

OVERWEIGHT IN AMERICA:

Why Are We Getting So Fat?

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TEACHER'S RESOURCE BOOK

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OVERWEIGHT IN AMERICA: WHY ARE WE GETTING SO FAT?

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Fat: it's a hot topic these days. Whether it's a news report about the growing number of overweight Americans, a magazine article about the newest diet to slim down for summer, or a TV commercial trying to entice teens into buying triple cheeseburgers and fries, messages about fat, health and obesity are everywhere—and often, they're contradictory. It's a challenge for today's young person to sort through all that information to find the facts about maintaining a healthy weight.

It is increasingly important for teens to understand obesity. Far beyond a simple issue of popularity or looks, being overweight or obese comes with serious health problems. Teens who are obese face more than social pressure—they are literally putting their lives on the line. Obesity increases the risk for a laundry list of health issues: hypertension, high cholesterol, liver disease, type II diabetes, heart disease, stroke and cancer are a few of the complications that an obese teen could run into in the future. The consequences can strike sooner than anyone ever expected; a study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* found that many body-fat-related conditions are striking younger and younger, and that an obese child could be cutting years off his life.

Unfortunately, some teens may recognize the dangers of obesity but not the healthy way to go about losing weight. “Fad” diets that forbid certain food groups or severely cut calories often cause more harm than good; while they may be effective in the short term, most fad diets are very difficult to sustain over an extended period. Plus, limiting foods too strictly is unhealthy. The body needs a well-balanced diet that includes a variety of foods in order to ensure it gets all the essential nutrients.

Teens must understand the basics of maintaining a healthy weight, starting with the definition of obesity. Once they can accurately gauge how healthy their own weight is, teens who need to lose a few pounds next must have the tools to do so in a safe and effective way. A healthy, well-balanced diet and regular exercise are key to losing weight and keeping in top shape. Young people should also learn to recognize unhealthy habits that contribute to obesity, like eating at fast-food restaurants too often or spending too much time watching TV or playing computer games. When teens grasp these facts, they set themselves up for a new, improved attitude—and the tools to adopt a truly healthy lifestyle.

It's never too early to take responsibility for your health. The habits formed in the younger years help ensure a longer, more enjoyable life; today's health-conscious teen is tomorrow's healthy adult. The stakes are too high to ignore the growing number of obese children and teens in America, but with a little knowledge, anyone can make the commitment to maintain a healthy weight—and succeed.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After watching the video *Overweight in America: Why Are We Getting So Fat?* and participating in the class activities included in this Teacher's Resource Book, your students will be able to:

- define the terms “overweight” and “obese”
- name some common causes for teen obesity
- explain the added health risks an obese person faces
- understand the psychological ramifications of obesity
- discuss the pros and cons of fad diets and weight-loss surgery
- create a plan with their families for adopting a healthier lifestyle
- recognize bad health habits and understand how to improve them
- understand what makes up a well-balanced, healthy diet
- create a personalized exercise program for better endurance and strength

The program opens with several overweight teenagers talking about the teasing and name-calling they endure because of their weight, and expressing their desire to lose pounds and feel better about themselves. The host explains that being overweight is no fun—not only do overweight teens have to deal with teasing, they are also at risk for many health problems.

The host then asserts that obesity rates have skyrocketed in the last few decades. The Centers for Disease Control reports that 30 percent of American adults 20 and older are obese, totaling 60 million people. Before the 1980s, only five percent of teenagers were overweight, but that number has now tripled. Viewers learn that obesity is now the second leading preventable cause of death in the United States.

The program addresses these central questions: Why are so many people gaining so much weight, and why is the number of overweight teens on the rise? Registered dietician Ellie Krieger begins to answer those questions by pointing out that people are eating bigger portions than they once did. The host explains that restaurants tend to serve very large portions, which she illustrates by comparing a reasonable, 500-calorie dinner plate with a typical restaurant portion of 1200 calories. “Over time, portions have gotten increasingly larger and larger, and in part it’s really what the consumer has wanted,” Krieger says.

The host tells viewers that fat itself is not a bad thing. Fat cushions and insulates organs and stores energy. She explains that humans used to depend on stored fat for survival; early people sometimes went days without food, so a reserve of energy was crucial for life. “But those days are long gone. We don’t do much hunting and gathering. It’s more like driving and sitting,” she says.

