STAYING HEALTHY
A Guide to Life Choices
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Dear Teachers,

The newspaper gives you a unique opportunity to motivate your students. Language development, reading, social studies, math, and current events are just a few of the areas that can be taught with the newspaper.

To make your Newspaper in Education experience an enjoyable one, consider these suggestions:

• Before you introduce the section, read it through. Make note of activities that need advance planning.

• Each morning, familiarize yourself with the day’s newspaper and selected activities. Some activities can be completed quickly; others are designed to be finished over a period of time.

• Give students plenty of space when they’re using the newspaper. They can sit at tables or on the floor.

• When necessary, separate sections of the newspaper. Give students only the sections they will be using.

• Make sure scissors and tape or glue are available for activities that require them.

• Have fun with it! “Staying Healthy” is designed to provide students with an exciting way to learn about their personal health and how to take care of it.

References

Exploring the Human Body by Ed Catherall
Focus on Drugs and the Brain by David Friedman
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Nutrition: What’s in the Food We Eat by Dorothy Hinshaw Patent
AIDS: What Does It Mean to You? by Margaret O. Hyde and Elizabeth H. Forsyth, M.D.
Love and Sex and Growing Up by Eric W. Johnson
Down Is Not Out by Esse E. Lee and Richard Wortman, M.D.
Drugs and You by Arnold Madison
Learning About HIV by Jory Post and Carole McPherson
Eat the Right Stuff: Food Facts by Catherine Reef
Sleep and Dreams by Dr. Alvin Silverstein and Virginia B. Silverstein
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Better Sleep Council
Health ResponseAbility Systems Inc.

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Throughout your study of health, watch your newspaper for articles on health issues. These may include articles on medical research, health-care laws, new treatments, etc. Keep your articles in a notebook or scrapbook. Which issues are most important in your community? State? In the United States? Worldwide?

List as many health issues as you can think of from your reading of newspapers and magazines. As a class, pick five that affect people in your age group. Take a poll to see which issue most concerns people in your class.

For extra credit, pick one health topic in the news to study in depth. Read all you can about it, supplementing your newspaper reading with library research. At the end of your study, give a class report on the topic.
Let's Eat!

So you'd rather have a burger, fries, and shake than a spinach and tofu salad. Does that mean you'll never be healthy? It doesn't have to!

Being healthy doesn't mean giving up everything you like. You can still have your burger and fries — if you only have them once in a while. If you cut back on sweets and fats, you'll find it easier to stick with a healthy diet than if you try to give up everything you like.

You've probably heard a lot of bad news about sugar and fat. Actually, your body needs a little of both because they provide energy. The problem is that most Americans eat way too much sugar and fat. The excess amounts can cause many health problems, including obesity and heart disease.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture developed the Food Guide Pyramid as a guideline for healthy eating. It shows the types and amounts of foods you should try to eat every day. Nutritionists recommend eating as many different foods as you can. That way, you're more likely to have a balanced diet than if you eat a few foods all the time.

You may get enough energy from junk food to keep going, but your body won't work as well as it would with good nutrition. You'll feel tired and get sick much more easily if you're undernourished. The bottom line: You'll feel better and look better if you eat well.

According to the National Cholesterol Education Program, all healthy Americans over 2 years of age should follow these guidelines to reduce their risk of getting heart disease:

- No more than 30 percent of the calories you eat should come from fat.
- Less than 10 percent of calories should come from saturated fat.
- You should eat less than 300 milligrams of cholesterol a day.
New food pyramid

The U.S. Agriculture Department has updated its pyramid-shaped guide to selecting foods.

The Food Guide Pyramid is designed to help you get the nutrients you need by making good food choices. It divides all of the major food groups into levels on a pyramid.

Different people, different needs

Guidelines available online at mypyramid.gov

Activity

Use your newspaper's food ads to plan a meal that includes at least one serving from each of the five major groups in the Food Pyramid. Cut out the foods you've chosen and paste them on a piece of paper. How much will your meal cost?

