

Chapter**1****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. These three elements make up the sides of what we call the “health triangle.” Students will discover the factors that influence health and develop the skills necessary to take more responsibility for their own health. They will learn how to balance the health triangle—achieve wellness in the three areas of health. They will also learn to recognize and avoid unnecessary health risks.

Some questions to which your teen will find answers 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? What other factors affect health? What is risk behavior? How can I avoid health risk behaviors?*

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. Begin with positive health traits, such as having a strong immune system, the absence of heart problems, and so forth. Next consider the traits that may put family members at risk. For example, is there a history of heart disease in your family? A history of dental cavities? A history of certain types of cancers?
- Consider any local environmental opportunities or hazards that might influence the quality of health. For example, is there a park nearby that can encourage outdoor activities? Is air pollution a problem in your area? How might your family help solve a local environmental problem?
- 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 one another in improving your health.

Any other activities that you believe will encourage your teen to develop lifelong health and wellness habits will be a welcome addition to our efforts here. Thank you for supporting our classroom work. Do not hesitate to contact me for further information.

Sincerely,

Health Teacher