

Dear Parent or Guardian,

In your teen's health class, we are currently studying noncommunicable diseases—those diseases that cannot be spread from one person to another. We begin by taking a look at heart disease, how it harms the body, and how it may be treated and prevented. Next we learn about cancer—what it is, how it is treated, and behaviors that may help prevent it. A lesson on allergies and asthma focuses on how people handle these conditions. We will conclude by studying other noncommunicable diseases, such as arthritis, diabetes, and Alzheimer's disease, and look at some of the treatment options for each.

Some questions your teen will answer as we study these topics include: *What is heart disease, and how does it harm the body? What can I do to avoid heart disease? What are some of the causes of cancer? What can I do to avoid cancer? What are allergies, and how are they treated? How do people who have asthma manage their condition? What is Alzheimer's disease, and how do people cope with it?*

Our approach to the topic of noncommunicable diseases will be to learn the facts about diseases and how a healthy lifestyle can help prevent or lessen their effects.

To support and extend our classroom work, please set aside some time during the next few weeks to complete one or more of the following activities with your teen:

- Low-fat, high-fiber foods reduce the risk of heart disease and cancer. Together, make a list of low-fat, high-fiber foods to buy the next time you go to the grocery store. You may wish to involve the entire family in deciding which of these foods to buy.
- Look through the telephone book for organizations or agencies in your community that help people cope with noncommunicable diseases. Such organizations might include the American Heart Association, the American Cancer Society, and the American Diabetes Association. Encourage your teen to contact one of the organizations for information that your family can use.
- Discuss with your teen the health history of your family as it relates to noncommunicable diseases. For example, is there a history of heart disease, a particular type of cancer, asthma, or allergies? Discuss what you and your teen can do to minimize your chances of getting these diseases.

Please feel free to engage in any other activities you think will encourage your teen to develop a greater understanding of noncommunicable diseases. Thank you for supporting our classroom work. As always, do not hesitate to contact me for further information.

Sincerely,

Health Teacher