Activity

Cut out pictures of foods that represent each of the groups of nutrients: water, carbohydrates, fats, protein, vitamins, and minerals. Make a collage that includes all of these groups.

Activity

Pretend you've been asked to design an ad to convince your friends to eat a healthy but unpopular food (pick one). What information will you use to persuade your audience? Share your finished ad with your class.

Food supplies the body with nutrients, the materials it needs for good health. Although a person may live a few weeks without food, body processes will eventually break down and stop without it:

**Water**
Water carries other nutrients to the body's tissues and transforms food into energy and building material. Water also carries away waste and cools the body.

**Carbohydrates**
 Sugars and starches are carbohydrates. They supply energy that enables the body to do its work.

**Fats**
 Fats are a form of very concentrated energy. They are made up of glycerol (a kind of alcohol) and fatty acids.

**Proteins**
 Proteins supply energy and building material for muscles, hair, and skin. Proteins called enzymes are present in every cell of the body and speed up chemical reactions. Proteins also fight diseases and act as chemical messengers.

**Minerals**
 Minerals maintain body structures and fluids and are necessary for growth. Some minerals help form bones and teeth; others help make hemoglobin (a molecule in red blood cells that carries oxygen) and help enzymes function properly.

**Vitamins**
 Vitamins control the chemical processes that turn food into energy and body tissue.

Vitamin A promotes healthy skin and bone development.
Vitamin B1 helps change starches and sugars into energy.
Vitamin B2 helps the body use food.
Vitamin B6 and biotin function in various chemical reactions.
Vitamin B12 and folic acid help form red blood cells and to promote a healthy nervous system.
Niacin enables cells to use carbohydrates.
Vitamin C helps maintain supportive tissue in the body.
Vitamin D helps the body use calcium.
Vitamin E helps maintain cell membranes.

How much of each group?

Depends on total calories a day person needs to consume

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calories</th>
<th>Grains*</th>
<th>Vegetables</th>
<th>Fruits</th>
<th>Oils</th>
<th>Milk</th>
<th>High-protein foods***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>3 oz.  (85 g)</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
<td>3 tsp.</td>
<td>2 cups</td>
<td>2 oz. (57 g)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>6 oz. (170 g)</td>
<td>2.5 cups</td>
<td>2 cups</td>
<td>6 tsp.</td>
<td>3 cups</td>
<td>5.5 oz. (720 g)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,200</td>
<td>10 oz. (280 g)</td>
<td>4 cups</td>
<td>2.5 cups</td>
<td>11 tsp.</td>
<td>3 cups</td>
<td>7 oz. (200 g)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*1 oz. is equivalent to one slice of bread
**These are equivalent: 1 oz. (28 g) lean meat, one egg, 1/4 cup cooked beans, 0.5 oz. (14 g) nuts

© 2005 KRT  Source: U.S. Agriculture Department  Graphic: Helen Lee McComas, Lee Hulteng
The energy in food is measured in units called calories. When you take in about the same number of calories your body needs to function properly, your weight stays the same. If you take in fewer than you need, you’ll lose weight. More, and you’ll gain weight (one pound for every 3,500 extra calories).

As a pre-teen or teen, you may not be worried about high blood pressure, heart disease, and other illnesses linked with obesity. However, overweight teens often become overweight adults who are at risk for these diseases.

Eating a balanced diet is only a part of the healthy weight equation: Getting enough exercise is the other part. Exercise burns up calories more effectively than dieting alone. When you exercise, calories burn at a faster rate.

How much exercise is enough? Experts recommend at least 30 minutes of aerobic exercise (exercise that increases oxygen consumption) most days of the week. Children and teenagers should be physically active for 60 minutes every day, or most days. You don’t have to run a marathon. A brisk walk, a bike ride, or a game of basketball burns calories and also helps strengthen your heart, lungs, and muscles.

It’s important to pay attention to what you eat, but it’s possible to become too concerned with food. Two eating disorders sometimes seen in teen-agers, especially girls, are anorexia nervosa and bulimia. Both are serious illnesses.

