

EXPLORING HEALTHY CHOICES

Grades 6–12

19–28 Minutes/6 Lessons

[CC]

This series teaches students vital information concerning key areas of their health – maintaining a healthy weight, proper nutrition, portion control, getting enough sleep, understanding the dangers of drowsy driving, and suicide prevention.

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Lesson 1. New Dietary Guidelines: What You Need to Know

In response to epidemic obesity in the United States, our government has issued new dietary guidelines that replace the old “Food Pyramid.” Viewers learn how to develop a healthy lifestyle instead of a healthy diet, combining sensible eating with regular exercise. The program explains the new Food Pyramid, encouraging students to use the new guidelines to personalize their own pyramid. Three major recommendations include: staying within your calorie or energy needs; being more active; and making wiser food choices. The relationship between the amount of food the body needs, the amount taken in, and the amount of calories burned for energy, illustrates how a person puts on excess weight and how to avoid this problem. On-the-street interviews with kids point out the need for serious education on this crucial subject. **(duration 24:00)**

Lesson 2. Portion Control: Seeing the Healthy Way to Eat

Using the power of video to its best advantage this program teaches teens how to choose the right food portions for their body type and metabolism and to visualize these portions in memorable ways. Nationwide, teenagers have become accustomed to eating “supersized.” This is a major factor in the obesity epidemic affecting teens today. Kids are suffering from weight-related health problems – diabetes; high blood pressure; high cholesterol; depression; and even heart disease.

The goal of this program is to teach teens how to correctly measure food portions using everyday, easy-to-understand analogies. For example, a protein portion should be about the same size as the palm of your hand; a portion of baked potato is about the size of a computer mouse. Using video to visualize portions, the program teaches viewers the difference between supersized portions and nutritionally correct portions. Once teens understand the right food portions for their body and metabolism, they can make healthy judgments about food portions at every meal, every day, for long-term health.

Portion Control also gives teen’s practical tips on checking labels, ordering small or medium sizes at restaurants, taking home leftovers from restaurants, sharing meals with friends, and starting with smaller amounts on dinner plates. **(duration 22:49)**

Lesson 3. Overweight in America: Why Are We Getting So Fat?

Huge portion sizes, fat-filled diets, too much TV/video games, and not enough exercise are common choices for a growing number of today’s teens. This timely program helps teens understand the serious health hazards of obesity and explores options for healthier eating and exercise. The program visits the Yale Bright Bodies clinic where teens and parents are learning how to change their lifestyles. Another segment looks in on an entire family trying to stem the tide of obesity. Teens will also see how a “fat camp” operates and how teens there are trying to get healthier. **(duration 20:26)**

Lesson 4. From A to ZZZZ's: What Teens Need to Know About Sleep

New research has shown how critically important it is for teens to get enough sleep to function at their best – physically, mentally and academically. Young viewers go inside a state-of-the-art sleep lab at Brown University where they learn key findings about sleep including: understanding the different stages of sleep; why too little sleep is not healthy; why teens are at particular disadvantages for getting enough sleep; and what teens can do to improve their sleep patterns. The program gives students important techniques for falling asleep and developing regular sleep patterns. **(duration 19:23)**

Lesson 5. Asleep at the Wheel: The Dangers of Drowsy Driving

Sleep deprived teens today are facing serious and even fatal consequences when combining drowsiness with driving. Each year drowsy driving causes more than 100,000 car crashes and 1,500 deaths. Over 50% of the drivers involved in these crashes are teenagers and young adults in their early twenties. Real life accident victims reiterate chilling stories of the repercussions of drowsy driving. A parent of a teen killed by a drowsy driver describes her successful efforts to pass a law, making it a felony to cause a fatal accident due to lack of sleep. A prominent sleep researcher compares driving while sleepy to driving while intoxicated. The program raises viewer awareness of warning signs and risk factors of drowsy driving and gives information to insure alertness and responsible, safe driving. **(duration 15:22)**

Lesson 6. It's Never Too Late: Stopping Teen Suicide

Armed with the latest statistics and facts on teen suicide, this video teaches viewers how to recognize and respond to the risks of teen suicide. Viewers will learn how feelings of rage, isolation and depression affect suicidal behavior and will understand the differences between normal "blues" and the symptoms of severe depression. Following media guidelines developed by the American Association of Suicidology, this program does not dramatize suicide. Rather, it focuses on stories of young adults who have overcome their problems by counseling and helps teenagers recognize the warning signs of suicide in their peers. The program emphasizes that all suicide threats should be taken seriously. Students will understand that help is available and what actions individuals can take to prevent suicides by others. The video stresses that students should not be afraid to ask if a peer is thinking about suicide and that it is important to get help. It includes the true story of several teens who recognized the warning signs in a classmate, contacted a trusted adult, and – because of their intervention – saved a life. **(duration 28:00)**

