


Module 9: Vehicle Information Center

Topic 3 Content: Family Health Habits

Introduction



Click each button below to learn more about positive family health habits.

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Healthy living is one of the primary ways you and your family can maintain more fulfilling, and vigorous lives. There are many components to healthy living. Click to learn of seven different behaviors and habits that will help your family promote and maintain overall health and wellness.

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Eating Habits



Your family can take many steps to promote healthier eating habits. Try making dinner together each evening. This gives you valuable time with your family, and also gives you an opportunity to have a voice in what kinds of food you eat. You can look up healthy recipes and try some that interest you. You may find out that cooking healthy meals can be fun, and that being healthy does not necessarily mean eliminating food that tastes good.

Go grocery shopping with your family. It will show your family that you are serious and dedicated to living a healthy lifestyle, and will provide them with the needed support to also maintain a health-oriented diet. Additionally, it will provide you and your family with the opportunity to explore different items in the supermarket and compare what is healthy and what is not. It is important that both you and your family members provide one another with words of inspiration and guidance. Be one another's role models! It is easier to choose healthy, nutritious options when you have people around you who inspire and encourage you to make the right decisions. You and your family can even demonstrate to others how to eat healthfully.

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Physical Activity



Exercise is essential, and it is often beneficial to participate in physical activity with a partner, or a number of partners, as they can provide you with positive feedback and encouragement, making your workouts more productive. If multiple members of your family participate in physical activity, you can serve as positive role models for one another, and exercising will become a habit that feels second nature. There are several activities, other than traditional weightlifting and aerobics, that you and your family members can do together:

Taking walks can be a tranquil end to a hectic day, and provide you with time to talk. Furthermore, walking is one of the best forms of exercise, and some even argue that it is more advantageous than running. In addition to simply taking walks around your neighborhood, consider local nature trails and walking paths.

Playing simple outdoor games such as baseball, soccer, basketball, or kickball can provide you with moderate to strenuous physical activity, allows for team-building skills, and can be fun. Consider inviting several local families to participate in these games with you and your family. When weather does not permit outdoor activities, you and your family can attend your local recreational facility where there may be an indoor activity area.

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Getting Enough Rest



Although the amount of rest needed for an individual to maintain a healthy lifestyle may vary from person to person, experts agree that the average teenager needs 8.5 to ten hours of sleep per night, and the average adult needs 7.5 to nine hours. Not getting enough sleep can hinder your cognitive functioning, can negatively affect your immune system, and can also upset the balance of your body, leading you to crave unhealthy foods. It is important that you and your family members go to bed at a reasonable hour and act respectfully toward other members of the family who may go to bed earlier or later than you. If you or a family member has difficulty falling asleep, reading a book helps some people relax. Watching television is not particularly conducive to falling asleep, and may create too much stimulation for your brain. If everyone in your family gets the right amount of sleep, each person will function at his or her peak, allowing for maximum productivity with a better mood.

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Dealing with Stress



Teenagers struggle daily with pressures from school, relationships, jobs, body image, and many other personal issues. Many of these stressors will remain present in your life well into adulthood. In fact, many adults deal with stress related to relationships, jobs, financial issues, and even body image. If stress is not dealt with in a productive way, it can have many negative implications, and can even affect your health through weight gain, weight loss, difficulty sleeping, anxiety, and hair loss.

One way to effectively deal with stress is simply by talking about it. Talking about the issues that are bothering you may be enough to deal with them. It is important to turn to a positive role model who views you with unconditional positive regard, and will provide you with support and a listening ear. You can turn to your parents, brothers or sisters, or even your guidance counselor at school. Talking about your problems will also bring you closer to the individual(s) in whom you choose to confide. If there is a particular problem that creates a significant amount of stress, such as homework, you may wish to seek out assistance from someone who can help you in that specific area.

Just as you can turn to your parents or other family members during times of stress, you should be there for family members to help them cope with their troubles. Openly discussing problematic issues within your family will create a healthy living environment that fosters open communication and the expression of emotions. Building a strong support system within your family is one of the preeminent ways to efficiently deal with stress.

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Oral Hygiene



Cleaning your mouth is just as important as taking a bath or shower each day. Each morning as you start your day and each evening as it comes to an end, it is important for you to brush your teeth. It is also important to floss at least once a day.

Visit the dentist so that he or she can thoroughly clean your teeth and examine your mouth to check for oral health complications, such as plaque, cavities, or gingivitis. Many illnesses like diabetes, leukemia, heart disease, and oral cancer have physical symptoms that show up in a patient's mouth. Regularly visiting the dentist is good for preventative care and for your overall health. If certain members of your family practice good oral hygiene, the rest of the family members will follow suit, promoting the wellness of the entire family.

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Getting Immunized



Immunizations are vaccinations that aim to reduce and eliminate disease or virus within an individual, often by helping the body produce the immunity against a particular disease. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention asserts that immunizations are important in helping to control the spread of disease. One immunization that has become particularly significant in recent years is the vaccination for the flu. The flu spreads very quickly, and if your family did not receive the flu vaccine, one member of your family may pass it on to others. If, however, your family had been vaccinated for the flu, your body may be more prepared to fight the influenza virus.

Although this is only one example, other immunizations work in precisely the same way. The CDC maintains that staying vaccinated can benefit the family as a whole and promote the well-being of each family member. Local clinics, and some schools, provide immunizations for little to no cost.

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Driving Habits



How you or your family members drive has a major influence on your health. Even though you may not have a license, you are learning how to drive from your family members, role models, and driver's education class. Driving a car is a big responsibility, not only in making sure that the car is taken care of, but most importantly, that you do not place your passengers, others on the road, or yourself in danger. Driving recklessly and in a state of rage are unhealthy, and even deadly, habits. When you are in the car with someone who is driving, encourage the driver to wear a seat belt, to pay attention to the road, and to remain calm. This means not using the phone or another electronic device. Many states have laws against talking on the phone or texting while driving. It also means not playing with the driver or having the driver do other things than driving. Finally, if something happens on the road that sparks anger in the driver, encourage the driver to calm down or maybe even pull over until he or she is no longer angry. Do not forget, too, that maintaining the car is part of driving safely. Take part in checking the condition of the tires, fluids, lights, brakes, and steering of the car on a regular basis.