

Chapter**4****Parent Letter and Activities**

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Our health class is currently studying food and nutrition. Our studies will include discussions of the Food Guide Pyramid and how to apply its guidelines to everyday eating. We will also study the roles of the digestive and excretory systems. After establishing a solid base of health for nutrition, we will discuss healthful weight management. Our emphasis throughout will be on choosing an eating plan that will help your teen be fit and healthy.

Some questions to which your teen will find answers as we study these topics include: *What nutrients does my body need for good health? What are nutrient-rich foods? What information can I get from Nutrition Facts panels? What influences my diet? How can I use the Food Guide Pyramid to make healthful food choices? How can I plan and choose nutritious meals and snacks? Why is eating breakfast important? How does digestion work, and how are waste products removed from the body? How can I determine a healthy weight for myself? What are the dangers of eating disorders? How can I manage my weight?*

Eating right often takes a back seat to convenience and the pressures of a hectic lifestyle. However, working together, we can provide your teen with the necessary information to enjoy the benefits of a balanced eating plan.

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:

- Go food shopping together. Read the labels on the foods you buy, and identify the nutrients and calories in the various food products.
- The next time you go to your teen's favorite fast-food restaurant together, look for the nutrition information that these restaurants are required to display. Determine which fast foods are the most nutritious and which are the least nutritious. Make wise choices—and enjoy.
- Make a list of the snack foods you have in the house. Review the list to determine which foods have a high amount of nutrients relative to the number of calories. Then use the list to plan some healthy snacks.
- Ask your teen to plan one or two balanced meals that provide servings from the following food groups: milk, yogurt, and cheese; meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs, and nuts; vegetable; fruit; bread, cereal, rice, and pasta.

Any other activities that you believe will encourage your teen to choose a healthful eating plan are, of course, a welcome addition to our efforts here. Thank you for supporting our classroom work. As always, do not hesitate to contact me for further information.

Sincerely,

Health Teacher