

Parent Letter and Activities

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Your child's health class is currently studying the major systems of the human body. Over the next few weeks, we will learn about the nervous, circulatory, respiratory, skeletal, muscular, digestive, endocrine, and reproductive systems. For each system, we will examine the function, parts, and possible problems that can affect it. When appropriate, we shall also look into how to take care of the system.

Some questions your teenager will answer as we study these systems are: *How are my senses connected to the nervous system? Why does the doctor check my pulse and blood pressure when I have a physical? What does smoking do to my respiratory system? What's the difference between a sprain and a fracture? Why do my muscles sometimes ache? Why does food have to be digested? Why does my heart beat faster when I am frightened or excited?* and many others.

The answers to these questions will help your teenager better understand how body systems work and why they need to be properly maintained. This knowledge will also enable your child to work toward wellness as a life goal.

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 teenager:

- Incorporate an understanding of body systems into your everyday life. Ask your child to point out, for example, what body systems are being used during a simple activity like sitting down for a meal.
- Ask your child to explain how a particular body system, such as the endocrine system, works.
- Together, create a list of things you can do to care for each system in your body. For example, regular exercise strengthens the heart and muscles and helps to keep the lungs working well.
- Buy a good medical reference book that family members can refer to when they have a problem with one of the body systems.

Feel free to engage in other activities you think will encourage your teenager to develop an appreciation of the body as an integrated system made up of smaller systems. By learning to think of the body in this way, your child will be able to make intelligent, informed health decisions throughout his or her life. Thank you for extending our classroom work.

Sincerely,

Health Teacher