

**Chapter****18****Parent Letter and Activities**

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Your child's health class is currently studying noncommunicable diseases—those that are not caused by pathogens and cannot be spread from person to person. Specifically, we are studying the causes, symptoms, and treatments of allergies, asthma, cancer, heart and circulatory problems, diabetes, arthritis, and others. Because understanding the risk factors can help prevent several of these diseases, our study of noncommunicable diseases is especially important.

Some questions your teen will answer as we study these topics are: *How can lifestyle behaviors contribute to diseases? How are allergies diagnosed and treated? What are ways to reduce the risk of developing cancer? What are ways to prevent heart disease? What are ways to prevent and treat diabetes?*

Throughout this chapter, our emphasis will be on understanding the facts of each disease and on following healthful lifestyle behaviors that help prevent, control, or reduce the risk of certain diseases. Our approach to this serious topic is straightforward and positive.

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:

- Initiate a discussion with your teen about any disease that runs in your family.
- Emphasize that many noncommunicable diseases develop over time as a result of a person's lifestyle behaviors. Explain that choices your child makes now could prevent the onset of some diseases in years to come.
- As a family, brainstorm ways you could change your lifestyle behaviors to help prevent certain diseases.
- Participate in physical activity with your child. Go for a walk or play a sport together. Emphasize how physical activity is essential for good health.

Please feel free to engage in any other activities you think will encourage your teen to develop a greater understanding of noncommunicable diseases. Emphasize the benefits of healthful lifestyle behaviors, including eating healthful foods, staying physically active, and getting enough rest. Thank you for supporting our classroom work.

Sincerely,

Health Teacher