

Chapter**17****Parent Letter and Activities**

Dear Parent or Guardian,

We are now studying communicable diseases—those that can be passed to a person from another person, animal, or object—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 colds and influenza. We will conclude by studying sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS.

Some questions your teen will answer as we study these topics are: *How are diseases spread? What are the body’s defenses against pathogens? What are good health habits that protect you from disease? Why is abstinence the best way to avoid getting a sexually transmitted infection? How can I avoid getting HIV?*

I would like to call your attention to the last two questions in particular. Our studies will emphasize choosing abstinence from sexual activity as one of the most important health decisions you ever make. Your teen will learn specific ways to avoid being pressured to become sexually active. 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 teen:

- Develop a Home Action Plan to minimize illness in your home. Let your teen suggest methods he or she has learned in class, and support their implementation.
- Discuss your teen’s vaccination 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 teen may have about sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS.

Please feel free to engage in any other activities you think will encourage your teen to develop a greater understanding of communicable diseases. This knowledge will serve your teen 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