

# Parent Letter and Activities

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Your teen has started a new course in health. We define *health* as a combination of physical, mental/emotional, and social well-being—the three sides of what we call the “health triangle.” Students will learn how to take charge of their own health by developing skills to help balance the health triangle and achieve wellness in the three areas of health. They will also learn to avoid unnecessary health risks. We define *wellness* as an overall state of well-being, involving regular behaviors that have a positive result over time.

Some questions your teen will answer as we study these topics are: *What does it mean to be healthy? How can I keep my physical, mental/emotional, and social health in balance? How do heredity and the environment affect health? Why should I check my health status? What actions can I take to be in charge of my own health? How can I avoid health risks?*

Your involvement in your teen’s health education is important. To help you reinforce what we are doing in class, I will send you this type of letter for every major topic we study. In each letter I will suggest some appropriate family activities. Please set aside some time during the next few weeks to complete one or more of the following activities with your teen:

- Make a list of the hereditary traits in your family that could affect the decisions you make about health. For example, is there a history of heart disease in your family? A history of dental cavities? A history of certain types of cancers? Note positive hereditary traits as well, such as a strong immune system, the absence of heart problems, and so forth.
- Involve all family members in thinking of some positive action your family can take to avoid contributing to air, water, and other forms of environmental pollution.
- Review and evaluate television, radio, and magazine advertisements to determine whether they promote a positive or negative behavior with regard to health. Identify the health factors in each advertisement you discuss.
- Discuss ways in which you might help and support each other in improving your health.

Please feel free to engage in any other activities that you believe will encourage your teen to develop lifelong health and wellness habits. Thank you for supporting our classroom work. Do not hesitate to contact me for further information.

Sincerely,

Health Teacher