

WATCH OUT FOR ACANTHOSIS NIGRICANS

The State of Texas has mandated that all students in 7th and 8th grades be screened for Acanthosis Nigricans.

What is Acanthosis Nigricans?

Acanthosis Nigricans is a skin condition that causes light brown-black, velvety, rough, or thickened areas on the surface of the skin. It is most frequently seen on the back of the neck. It can begin at any age, but is most frequently seen in preadolescence.

Why is it important to screen for Acanthosis Nigricans?

Acanthosis Nigricans is a skin condition that signals high insulin levels in the body. Screening for Acanthosis Nigricans can help identify students who run the risk of developing diabetes in the future. Once these students are identified, measures can be taken to help them lower their insulin levels and reduce their risk of developing diabetes.

How is the screening done?

The school nurse will perform the screening. Acanthosis Nigricans on the skin of the neck is easily identified. Visual exam and palpation of the neck for the thickened, darker skin is the method of screening. In most cases, the Acanthosis Nigricans marker may appear like a dirty neck.

What will happen if my child has Acanthosis Nigricans?

Students who are identified to have Acanthosis Nigricans will have blood pressure, BMI, height, and weight measurements taken. All screenings will be done in such a way to insure the student's privacy. Referral letters with screening results will be mailed to parents.

What should I do if I receive a referral letter saying that my child's screening has been positive for Acanthosis Nigricans ?

Your child should be evaluated by his/her health care provider. The purpose of this screening is to help students prevent chronic disease. Usually the recommendations consist of dietary changes and more physical activity.