A person with anorexia nervosa will sometimes diet to the point of starvation. She may weigh only half what her normal body weight should be, but she believes she’s fat. She will deny herself food until she becomes very sick.

Bulimia is a disorder in which a person “binges” on high-calorie foods and then tries to get rid of them by vomiting or using laxatives.

A healthy diet helps you maintain the weight that’s right for you. It’s always best to talk to your family doctor before starting any reducing diet. She can help you decide what you should weigh and how best to reach your healthy weight.
When you think of exercise, do you think of the word “fun”? You should! Staying active makes you feel good. Besides making you fit, exercise is a great way to relieve stress and raise your spirits. (Enjoyable activities cause your body to release endorphins, natural chemicals that give you a sense of well-being.) The type of activity doesn’t matter, as long as it’s something you like to do. The best exercise is the one that makes you forget you’re exercising!

You don’t have to put on gym clothes and do monotonous exercises to be fit. Be creative. If you don’t like sports, find something else you enjoy. Walking around the mall, biking, dancing, exercising to music, swimming, working around the house — all of these activities burn up calories. The more energy you put into them, the more calories they burn.

Remember to warm up if you’re going to exercise hard. Start out by stretching gently. Begin the aerobic part of your exercise at a slow pace; jog in place or walk slowly to start with. To cool down afterward, taper off your activity gradually. End by gently stretching the muscles you’ve used.

If you haven’t exercised in a while, start slowly and work your way up to 20 or 30 minutes. If you have any health problems, talk to your doctor first!

Did You Know?

It’s not unusual to feel sore right after starting an exercise program, but fitness experts say you shouldn’t push yourself if you feel pain. If something hurts, stop and take a breather. Pushing too hard can cause injuries.
Hey, What's Happening Here?

Between the ages of 10 and 16, many physical and emotional changes take place in both boys and girls. You may be experiencing some of them now. If you haven’t yet, you will. This period of change is called puberty, and it’s a normal part of growing up.

What causes these changes? Hormones! Hormones are substances produced by your body that stimulate your cells to specific kinds of activity. During puberty, your brain produces special hormones that send messages to your reproductive organs. These messages cause a boy’s body to produce sperm, and a girl’s to release eggs. After these changes occur, boys and girls are able to become fathers and mothers.

Other changes occur, too. They include an increase in body hair; changes in the size and shape of the body; changes in the voice (more noticeable in boys than in girls); increased oiliness of the skin (which sometimes leads to pimples); and an increase in sweating. Girls begin to menstruate, or have monthly periods, during this time.

There are emotional changes as well as physical ones. Most adolescents (those who have gone through puberty) begin to take more of an interest in the opposite sex. They begin to feel attracted to specific people and might date for the first time.

Girls usually mature a year or two ahead of boys, but there are many variations. Some people reach puberty at 9 or 10 years old; others are well into their teens before the changes begin.

All of this rapid growth and change can make your body feel awkward and strange. Sometimes people are embarrassed because they are maturing earlier or later than their friends. Also, the hormonal changes can cause moodiness. You may feel down in the dumps one minute, and on top of the world the next.

Most of these changes take place over several years. It may take time to get used to them and to feel comfortable in your changing body. That’s normal, too.
You have probably heard a lot about AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome). AIDS is just one of several sexually transmitted diseases. Scientists are working on treatments for AIDS, but so far there isn’t a cure. Abstinence (not having sex) is one sure way to avoid getting AIDS or any other sexually transmitted disease.

You won’t catch the HIV virus (which causes AIDS) just by being friends with someone who’s HIV-positive. You can get AIDS by having unsafe sex or sharing needles with someone who has the disease. In the past, some people got AIDS through blood transfusions. However, donated blood is now tested for the virus and is considered safe.

Many teen-agers experience conflicting feelings. They want to be treated like adults, but they don’t always feel mature. Sometimes, they may wish they were younger and didn’t have so many decisions to make.

