

Welcome! This newsletter is for families and is offered to you by The Fourth R program. The Fourth R is a healthy relationship curriculum that your teen receives at school. The goal of the newsletters is to provide practical and usable information, resources, and strategies related to health education that aligns with what your teen is currently learning in class.



The Fourth R Program – Healthy Relationships, Safe Choices, Connected Youth

The Fourth R promotes healthy relationship skills and reduces risk behaviors

Your teen's health class consists of four units of study. This newsletter is related to the fourth unit of study: **Healthy Eating.**

What is your teen learning in health class?

- Eating, sleeping and exercise patterns
- Understanding MyPlate
- Goal setting for healthy eating
- Social and environmental influences on food choices
- Skills for making healthy food choices



Parent involvement matters

Your teen is learning how to make goals for healthy eating and will engage in an activity where they track their food, sleep, and exercise. They will also learn about barriers to meeting their goals in these three areas. Talk with your teen about their healthy eating goals and help support them in achieving these goals. The way that you speak about food, what meals you cook and how you prioritize personal activity are several things that help your teen develop healthy eating habits and a positive exercise regimen.

Now that your teen is in high school, they may strive for more independence and spend a lot of time in their peer group. Use grocery shopping and cooking as a way to stay connected with one another. Give your teen some choice in selecting food items and planning meals, and then discuss the health benefits of their choices. The transition period into adolescence can be an emotional time. Emotions contribute to the development of eating habits. Although eating as a celebration or a pick-me-up isn't always a bad thing, eating shouldn't be a primary coping mechanism. Help your teen identify their emotional eating triggers and together come up with a plan to minimize emotional eating.



Parent To-Do: Have a discussion with your teen about setting healthier food and activity goals for the family. How can you make a favorite meal healthier? Decide on a family activity plan that you can do together one night a week.

How can I help my teen form healthy eating habits?

Be a good role model: You don't always have to be perfect, but send the message that good health is important by trying to eat right and getting physically active.

Talk about healthy habits at mealtime: Use mealtime to discuss what foods everyone ate that day and how everyone can make better choices.

Find a realistic balance: It is best to avoid restricting foods or labeling foods as good or bad. Restricting foods can actually increase your teen's desires for these foods when you are not there to restrict them. Find a healthy balance where healthy options are offered and consumed most of the time.

Did you know?

Sugar-sweetened beverages are an unhealthy drink option. Consuming liquid sugar is detrimental because you end up consuming more calories overall and there are no nutritious value to these drinks. Water is a better option as it is a critical nutrient for our bodies and is needed for almost every function of the body.

Did you know?

Emotions can contribute to our food choices. Recognizing your thoughts and emotions prior to eating can help you make better choices. Think about how you feel before and after eating something to become more aware of how your emotions affect your food choices.

How can parents help?

Parents have a chance to

Get their teen off to a good start. It is important for your teen to start the morning off with breakfast. Skipping this meal can lead to learning and health problems. Help your teen have time in the morning for breakfast and if they are 'not hungry' provide a light breakfast to help build their appetite.

Make physical activity a priority. Schedule times for your family to get moving together, like walks or bike rides. Also encourage your teen to experiment with different activities and find one they enjoy.

Make meals matter. Although it may not be realistic of today's busy families to eat all their meals together, that doesn't mean it isn't a goal we should continue to strive for. Research shows that having family meals together has many benefits for both parents and children. Commit to at least one meal a day or several a week where all members of the family can eat together.

For more information about the newsletter or the Fourth R Program, please contact:

Centre for School Mental Health

Western University, Faculty of Education

1137 Western Road, Room 1154

London, ON, Canada, N6G 1G7

Phone: (519) 661-2111 X25154

Email: thefourth@uwo.ca

Web: www.youthrelationships.org

