

# From the AACMS Health Room



## BACK TO “NORMAL”

We made it through the first quarter and we couldn't be more excited to have a more “normal” school year! Our students have been working super hard and are doing a great job, despite all the new changes and challenges they have faced with this pandemic. With the holidays approaching, it is time to kick back, relax, and regather with family and friends. Let's continue to stay safe, stay informed, and work together to end this pandemic! Happy Holidays!

Nurse Andrea

Andrea L. Angstadt, RN BSN CSN  
School Nurse AACMS  
610-351-0234 ext. 517  
AAngstadt@arts-cs.org

## MASK MANDATE CONTINUES

There has been much in the news lately regarding school masking mandates. As court hearings are taking place, it is important to highlight a few important points.

**The mask mandate will remain in effect at AACMS until further notice.**

AACMS stands with CDC recommendations for universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status.

When the mask mandate is lifted (either January 17, 2022, or before), AACMS will consider recommendations from the CDC, DOH, and PDE, along with data on the community and building level spread, for possible modifications to AACMS's face covering practices.

Please note, AACMS holds the right to mandate universal masking which may be considered at any time for all students and staff, regardless of vaccination status, based on CDC guidance and the level of community and/or building transmission of COVID-19.

We all play an important role in keeping our students, staff, and community safe. Our community's ability to work together to lower rates of incidence and transmission will likely help us ease restrictions once the state mandate is lifted. Thank you for your continued cooperation and support!

## Tips for Healthy Holidays

1. **Get Active-** Create a calorie deficit by exercising to burn off extra calories before you ever indulge in your favorite foods. Eat less and exercise more is the winning formula to prevent weight gain during the holidays.
2. **Eat Breakfast-** While you might think it makes sense to save up calories for the big meal, experts say eating a small meal in the morning can give you more control over your appetite. Start your day with a small but satisfying breakfast so you won't be starving when you arrive at the gathering.
3. **Police your Portion and Skip the Seconds-** Don't waste your calories on foods that you can have all year long. Fill your plate with small portions of holiday favorites that only come around once a year so you can enjoy desirable, traditional foods.
4. **Be Realistic-** The holiday season is a time for celebration. With busy schedules and so many extra temptations, this is a good time to strive for weight maintenance instead of weight loss.
5. **Focus on Family and Friends-** Holidays are not just about the delicious bounty of food. It's a time to celebrate relationships with family and friends. The main event should be family and friends socializing, spending quality time together, and not just what is on the buffet.

## COVID-19 Vaccines for Ages 5-11

AACMS is encouraging faculty members and students to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Please note, **THIS VACCINE IS NOT MANDATORY or required for students to attend school.** We are solely encouraging *interested individuals* to schedule an appointment to be vaccinated. Visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to find vaccination providers near you.

Free COVID-19 vaccination clinics are being offered by both Lehigh Valley and St. Luke's Hospitals. To schedule a vaccine, please call one of the following hotlines:

LVHN 1-888-402-5846  
St. Luke's 1-866-785-8537 Option 7

Vaccinating our children is a critical step in protecting them from COVID-19 and its complications. Vaccination will also help our children continue to participate in school, sports, and have a general sense of normalcy.

### Age 5-11 Vaccines FAQs

#### Is the Vaccine Safe for My Young Child? How Do You Know?

The same rigorous testing that went into the studies for individuals ages 12 years of age and older was followed for the 5-11 year old age group as well. The FDA and CDC have approved the Pfizer vaccine for use in this age group because it has been proven to be safe and effective in preventing COVID.

The American Academy of Pediatrics also fully supports the recommendation to vaccinate children ages 5 years and older.

#### Why Should I Get the Vaccine for My Children? Children aren't getting as sick as older people.

While it is true that most severe cases of COVID (hospitalization, ICU admissions, and deaths) are attributed to an older population, our children are not immune from contracting COVID. By giving the vaccine to children ages 5 years+, we can now protect even more children from getting sick. An added benefit is that we can also cut down on their risk of spreading it to other, older or younger, family members.

#### Will My Child Receive the Same Vaccine as Me?

Not quite. The ingredients are identical; however, those aged 5-11 years will receive a reduced dose - one third the amount of the standard dose. This is why St. Luke's has chosen to separate the age groups. Those 5-11 years will be vaccinated at separate, child-friendly locations, to reduce any risk in providing the wrong dose.

The vaccine is still administered in two parts - two shots spaced approximately three weeks apart.

#### Will My Child Experience Side Effects After Receiving the COVID Vaccine?

Like many other vaccines, the COVID-19 vaccine can cause mild to moderate symptoms related to the induced immune response.



### Reminder

The school health laws of Pennsylvania require a physical examination upon original entry as well as in **sixth** and eleventh grades. Dental examinations are required on original entry into school and in grades three and **seven**. These examinations may be done privately or through the school appointed physician or dentist. If your student had a 6<sup>th</sup> grade physical or a 7<sup>th</sup> dental exam done within the last year, please submit it to the health room as soon as possible.

#### 6<sup>th</sup> Grade:

Physicals are due by the end of November.

If you would prefer the school physician to examine your child, please contact Nurse Andrea.

#### 7<sup>th</sup> Grade:

Dental examinations are due by January.

If you would prefer the school physician to examine your child, please contact Nurse Andrea.