

Healthy and Wise



Middle School Unit 6

Caprock Press

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Using Health Information to Improve Your Health



The availability of health information is vast. Some information can be helpful to you and improve your health, but some information, which might be false, can be detrimental to your health. Being aware of where to obtain credible health information is vital to improving your health.

When using prescription drugs, it is important to understand the information attached to the medicine provided by the pharmacy. This includes the necessary information to understand how to use the medication, any side effects, interactions with other drugs, and how it works to relieve symptoms or the illness. Reading this information when receiving a new medication can help you use the medication correctly. This is also true for over-the-counter medications. Be sure to read all the information on the packaging so you can decide if the medication is right for you.

The Internet can be a great place to access health information. MyPyramid.gov can help you make better dietary choices based on your nutritional needs. Also, medical web sites that are credible and research-based can help you get a better understanding of the best ways to manage your weight and health. However, the Internet also has sites that provide false information that can be misleading and even harmful. Make sure a web site is credible (government or university level) so that you always access accurate health information.

When evaluating health information or products, beware of the following:

- ✓ Recommends a quick solution or fix to the problem or condition
- ✓ Promotes a single product or food
- ✓ Results seem too good to be true
- ✓ No studies or scientific research available to back up the claims
- ✓ Promotes weight loss of more than one to two pounds per week
- ✓ Promotes weight loss without physical activity
- ✓ Traps fat
- ✓ Builds muscle fast
- ✓ Pill or substance that contains all the nutrients your body needs



Discussion Questions:

What types of health information resources do you use?

What kinds of health topics have you read about on the Internet or in magazines?

Activities



1. With your teacher leading this activity, make a list of relevant health topics for adolescents that your class can research online.
2. Select a health product. Use the product's packaging or manufacturer's web site to obtain more information about this product. Evaluate the cost versus the effectiveness of the product. Write a brief report on the product and turn it in to your teacher.
3. In groups, make a list of credible health web sites on the Internet. What criteria did you use to determine the sites were accurate and truthful? Share your list of sites with the other groups.
4. Create a poster that lists credible health information resources. Display the posters in your school to encourage students to access accurate health information.

Home Connection

Interview several family members and find out where they access most of their health information. Example - Grandmother (doctor, magazines, television news segments). Place this information in your health portfolio.



TEACHERS, STUDENTS, AND PARENTS

Additional activities, instructional guides, and correlations can be accessed and downloaded at www.caprockpress.com