Next, the host identifies another reason for the rising number of overweight teens: advertisements for fast food restaurants. She tells viewers that fast food chains frequently market their products based on taste and size, not nutrition or health. One teen who eats fast food frequently says that he sees such advertising everywhere and “that makes you want to go try it because they’re telling you it’s really good.” Visiting a fast food restaurant once in a while is not a problem. Krieger points out that even fast food places have healthy menu choices. However, eating too much fast food is unhealthy.

The program moves on to another important factor in being overweight: lack of exercise. “Exercise is essential to staying fit and healthy, but too few of us are active,” the host says. One teen, Ron, describes his typical day as an example: going to school, coming home and eating, then spending time on the computer. He also lists his favorite foods: high-fat choices like ribs, cheeseburgers, and onion rings. Krieger tells viewers that the government recommends that teens get 60 minutes of activity each day. The host reviews Ron’s typical day: too much fat, sugar and salt, and too little exercise. “This means trouble—health trouble,” she says.

Young people don't have to wait until they're older to suffer health problems, viewers are told. Overweight teens are at risk for a long list of illnesses and conditions, especially if being overweight runs in the family. Dr. Marlene Schwartz of the Yale Department of Psychology is introduced. She discusses the surprising jump in the rates of overweight teens. Next, Krieger and the host list the health risks of carrying too much weight. Joint problems, hypertension and sleep apnea can result from being overweight; the extra strain on the heart can also lead to problems with the kidneys, eyes and brain. Other risks include high cholesterol, liver disease and type II diabetes, which can itself cause heart disease, blindness and kidney failure.

The good news is that such problems can be prevented by maintaining a healthy weight. The host discusses the United States Department of Agriculture's guidelines for healthy eating. The first guideline is to stay within calorie needs for the day. The second is to be active in order to burn some of those calories. The third is to make wise food choices, opting for nutrient rich, low-fat foods. The host points out that knowing the guidelines and actually following them are two different things, though. Losing weight is a difficult task.

To learn some ways people can stick to a healthy lifestyle, viewers meet a typical family of four. The parents share their tips on weight control. The mother explains that she keeps the house stocked with healthy snacks, and the father says that he allows fast food only once in a while. Krieger emphasizes the importance of family involvement: "A healthy lifestyle should absolutely be a family affair," she says.

The mother tells viewers she believes teaching her children about healthy eating is an important responsibility. Her children, Matt and Stephanie, then share some of their family's healthy habits. Stephanie says her mom promotes healthy eating because she "makes it fun" by preparing dishes like fish in tasty sauces and macaroni with broccoli. Matt adds that "As a family, we go bike riding, we take walks, and sometimes my dad and I throw a baseball around."

Their father then explains that their commitment to healthy living began when he learned he had an unhealthy BMI, or Body Mass Index. Krieger explains that BMI is a comparison between someone's weight and height, used by doctors to gauge a person's ideal weight. Krieger adds that a different BMI-for-age chart is used for teens because they are still growing. "As you grow, you can actually grow into your weight," she says.

Next, the host lists four guidelines for healthy weight loss. The first is to eat a balanced diet that includes lots of fruits and vegetables. The second is to eat a healthy breakfast every day. Third, teens are encouraged to exercise every day for at least an hour. Finally, young people must commit to the long haul. "Losing weight slowly is better than losing weight quickly,"

the host points out, adding that working with family and a dietician or a doctor is the best way to go.

The program then introduces another tool teens can use to lose weight: special summer camps where all young people have the same goal and are accepting of each other. Viewers meet campers and counselors at Camp Kingston in Amherst, Massachusetts, who discuss their experiences losing weight together. “Kids can relate with each other, and it makes it easier to realize that you’re not alone in this,” says Executive Director Mark Manila. Counselors emphasize that their biggest goals are improving campers’ self-image in order to empower them to stick to a healthier lifestyle once they leave camp.

