Promoting healthy 15 to 18 year olds

Name _____ Weight _____ Height _____ Date _____

Fitness and Nutrition

- Advise them to Eat from the five food groups on a daily basis:

1. fruits
2. vegetables
3. whole grains
4. dairy (milk, cheese, yogurt)
5. meat, chicken, fish, beans, and eggs

- Calcium is important for bone growth and strength. Good sources are dairy products, spinach, broccoli and calcium-fortified orange juice.
- Iron is important in order to prevent anemia. Good iron sources include red meats, dark green vegetables, and iron-fortified breads and cereals.
- Advise them to make physical activity part of your daily life. Benefits of physical activity include:

1. increased cardiovascular fitness
2. increased strength
3. decreased tension
4. improved mood

- Consider joining an organized sports program or activities with friends.

Injury Prevention

- Wear a seat belt on every ride and a helmet for biking and skating.
- Never ride with an impaired driver. Avoid distracted driving.
- The safest home for children has no firearms. If present, keep guns unloaded and locked, and lock ammunition separately.
- Use nonviolent ways to resolve conflict. Ask a trusted adult or clinician for help when you feel unsafe.
- Take concerns about depression or self-harm seriously and seek help promptly.

School

- Academic performance affects your future decisions.
- Persons without a high school diploma usually do very poorly in the job market.
- We recommend you discuss career and educational opportunities with your school counselor.
- School and public libraries have information on available scholarships.
- If you are having trouble in school, please ask for help.

Relationships

- Be assertive with friends and family. Let them know your needs while being sensitive to theirs.
- Use “I” messages. For example, “I feel upset when you are more concerned about whether I do my chores than how my day was,” is more useful than “You always yell at me about my chores.”
- When you are angry, take time to calm down before you respond.
- Examine your choices and make well thought out decisions. Do not allow others to pressure you.
- Some adolescents are sexually active; others are not. Be aware of the risks of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (like chlamydia and AIDS). Abstinence is the best protection against unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. If you chose to be sexually active, protect yourself with a condom and use birth control methods.

Health Risks

- Fast foods tend to be high in fat and salt.
- Alcohol and drug use will impair your judgment.
- Date rapes are much more common when alcohol and drugs are being used.
- Cigarettes will stain your hands and teeth yellow, will make you smell like smoke, and will greatly increase your chances of heart disease and lung cancer.
- All tobacco is addictive. Once you are hooked, stopping can be very difficult.
- Untreated sexually transmitted diseases can lead to infertility and other illnesses, and, in the case of HIV infection, death.

Managing Stress

Adolescents’ lives can be very stressful at times. Stress can lead to illness, headaches and stomachaches. Here are some ways to reduce stress.

1. Relax: close your eyes and imagine a pleasant setting.
2. Take a break for exercise or fresh air.

3. Consider whether the issue is worth getting upset over.
4. Accept what you cannot change.
5. Make time for yourself.
6. Manage your time rather than waiting until the last minute.
7. Prepare for stressful situations and consider your choices.

Recommended Reading

Growing Up - Susan Meredith

All Grown Up and No Place To Go - David Elkind

Get Out of My Life, But First Could You Drive Me and Cheryl To The Mall - A. Wolf

Adolescents at Risk - Joy Dryfoos

How To Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk - Faber & Mazlish