Components of Whole Health

What You Will Learn to Do
Develop a plan for life-long health

Linked Core Abilities
- Take responsibility for your actions and choices

Skills and Knowledge You Will Gain Along the Way
- Identify the components of whole health
- Determine how food impacts overall health
- Determine how exercise impacts overall health
- Identify how stress impacts overall health
- Explain what constitutes a balanced or healthy life
- Explore the behaviors that negatively affect health

Key Words:
Balance
Behavior
Calories
Decision
Fitness
Metabolism
Self-discipline
Introduction: What REALLY Makes a Difference to Overall Health?

There are several components contributing to a person’s overall health. By maintaining a proper balance of physical activity, food choices, sleep and stress control, people enjoy healthier lives.

Key Components of Good Health

- Physical activity
- Food choices and portions
- Sleep
- Control of stress

To **balance** means to estimate or weigh the relative importance of every component of health. Just like eating and sleeping, physical activity should be a regular part of your day. Add physical activity to your own daily habits and feel the positive mental and physical results!

Physical Activity

Physical activity should be a regular part of your day, according to the U.S. Surgeon General’s Office (http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/obesityprevention/pledges/parents.html). Did you know that regular physical activity in children and adolescents promotes health and fitness? It does!

When compared to children and adolescents who are inactive, physically active youth have stronger muscles and higher levels of cardio-respiratory fitness. Additionally, physically active youth also typically have a lower percentage of body fat, stronger bones, and may experience less depression and anxiety than youth who do not exercise regularly.

- **Fitness** is a state or condition of being physically sound and healthy.
- **Health** is a state of complete mental, physical and social well-being.

In fact, substantial health benefits can result from engaging in moderate and vigorous physical activity. The best exercises include some type of aerobic activity, such as running, swimming or biking, as well as age-appropriate muscle- and bone-strengthening activities, including weight lifting and push-ups. It is best to exercise for periods of time that add up to 60 minutes (one hour) or more each day.

- Put an hour of physical activity into your day.
- Limit TV and other screen time to less than two hours per day.

Youth who are regularly active also have a better chance of a healthy adulthood. Children and adolescents don’t usually develop chronic diseases, such as heart disease, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, or osteoporosis. However, risk factors for
these diseases can begin to develop early in life. Regular physical activity makes it less likely that these risk factors will develop, and more likely that children will remain healthy as adults.

Add physical activity to your own daily habits.

Did you know...?

The average 12 to 17 year old watches about 23 hours of TV per week. You may know that TV has both positive and negative effects. It is not always clear how to use TV in a positive, creative way and protect yourself from the negative effects.

Today's young people spend more time watching TV (15,000 hours) than they do in school (11,000 hours). During an average year, American youth are exposed to:

- More than 14,000 sexual references and jokes, yet less than 175 will deal with self-control behaviors
- Between 1,000 and 2,000 beer and wine commercials
- More than 1,000 murders, rapes, assaults and armed robberies
- Nearly 20,000 commercials

The Food You Eat

The best way to ensure you’re getting proper nutrition without consuming too many calories is by eating healthier foods, in appropriate portions, from each food group. The U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans describes a healthy eating plan as one that:
• Emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and dairy products
• Includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts
• Is low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars
• Stays within your calorie needs

By planning your menu on a weekly basis, it’s easier to be sure you are getting the calories and nutrition your body needs. Buy healthy foods such as fruits, vegetables and whole grain products, and be sure to read the nutrition labels on packages to help you make healthy choices. Make sure you try to have three healthy meals each day, beginning with a nutritious breakfast. Did you realize that eating breakfast could help you reach and maintain a healthy weight? By planning out menus, shopping for healthy foods and preparing nutritious meals, you’ll be one step closer to a healthier you!

• Eat a healthy breakfast every day
• Sit at the table and eat together as a family
• Know how much food to eat

Did you know...?

In today’s world, calorie-packed food comes fast and easy. But, the benefits of staying at a healthy weight are huge and well worth the effort. In addition to lowering the risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and high blood pressure, keeping weight in check can also lower the risk of many different cancers, including breast, colon, kidney, pancreas, and esophageal.

How Many Calories Do You Need?

The number of calories a person needs is dependent on a variety of factors, including gender, activity level, age and weight. A calorie is a unit of food energy. Generally, males require more calories than females, and those who are more physically active need more calories than those who are not. In fact, people who are more physically active need more total calories and have a larger discretionary calorie allowance. The discretionary calorie allowance is part of total estimated calorie needs, not in addition to total calorie needs.

People use food energy – calories – to produce energy through metabolism.

Metabolism is a chemical process by which the body produces energy and maintains vital functions.
*These amounts are appropriate for individuals who get less than 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most days.