The host explains that a lifestyle change is essential. “There’s no quick fix for getting weight under control. Think of it as a lifestyle change: permanent adjustments in eating and exercise habits. Slow, steady improvement is the best strategy,” she says. Krieger acknowledges that this can be overwhelming, but teens don’t need to panic. “The fact is that you don’t have to do anything drastic in order to see a huge difference,” she explains. The host provides an example: Choosing water or diet soda instead of regular soda at lunch saves about 200 calories a day, which translates to 20 pounds of fat per year.

The program moves on to the new USDA food guide pyramid. “Not all foods are created equal,” the host tells viewers. Some foods will provide energizing nutrients, while others provide little but fat and empty calories. “The key is knowing what kinds of food are needed, and in what amounts,” says the host, explaining that the new pyramid is a great tool to figure that out. The pyramid is now personalized, so students can log on to www.mypyramid.gov to receive eating guidelines based on their own age, gender, and activity level.

The new pyramid stresses the importance of a healthy lifestyle, including diet and exercise. Colored bands help on the diet side by representing different food groups. The wide orange band stands for grains like cereal and pasta. The green represents vegetables, red represents fruit, and blue represents milk and milk products like cheese and yogurt. Purple stands for meat and beans; healthy choices from this group include lean meats, poultry, fish, nuts and beans. Finally, yellow stands for oils, which should be limited in a healthy diet. The second component of the new pyramid is exercise, illustrated by a figure running up the side of the pyramid. The host explains that the personalized pyramid is a great tool for students to learn how they can improve their eating habits and pick up tips about which foods to eat and how to exercise.

Once more, the host reminds viewers that gradual improvement is much better than a quick fix. “The focus isn’t on crash diets. It’s about making those small changes that really add up,” like swapping carrots for chips at lunch or choosing a grilled chicken sandwich over a cheeseburger, she says. She then warns viewers not to trust so-called “miracle diets” or

eating fads. Krieger agrees, pointing out that following a restrictive diet “only works for the short term, and very often isn’t healthy.”

An important part of weight control is also getting into the habit of exercising, which burns calories and builds strength and endurance. “We don’t even need to think of it as exercise, because it sounds like such a chore,” says Krieger. “Just get out and move.” She lists some fun ways to be active, such as dancing, playing Frisbee, walking the dog or jumping rope. The host points out how easy it can be to work exercise into the day by going back to Ron’s example. She shows how he can be more active: Ron could ride his bike to school instead of driving, which gives him 20 total minutes of activity. Then, instead of sitting at the computer after school, Ron could go for a walk with a friend, play basketball or help with yard work.

Next, the host acknowledges that starting a new, healthier lifestyle can be hard—“But all those little steps do matter,” she says. Realizing that small changes add up is the first step towards maintaining a healthy weight. Krieger urges viewers to think about “what is an ideal life for you. Chances are it’s full of energy, it’s full of activity.” Keeping that goal in mind can help students make healthy choices.

Finally, the host reviews the program’s main points. She reminds viewers that the rising number of overweight teens is due to big portions, unhealthy food and a lack of exercise. Being overweight causes a number of health problems and lowers self-esteem, but teens have the power to change their lives. “We can start by following a few lifestyle guidelines: understanding how much to eat and which foods to choose, and working in at least one hour of exercise every day.” She poses a question to all viewers: “We can do it. Why not start today?”

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Name: _____

Pre/Post Test

1. TRUE or FALSE: The rate of overweight teenagers has remained steady for the past few decades at 15 percent. _____
2. TRUE or FALSE: Large portion sizes are one reason that so many Americans are overweight. _____
3. TRUE or FALSE: Commercials for fast food restaurants usually talk about the taste and size of their food instead of nutrition. _____
4. TRUE or FALSE: The government recommends that teens get at 15 minutes of exercise per day. _____
5. TRUE or FALSE: Being overweight only causes health problems in adults. _____
6. TRUE or FALSE: Family involvement is very important for a teen who wants to maintain a healthy weight. _____
7. TRUE or FALSE: When it comes to weight loss, fast results are better than slow improvements. _____
8. TRUE or FALSE: Small lifestyle changes can make a huge difference in your health. _____
9. TRUE or FALSE: The USDA food pyramid has the same diet and exercise guidelines for everyone. _____
10. TRUE or FALSE: Dancing, walking the dog and playing Frisbee all count as exercise. _____

Answers to this test appear on the next page.

