

Primary School Health Nurse Team Newsletter

Term 5 May 2017

This newsletter aims to provide families and young people with some useful tips for keeping healthy. Childhood is an important time to instill healthy habits and learn crucial life skills. Establishing these habits early on will help to improve your child's quality of life in the future and enable them to reach their full potential educationally.

Further information about SHN can be found on our website:

<http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/children-and-young-people/oxon/school-health-nursing/>



Prevent young deaths by respecting the Wild Water Code - Fire and Rescue Service

Oxford's rivers have become a hotspot for accidental drownings, and many of these tragedies involve children and young people, cutting short lives and devastating families. Please help us stop this by educating your family and friends about the potential dangers posed by wild water.

The River Wild: If you have never swum in a river before don't just jump in thinking it will be like your local leisure pool; at any time of year the cold of wild water can have a dramatic effect on the body and there may also be strong currents and submerged hazards. The initial involuntary gasp reflex caused by the shock of the cold can instantly fill the lungs with water causing a fatal chain reaction within minutes. Learning to wild swim should be a gradual process and never a spur of the moment leap into the unknown.

Look Before You Leap: It's easy to jump in, but is there somewhere you can get out easily? Banks can be steep and slippery; only realising this after you get into difficulty will cause further panic and can mean the difference between life and death.

Don't Drink and Dive: Drownings often occur because the person is under the influence of drink or drugs. Mixing the desensitising effects of even small amounts of alcohol or other substances with the numbing effects of the cold can create a fatal cocktail.

Rock Bottom: Don't jump from the bridges in Oxford; the water is just too shallow and you are likely to be hit by a double whammy of being winded or injured because you hit the bottom and gasping because of the cold. Some risk in life is good but jumping from a bridge into shallow water is likely to end your life or change it for ever.

Flood Warning: Several people have drowned in the city after being swept into flooded rivers when trying to walk or cycle along partially submerged towpaths. River banks often subside under these conditions but such hazard will be invisible below the water. Even good swimmers will have little chance in a flooded river.

Can You/Your Family Swim? Learning to swim and respect for wild water should be considered basic life skills like learning to cross the road. Swimming is also a great way of keeping fit and great fun - **PROVIDING YOU DO IT SAFELY!**



Please contact your local leisure centre for details of swimming lessons available. There is a general number for Oxford which will connect you to the centre in your area: 0844 8933 222. The city council and its partner Fusion Lifestyles also offer a range of free swimming lessons for under 16s to families on a limited budget (see www.oxford.gov.uk/freeswim for more details).

There are also clubs that can provide training and information on wild swimming including: http://www.owsc.co.uk/OWSC/Open_Water_Swimming.html

Plan ahead to ensure you and your family stay safe when travelling this summer



Before your Trip

Seek consultation with a travel medicine specialist at least four weeks before travel.

Ask about special vaccines that are recommended for specific destinations.

First aid and medical kit containing regular and special medication for the trip - carry in hand luggage.

Evacuation and travel insurance to cover health emergencies while abroad.

If fever develops during or after trip, seek medical help immediately. This advice has been reproduced from the International Society of Travel Medicine Website: www.istm.org/

During your Trip

Take precautions against malaria when you visit areas at risk. Prevent mosquito bites and take malaria pills as advised.

Road safety is important - wear safety belts in cars, helmets on bikes and avoid night time driving.

Always ensure children are supervised near water.

Verify and consume safe water and food. Have a supply of medicine for self-treatment of diarrhoea.

Excessive sun exposure should be minimized by the use of sunscreen. Sun can be more intense over water, snow and at altitude.

Leave animals alone. Animal bites or scratches can transmit rabies. Seek help if bitten.

Year 6 Transition - Moving to Secondary School

If you have a child in Year 6 you will be getting ready for the transition to secondary school. This can be an exciting and daunting time for both yourself and your child. If your child has a physical or mental health issue then please be assured that there is a School Health Nurse based in every Secondary School in Oxfordshire who can help to make the transition as easy as possible. Please complete and return all admission documents as soon possible to your child's new school, to ensure they are aware of any medical issues. If you would like your child to have a Health Review with their School Health Nurse please contact them through your child's new school. Parents/carers are not routinely asked to attend for a health review; however you may of course attend if you wish.

The service the School Health Nurses offer to students in secondary schools is confidential however; if there are concerns that your child or other young people are at risk of harm this information will be shared to ensure the safety of the child.



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The school health nurse for your school is Sarah Gibbons