

Dear Parent or Guardian,

We are now studying communicable diseases—those that can be passed from one person to another—in your child’s health class. Specifically, we are studying the best methods to prevent the spread of disease and the ways the human body defends against disease. We are also studying the characteristics of some common communicable diseases, such as measles and hepatitis. We will conclude by studying sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS.

Some questions your teenager will answer as we study these topics are: *How can I avoid picking up or passing on germs that cause disease? If germs are all around me, why am I not sick all the time? What causes colds, and how can they be cured? What’s the best way to avoid getting a sexually transmitted disease? What can I do to avoid getting AIDS?* and many others.

I would like to call your attention to the last two questions in particular. The simple answer to both is abstinence. Our studies will emphasize choosing abstinence as one of the most important health decisions you can ever make. Your teenager will learn specific ways to avoid being pressured into having sex. Our goal is to encourage young people to choose abstinence and to feel good about this decision.

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:

- Develop a Home Action Plan to minimize illness in your home. Let your teenager suggest methods he or she has learned in class, and support their implementation.
- Assist your teenager in obtaining and maintaining his or her personal immunization records.
- Visit the pharmacy together, and discuss the value of various cold medicines.
- Together, develop a checklist of home health supplies you should keep on hand.
- Make yourself available to answer questions and discuss concerns your teenager may have about sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS.

Please feel free to engage in any other activities you think will encourage your teenager to develop a greater understanding of communicable diseases. This knowledge will serve your teenager well, for “an ounce of prevention” is certainly the best insurance against communicable diseases. Thank you for supporting our classroom work. As always, do not hesitate to contact me for further information.

Sincerely,

Health Teacher