Name: _____

Answers to Pre/Post Test

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. TRUE or FALSE: The rate of overweight teenagers has remained steady for the past few decades at 15 percent. | FALSE |
| 2. TRUE or FALSE: Large portion sizes are one reason that so many Americans are overweight. | TRUE |
| 3. TRUE or FALSE: Commercials for fast food restaurants usually talk about the taste and size of their food instead of nutrition. | TRUE |
| 4. TRUE or FALSE: The government recommends that teens get at 15 minutes of exercise per day. | FALSE |
| 5. TRUE or FALSE: Being overweight only causes health problems in adults. | FALSE |
| 6. TRUE or FALSE: Family involvement is very important for a teen who wants to maintain a healthy weight. | TRUE |
| 7. TRUE or FALSE: When it comes to weight loss, fast results are better than slow improvements. | FALSE |
| 8. TRUE or FALSE: Small lifestyle changes can make a huge difference in your health. | TRUE |
| 9. TRUE or FALSE: The USDA food pyramid has the same diet and exercise guidelines for everyone. | FALSE |
| 10. TRUE or FALSE: Dancing, walking the dog and playing Frisbee all count as exercise. | TRUE |

Name: _____

The best way to improve your health is to first take a good honest look at your habits. If you don't know where your problems lie, how can you fix them? First evaluate your current level of health by answering the questions on this pre-test honestly. Then look over your answers and set some goals. In two weeks, take the post-test and evaluate your progress.

PART ONE: PRE-TEST

1. How many servings of fruits and vegetables do you eat most days?

2. How many times a week do you exercise for 30 minutes or more in a row?

3. How many times a week do you eat at fast food restaurants?

4. How many hours per day do you spend watching TV, movies, or using the computer?

5. Do you feel that you are at a healthy weight, overweight, obese, or underweight?

6. How many hours do you sleep each night?

7. How many servings of candy, sweets, or other desserts do you eat each week?

8. Do you follow any diets? Which one?

9. What kind of exercise do you do regularly?

This activity is continued on the next page.

Name: _____

PART TWO: EVALUATION

Look over your answers to the pre-test, then read the information below and decide how you can improve your health in that area. Use additional paper if needed.

1. The USDA recommends that you eat 5-9 servings of fruits and vegetables every day.

How can you do better? _____

2. It's best to exercise for 30-60 minutes, 3-5 days a week. Your exercise can be almost anything: running, playing basketball, biking, swimming, dancing, etc.

How can you do better? _____

3. You should limit your trips to fast food restaurants as much as you can—and if you must go, order a small size and opt for salads or grilled chicken rather than fried foods or greasy burgers.

How can you do better? _____

4. Limit your “screen time” to less than two hours per day. Instead, go out and get active!

How can you do better? _____

5. The way you feel about your weight is very important—the more comfortable you are, the better you'll feel, both physically and mentally.

How can you do better? _____

6. You should be getting at least eight hours of sleep every night in order to perform at you best.

How can you do better? _____

7. Limit the fats, oils, and sweets you eat as much as possible. Choose healthy snacks and desserts instead, like fruit or low-fat yogurt.

How can you do better? _____

8. There's usually no need to follow any “fad” diets. You can maintain a healthy weight by exercising regularly and making smart choices about food.

How can you do better? _____

9. Doing the same workout every day gets boring. By doing a variety of exercises, you not only spice things up, but you are more likely to work out all parts of your body.

How can you do better? _____

This activity is continued on the next page.

Name: _____

PART THREE: POST-TEST
(two weeks later)

1. How many servings of fruits and vegetables do you eat most days?

2. How many times a week do you exercise for 30 minutes or more in a row?

3. How many times a week do you eat at fast food restaurants?

4. How many hours per day do you spend watching TV, movies, or using the computer?

5. Do you feel that you are at a healthy weight, overweight, obese, or underweight?

6. How many hours do you sleep each night?

7. How many servings of candy, sweets, or other desserts do you eat each week?

8. Do you follow any diets? Which one?

9. What kind of exercise do you do regularly?

On a separate sheet of paper, answer these questions:

Have you improved in any areas? Which ones?

