

Dear Parent or Guardian,

The greatest threat to teen health is often overlooked. According to the Centers for Disease Control, accidental injuries kill more young people than all diseases combined, over 15,000 adolescents a year; and for every fatality, there are 41 hospitalizations and 1,100 emergency room treatments. (The largest percentage of these injuries and fatalities are the result of motor vehicle accidents.) Such statistics emphasize the importance of understanding how accidents occur and methods to reduce risks. In health class, we will explore home, work, recreational, and road safety. The class will also examine hazards relating to severe weather and natural disasters. We will then develop strategies to help prevent accidental injuries under each of these circumstances.

Some questions your teen will explore in this chapter include: *How do unintentional accidents occur, and what are some strategies for preventing them at work and at home? How can the risk of accidents during recreational activities be reduced? What is the relationship between risk-taking behavior during recreational activities and consequences such as unintentional injury? What are some strategies for preventing injuries while driving or riding in a motor vehicle? How does risk-taking while driving a motor vehicle relate to unintentional injury? What are the proper safety procedures that should be followed during severe weather and natural disasters?*

Please reinforce our classroom work by discussing with your son or daughter one or more of the following topics:

- Discuss with your teen the seriousness of vehicular safety. Talk about the value of safety belts, driving defensively, and avoiding road rage. Share concerns about teen tendency toward risk-taking behaviors while driving. Discuss strategies that will help your son or daughter behave responsibly while driving or riding in a motor vehicle.
- Do a home walk-through with your teen and discuss strategies for preventing unintentional injury in the home.
- Review your family's emergency plans with your son or daughter. If you don't have such a plan, work with your teen to create one.
- Discuss recreational safety with your teen, analyzing his or her activities in regard to injury potential and possible preventative safety measures.
- Talk about safety procedures that should be followed away from home during a severe weather event or natural disaster.

I hope we can work together to help your teen develop an awareness of home, work, recreational, and vehicular safety, reducing his or her risk of unintentional injury. 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