One important decision is whether to remain abstinent or to become sexually active. Although adolescents are physically capable of becoming parents, they’re usually far from being ready in other ways. Even people who use birth control sometimes become pregnant. Sexually transmitted diseases are also a big concern.

That’s why it’s important to consider what’s best for your overall health when sex becomes an issue. Parents and other trusted adults can help you think about these issues and make choices based on facts.
Who Needs Sleep?

When school, social activities, and the other things that keep you busy, sleep may be the last thing you worry about. Sleep deprivation (lack of adequate sleep) often begins around age 12 or 13 and remains a problem during the teen years. Biological changes during puberty can cause sleep patterns to change. Teenagers tend to be more alert at night and to sleep later in the morning.

People between the ages of 9 and 14 usually need nine or 10 hours of sleep every night. Many get much less than that. Some teenagers (and adults) are so used to being sleep-deprived that they don't even know they have a problem.

If you're used to getting by on a few hours' sleep, you may think sleep deprivation is no big deal. But doing without sleep has consequences. Not only does a sleepy person feel intable and tired, he or she also has trouble concentrating, completing tasks, and using good judgment. In lab studies, severe sleep deprivation has led to hallucinations ("seeing" or "hearing" imaginary things or people) and delusions (mistaken ideas about what's real). Sleep deprivation can affect your relationships with friends and family, your grades, and your overall health. Getting enough sleep is just as important as good nutrition and exercise in helping you look and feel your best.

Here are some tips to help you get a good night's sleep every night.

- Get enough exercise. If you get 20 to 30 minutes of exercise at least three times a week, you'll sleep better. (But don't exercise right before going to bed.)
- Don't drink too many sodas or eat too much chocolate, especially before going to bed. Caffeine can keep you awake.
- Eat a filling, nutritious meal early in the evening.
- Try to unwind before going to bed by reading, taking a bath, or doing some other quiet activity.
- If you're upset or worried about something, try talking it over with someone well before bedtime. Stress can prevent you from sleeping well.
- Try to go to bed at the same time every night.
Have you ever wished you could catch yourself falling asleep? If you’ve ever tried it, you know it doesn’t work. Scientists who study sleep have to watch other people fall asleep in laboratories. Because of their research, we know there are several stages of sleep.

A person passes from drowsiness into stage 1 sleep as his muscles relax and his heart rate slows. This light phase of sleep lasts only a few minutes before merging into stage 2, a deeper sleep in which vague thoughts and dreams may occur. As the person moves into stage 3, an even deeper sleep, he becomes very relaxed, his heart rate slows even more, and his blood pressure drops. Stage 4 is the deepest sleep, in which the person is at his most relaxed and is very hard to awaken.

Dreams occur during REM sleep, a phase of light sleep that follows stage 4. REM sleep is named for the rapid eye movements that take place during this stage. (Scientists have theorized that these movements occur because the sleeper is watching events in his dreams.) Blood pressure, heart rate, and breathing may fluctuate a great deal during REM sleep.

A person will pass through these stages several times in a night. Each time the cycle occurs, the REM stage gets a little longer and the deep sleep a little less deep.

If you’re asleep, your brain must be asleep, too — right? Would it surprise you to know that some parts of the brain are more active when you’re sleeping than when you’re awake? Studies show that sleep plays a role in several brain functions, including learning and memory.

One study compared the performance of students who crammed for a test without sleeping with that of classmates who slept after studying. The students who slept remembered more of what they had studied.

While you sleep, your body repairs tissues, reenergizes organs and muscles, and replaces old cells with new ones. Cells reproduce twice as fast during sleep as they do during waking hours.

Without adequate sleep to replace used-up energy, you can’t get the full benefits of exercise.

(Source: Better Sleep Council)
Do you take drugs? If you've never taken aspirin, cough syrup, or medicine prescribed by a doctor, you're unusual. Nearly everyone has used drugs in one form or another. Drugs can help cure or relieve symptoms of many illnesses and when used wisely are usually safe. Some drugs, however, have no medical uses. And even medications can be dangerous when used improperly.

