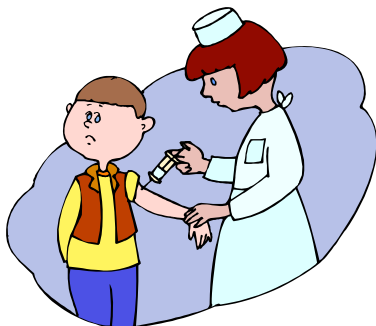


Things in Motion

ALL THINGS ARE IN MOTION AND NOTHING IS AT REST ... YOU CANNOT GO
INTO THE SAME (RIVER) TWICE. --HERACLITUS (540?-480?)B.C.

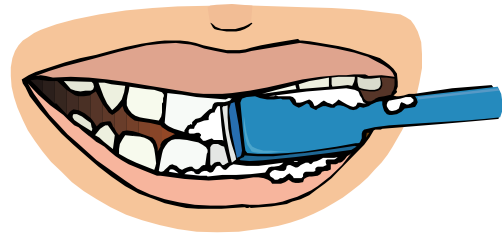
SHOTS IN CLASSROOM E2 ...

IF MEMORY serves me correctly, I did not get my first inoculation until I received it in elementary school as a first grade student, and the shock of that first exposure to no-nonsense nurses, incredibly large needles, the smell of liberally applied alcohol and the knowing grins of veteran students lingers with me still. It was 1937 in the rural South where farm kids such as I was then were woefully ignorant of such bad diseases as diphtheria, typhoid, polio, and the host of other maladies that had led my state to bring inoculations into the schools. As kids are inclined to do, the small swelling that appeared on our scrawny arms after getting our “shots” was turned into a status symbol proclaiming our courage and indomitable spirit—and never was it mentioned that some of us squalled and had to be held in place by a stern-faced nurse in a stiffly-starched white uniform. This was one of our annual rituals that persisted even through high school, where it was still viewed by most students as a minor form of torture. In 1942, an extra torment was added: Smallpox vaccination.



Regardless of the reluctance of students to get their annual “shots,” these precautions were probably worth their weight in gold because of the lives such measures saved and the many days not lost to illnesses.

Another, perhaps the least objectionable of our school health programs was to issue a dose of medicine to eliminate worms—this originally involved bringing stool samples for testing, but apparently worms were so common among the students that the stool sample test was dropped and every student was issued a dose of medicine; school was closed on the day following. To a farm kid, the “day off” was worth the many runs to the outhouse. This practice ended in 1942.



In those days, a dentist was not visited unless there was a serious accident, or a lengthy toothache which almost always ended with the extraction of a tooth. Nevertheless, once a year, a local dentist visited the schools to perform a quick check of each student's teeth. A notice was sent home informing the parents of any dental work needed—an essentially useless effort, as such notices were almost always ignored. There was a bonus, however, since each student was given a toothbrush and a sample tube of either Colgate or Ipana toothpaste. Those items did much to cultivate dental health among young kids, and upon reflection it is obvious that our schools played a major role in the health and wellbeing of most of our youngsters.

Number 56, Spring 2009 Published
for AAPA by Hugh Singleton at
102 Azalea Trail, Leesburg, FL 34748