

Dear Parent or Guardian,

The present focus of your teen's health studies is communicable diseases, which are a leading cause of death in the world. According to the Centers for Disease Control, there are over 62 million cases of the common cold annually in the United States. About 84 percent of these cases affect children under age 17, resulting in 22 million school-loss days. Other more serious communicable diseases, such as hepatitis, various strains of influenza, tuberculosis, and AIDS, remain a pressing concern for the health community. In class, we will identify the types of pathogens that cause disease. In addition, your teen will learn strategies to help reduce the risk of contracting disease.

Below are some of the questions your teen will explore as we study this chapter: *How do pathogens cause communicable diseases? How does the body protect itself against pathogens? What are some healthful behaviors that help prevent the spread of communicable diseases? How do vaccines work? What are the symptoms of common communicable diseases, how are they transmitted, and how are they treated? How has technology impacted world health?*

Your involvement and participation in your teen's health education is important. To extend our classroom work, please complete one or more of the following activities with your teen.

- Discuss with your teen the difference between a virus and bacteria. Ask your son or daughter to explain why viruses are especially difficult for the body to combat.
- Inspect your home with your teen. Check the bathroom(s) for the presence of soap and towels to encourage handwashing. Discuss ways to prevent foodborne illness in the kitchen.
- Discuss ways to diminish the chances of contracting diseases.
- Explore with your teen recent scientific breakthroughs in disease prevention and cures. Learn more about the diseases for which cures are currently being researched.

Please plan other activities you think will help your son or daughter develop an awareness of communicable diseases. Thank you for supporting our classroom work. Feel free to contact me if you wish to discuss your teen's health education.

Sincerely,

Health Teacher