With all the different kinds of drugs, it's easy to be confused about what "having a drug problem" means. Just what is a drug, anyway, and what's the difference between use and abuse?

Drugs are chemical substances that change the structure or functioning of your body. Psychoactive drugs are drugs that change the way you think, feel, or act by affecting your brain. Some psychoactive drugs are legal, but many are not. (Illegal psychoactive drugs are sometimes called dope. They include marijuana, cocaine, heroin, and acid.)

A person may turn to psychoactive drugs to help him feel more relaxed, energetic, or cheerful. Although the drugs often have the intended effect, they may have other effects, too. That's why even psychoactive drugs prescribed by a doctor must be used with care.

Two people may be affected differently by the same drug. Body chemistry is complex and varies slightly from one person to the next. This is why it's risky to take any drug unless it's needed for a specific purpose and approved by a doctor. Some drugs are so powerful that taking them even once can hurt you or kill you.

Why do people abuse drugs? Sometimes it's because they're feeling down or depressed and they hope the drugs will help them feel better. Sometimes they're curious about what effect drugs will have on them, or they feel pressured to try them by their friends.

Few people start taking drugs with the thought that they'll become addicted, but it happens just the same. When a person is addicted, he has developed a physical dependence on the drug. Drug use has caused changes in the chemistry of his brain, and he must continue taking the drug to avoid becoming sick. Not all drugs are physically addicting. Sometimes people become psychologically dependent instead; they depend on drugs to get them through the day. This is called drug habituation.

Either way, the person dependent on drugs has a problem. Not only does the drug habit affect overall health, it can also cause a person to do other dangerous things. Drinking and driving is one example.

Did You Know?

Medicines are drugs, but drugs aren't always medicines. A medicine is a substance that's used to control or cure illness, discomfort, or pain. Medicines can be abused, too. A person who uses medicine for the wrong purpose or takes too much of it is abusing it.
Commonly Abused Drugs

The following chart lists several of the most commonly abused drugs. All of these drugs work by changing the way the brain functions. They may speed up or slow down the rate at which the brain receives messages from other parts of the body, or they may affect it in ways we don’t completely understand.

- **Alcohol** — Alcohol affects the part of the brain that controls judgment and behavior. In small amounts, it makes the user more relaxed. In large amounts, it can damage vital organs, including the brain.

- **Amphetamines** — Amphetamines provide “pep” and may help a person stay awake. One type of amphetamine, “speed,” sometimes causes violent behavior.

- **Barbiturates** — In small doses, these drugs can produce calmness and muscle relaxation. Larger amounts cause confusion, gogginess, and breathing problems. Barbiturates are especially dangerous when mixed with alcohol.

- **Caffeine** — Though not as dangerous as some drugs, caffeine has its negative effects. Many people like it because it makes them feel alert. It can also cause irritability and sleeplessness. Caffeine has been linked to cancer and other diseases.

- **Cocaine** — Cocaine may produce feelings of happiness and alertness; it may also cause hallucinations, breathing problems, and fearfulness. (“Crack” is a cheaper, more powerful type of cocaine.)

- **Heroin** — Heroin gives a brief burst of pleasurable feelings called a “rush.” Heroin is highly addictive; an addict may neglect everything, including his or her health, to get more heroin. An overdose can interfere with breathing and cause death. Addicts often share needles, which can spread infections like AIDS.

- **LSD** — This drug is often called “acid.” It can cause powerful hallucinations and flashbacks, which may occur long after the drug is taken. Some scientists think LSD damages the nervous system.

- **Marijuana** — Marijuana causes feelings of calmness and contentment, mild hallucinations, and loss of coordination. Marijuana has some medical uses, but there are concerns about its effects on the lungs and heart.

- **Methaqualone** — This drug can cause relaxation, sleepiness, loss of coordination, dizziness, breathing problems, convulsions, and coma.

