are growing and gaining weight at an appropriate rate. On average, children grow about 2 inches per year and gain about 10 pounds. Of course every child grows at their own rate, but should have a steady growth from year to year. From height and weight measurements a student's Body Mass Index (BMI) can be figured. Included with this information is a BMI percentile chart to estimate what percentile your child is in. There is a chart for girls and one for boys.

Students also have their eyes checked for distant vision, and their backs checked for Scoliosis. Hearing is checked for students in Pre-K, Kindergarten, 1st, 3rd and 5th, 7th, and 9th, grades and if they are new students to the district. Students are also checked for Acanthosis Nigricans. This is a newly state mandated screening that the schools have been doing for the past few years.

BMI

Experts have developed a way to help figure out if a person is in the healthy weight range for his or her height. It's called the **body mass index**, or BMI. BMI is a formula that is used to estimate how much body fat a person has based on his or her weight and height. The BMI formula uses height and weight measurements to calculate a BMI number. This number is then plotted on a chart, which tells a person whether he or she is underweight, average weight, at risk of becoming overweight, or overweight.

Figuring out the body mass index is a little more complicated for teens than it is for adults. BMI charts for school children use **percentile** lines to help individuals compare their BMIs to those of a very large group of people the same age and gender. There are different BMI charts for boys and girls under the age of 20.

A person's BMI number is plotted on the chart for their age and gender. Each BMI chart has eight percentile lines for 5th, 10th, 25th, 50th, 75th, 85th, 90th, and 95th percentiles. A child whose BMI is at the 50th percentile is close to the average of the age group. A teen above the 95th percentile is considered overweight because 95% of the age group has a BMI less than he or she does. A child below the 5th percentile is considered underweight because 95% of the age group has a higher BMI.

Scoliosis

Fifth grade through 9th grade students are screened for scoliosis. If your child receives a referral for scoliosis based on a school screening, more detailed information will be included. Listed here are some general facts about scoliosis.

Scoliosis:

- Is a sideways curvature of the spine that makes the spine look more like an "S" or "C" than a straight "I".
- Can cause the bones of the spine to turn (rotate) so that one shoulder, scapula, or hip appears higher than the other.
- Can run in families. However, the exact cause of most cases of scoliosis is not known (idiopathic).
- Can occur at any age. Adolescent idiopathic scoliosis occurs after the age of 10. It is the most common type. Infantile scoliosis occurs in children less than 3 years old. It may result from a birth defect, disease of the nerves and muscles (such as muscular dystrophy or cerebral palsy), injury, infection or tumors. Juvenile scoliosis occurs in children between the ages of 3 and 10 years old. It is not common.
- Does not usually cause any pain.

Small curves occur with similar frequency in boys and girls, but girls are more likely to have a progressive curve that will require treatment.

Acanthosis Nigricans (AN)

Acanthosis Nigricans (AN) is a skin condition that signals high insulin levels in the body. Most of the time AN is seen on the back of the neck as a black-brown velvety marker.

Insulin is produced by an organ called the pancreas. Insulin is important because it helps "carry" the glucose or sugar to the cells in your body. High insulin levels indicate that the body is resisting the insulin that is being produced. As a result, the pancreas produces more insulin than needed, and through time, it can stop producing enough insulin to take the glucose to the cells in the body. Acanthosis Nigricans is important because these markings can help identify persons who run the risk of developing diabetes in the future.

In most cases the markers will fade and insulin levels will drop if changes including diet and exercise are made.