**These amounts are appropriate for individuals who get at least 30 minutes (lower calorie level) to at least 60 minutes (higher calorie level) of moderate physical activity most days.

***The number of discretionary calories is higher for children eight and younger than it is for older children or adults consuming the same number of calories, because younger children’s nutrient needs are lower. Therefore, less food from the basic food groups and fewer “essential calories” are needed.

**Sleep**

Does it really matter if you get enough sleep? Absolutely! Not only does the quantity of your sleep matter, but the quality of your sleep is important as well. People whose sleep is interrupted or cut short might not reach the deeper stages of sleep. When people wake up during deep sleep they may not get enough of the type of sleep they need to really feel rested. In other words, how well rested you are, and how well you function the next day, depend on the amount of time you slept and the amount of time you spent in each stage of sleep. We need sleep to think clearly, react quickly and create memories. In fact, the pathways in the brain that help us learn and remember are very active when we sleep. Studies show that people who are taught mentally challenging tasks do better after a good night’s sleep. Other research suggests that sleep is needed for creative problem solving.

It’s true that sleep is a significant contributor to overall health. Less sleep can increase your risk of being overweight or obese. A recent study found that with each
extra hour of sleep, the risk of being overweight or obese dropped by nine percent. Most children over age 10 need at least nine hours of sleep per day.

The decision to get enough sleep is completely up to you! To **decide** is to make your mind up about something. Decide to get the rest your body needs and feel better as a result!

- Make sure you get enough sleep each night
- Understand why you are making changes to get enough sleep

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**Did you know...?**

Early start times in some schools may play a role in teens not getting enough sleep. Teens that fall asleep after midnight may still have to get up early for school, so they may only squeeze in six or seven hours of sleep a night. A couple hours of missed sleep a night may not seem like a big deal, but it can create a noticeable sleep deficit over time.

This sleep deficit impacts everything from a person's ability to pay attention in class to his or her mood. According to the National Sleep Foundation’s 2006 Sleep in America poll, more than one quarter of high school students fall asleep in class, and experts have tied lost sleep to poorer grades. Lack of sleep also damages teens’ ability to do their best in athletics.

Slowed responses and concentration from lack of sleep don't just affect school or sports performance, though. More than half of teens surveyed reported that they have driven a car drowsy over the past year, and 15 percent of students in the 10th to 12th grades drive drowsy at least once a week.

The National Highway Safety Traffic Administration estimates that more than 100,000 accidents, 40,000 injuries, and 1,500 people are killed in the United States every year in crashes caused by drivers who are simply tired. Additionally, young people under the age of 25 are far more likely to be involved in drowsy driving crashes.

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**Being Aware of Health Stressors**

Stress is an inevitable part of life that everyone – adults, teens, and even children – experiences at times. Stress can be beneficial by helping people develop the skills they need to cope with, and adapt to, new and potentially threatening situations throughout life. However, the beneficial aspects of stress diminish when it is severe enough to overwhelm a person's ability to cope effectively. By taking care of yourself
and getting plenty of rest and exercise, you can better deal with the effects of stress.

Behaviors That Negatively Impact Health

A person’s behavior can positively or negatively affect his/her health. **Behavior** refers to how one responds to his or her environment. One very negative behavior is cigarette smoking.

Cigarette smoking, even as an adolescent, is dangerous to health. By quitting, you will feel better, have more energy, breathe easier and reduce the chance of getting sick. Did you know that more than 435,000 Americans die each year from smoking? Smoking causes illnesses, such as cancer, heart disease, stroke, lung disease, and can create problems for pregnant women and unborn babies.

**Did you know...?**

Smokers spend a larger proportion of their lives coping with functional disabilities when compared to non-smokers. Smokers are far more likely to die prematurely, according to a study on the relationship between smoking and disability-free life expectancy.

One study, which analyzes data from the National Population Health Survey, also found that smoking not only reduces the number of years that a person may hope to live, it also has a negative impact on their quality of life. Smoking has been associated with a variety of chronic conditions ranging from bronchitis to asthma to high blood pressure.

**Conclusion**

In order to achieve a healthy lifestyle, it is important to manage and balance stress, physical activity, sleep and diet. These factors drastically impact a person’s health – their physical, mental and social well-being. In order to do this properly, it takes determination and **self-discipline** – the correction or regulation of oneself for the sake of improvement. In other words, to improve your health, you need to take action with a plan. Plan your meals, choose healthy foods and exercise daily. Decide against unhealthy behaviors, such as smoking, and opt instead for activities that bring you strength, endurance, health and peace of mind.
Lesson Check-up

1. What considerations are necessary when striving for good health?
2. Explain why sleep is a necessary component of health.
3. Is it too soon for you to develop a plan for lifelong health? Why or why not?