- **Nicotine** — Many tobacco users say nicotine calms them down, but it’s actually a stimulant (a drug that speeds up the brain’s activities). Some minor effects include dizziness and headaches. Long-term dangers include an increased risk of heart disease and lung cancer.

- **PCP** — “Angel dust,” or PCP, has unpredictable effects. It may cause the user to feel either excited or calm. It may produce violent behavior, panic reactions, paralysis, and convulsions.

- **Steroids** — Besides increasing muscular development, these drugs can damage several organs, including the heart and liver. Users may become violent.

- **Tranquilizers** — They can make the user feel calm but may also produce dizziness, fainting, and low blood pressure.

Pick one of these drugs and do some research to find out more about it. Be sure to find out whether the drug is legal or illegal and whether it is addictive. Use encyclopedias, library books, and other sources. Share your findings with your class.

Your Brain

The brain sends and receives messages through the nervous system, a complicated network of nerve cells. Messages travel from one nerve cell to another with the help of chemical transmitters. Psychoactive drugs interfere with this process. For instance, some drugs cause the messages that control breathing to stop. When this happens, a person will die.

A person may take so many drugs that her body chemistry changes. The brain’s pleasure center, the part that tells you to eat, sleep, and do the other things you need to do to survive, is turned on by some drugs. The brain can become so used to the drugs that it thinks it needs them more than food or sleep. If the dependence becomes so strong that only drugs can turn on the pleasure center, the person is addicted.
"Depression" means sad feelings that last over time and cause you to have trouble sleeping, concentrating, and doing things you need to do. There's a difference between being depressed and just being down. If you get a bad grade on a test, you might be upset about it for a few days without being depressed. But if you continue to worry about it, lose confidence, and feel bad about yourself, you might be suffering from depression.

There are different kinds of depression. Some people become depressed because of stressful situations or losses, such as the death of a friend or family member. Other people are depressed much of the time because of long-term problems. Some depressed people don't look sad, even though they are.

Symptoms of severe depression include a loss of interest in normal activities; feelings of worthlessness; and thoughts of suicide. Depressed teenagers often show other signs, too. They may lose weight, have trouble remembering things, and feel hopeless or guilty much of the time.

Many young people have trouble dealing with depression. When they're depressed, they sometimes think they'll never feel any better. Older people with more life experience usually know that sad feelings and bad times pass. A younger person may be so overwhelmed by depression along with the normal problems of growing up that "ending it all" may seem to be an answer.

In the United States, suicides among young people have increased over the last few years. Suicide is the sixth leading cause of death among 5- to 14-year-olds. Most of these deaths could be avoided. Professional help is always available and can make any situation seem a lot more hopeful.

Here are some signs that a person may be considering suicide. If anyone you know is showing one or more of these signs, ask an adult for help. These signs don't always mean someone is suicidal, but they point to problems that need attention.

- A change in eating and sleeping habits.
- Withdrawal from friends, family, and normal activities.
- Violent or rebellious behavior.
- Drug or alcohol use.
- Unusual neglect of personal appearance.
- Personality change.
- A drop in grades.
- Frequent complaints about stomach aches, headaches, and tiredness.
- Suddenly giving away favorite possessions or throwing away important belongings.
- Talking about suicide.

(Source: American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry)
Self-esteem means the same thing as self-respect. Having self-esteem means that most of the time you feel good about yourself and have confidence in your abilities. Everyone feels depressed and unsure at times. However, people with self-esteem can usually bounce back from problems fairly easily.

Some people have higher self-esteem than others because their experiences have made them that way. But self-esteem can also be developed, in much the same way that you develop your mind through learning or your body through exercise. The more you treat yourself as if you matter, the more you begin to feel that you do. Taking care of your health is one of the most important ways you treat yourself with respect. Can you think of some other ways?

Activity

Look through your newspaper for articles about people who you believe have high self-esteem. What qualities does the person have that lead you to that conclusion?

Activity

Try to pick out comic strip characters with high self-esteem and low self-esteem. What differences do you see between them?
STAYING HEALTHY

A Guide to Life Choices