Which areas do you still need to work on?

Do you feel physically better than you did two weeks ago? In what way?

Do you feel better mentally or emotionally than you did two weeks ago?
In what way?

Name: _____

Take a closer look at obesity by choosing one of the topics below and writing a two-to-three page paper on the subject. Use books, magazines, newspapers, and the Internet as resources. Use a *Resource Tracker* to record all your sources.

Health Effects of Teen Obesity

You've probably heard that being overweight or obese is bad for your health, but do you know why? Obesity is linked to all sorts of health problems, from high blood pressure to type II diabetes. Research the different health risks that come along with being obese and briefly explain each one. Think both short-term and long-term: how does being obese affect a teen now? How will it likely affect him or her in the future?

Social and Psychological Effects of Teen Obesity

The hardships of obesity don't stop at the physical; obese young people also face a host of social or psychological problems. Research how being obese is related to problems with peers, teasing, self-esteem, body image, and depression. Why do these connections exist?

From Culture to Culture

Obesity rates are not equal around the world—some cultures, like ours, report high rates, while others, like some European countries, have very low rates. Which cultures or nationalities have the highest numbers of obese people? Which have the lowest? What differences are there between the diets, physical activity levels, and lifestyles of these cultures?

Health Initiatives

All kinds of organizations are working to reduce obesity in this country, from federal government campaigns to state initiatives to community groups. Choose one group or individual campaign and describe the measures it is taking to improve citizens' health. Is there any data on the campaign's effectiveness?

Surgery

Overweight or obese people may be tempted to try drastic measures, like stomach stapling or liposuction, to lose weight. What kind of weight-loss surgeries exist? How are these procedures performed? What are the risks involved? What do the experts say about teens getting these kinds of procedures done?

Name: _____

Fitness and health-related magazines are big sellers—look at any magazine rack, and you’ll see all kinds of publications chock-full of articles about diet, exercise and lifestyle. Get in on the action by designing your own fitness magazine. Working in groups of three to four students, produce one issue of a magazine complete with pictures, articles, and cover art. Your magazine should be at least ten pages long. You can use your own photos or pictures cut from other magazines or newspapers to illustrate. Before you begin, use the space below to brainstorm with your group and plan out your issue. Some things to think about include:

What will the name of your magazine be?

Who is your intended audience? Most magazines have a specific reader in mind. Will your magazine target teenage boys? Snowboarders? Marathon runners? Women in their fifties? Couch potatoes who want to get fit?

What writing style will you use? Will your magazine work well using slang, or would it be better with more formal writing?

What content will you include? Some ideas:

Interviews with local health experts

Fun facts

Profiles of doctors, researchers, gym teachers, coaches, or dieticians

Exercise tips

Nutrition news

Name: _____

Even though we all want to be healthy, sometimes we don't act in the most healthful way. Maybe you're busy and eat at fast-food restaurants a few times a week, or maybe you don't really know how to improve your strength—whatever the reason, we can all stand to make some healthy changes in our lifestyles. The best way to do that is to set out some specific goals for yourself.

For each topic below, think of one specific goal that you can work towards to improve your health. It doesn't have to be a huge goal; sometimes, the most important thing is taking that first step.

Sample: What can I do to improve my muscular strength?

Sign up for a beginner's weight-lifting class after school; buy one session with a personal trainer at the gym to learn some new routines

1. What can I do to eat better at restaurants?

2. What can I do to increase my endurance?

3. What can I do to cut back on sugar, sweets, and fats in my diet?

4. What can I do to maintain a healthy weight for my body?

5. What can I do to make sure I stick with my exercise program?

6. What can I do to improve my flexibility?

7. What can I do to add more fruits and vegetables to my diet?

Name: _____

Exercise strengthens your heart, builds muscle, prevents many diseases, and helps control body weight—everyone agrees that regular physical activity is a great idea. It's recommended that you get 30-60 minutes of exercise on most days, and the best part is that exercise can be fun. You don't have to force yourself on the treadmill or struggle through a weight-lifting session if you don't like it; there are as many different ways to exercise as there are different people, and you can pick a routine that's fun and healthy for you.

Try it out: design a two-week personal exercise program, and then follow it for those two weeks. You may be surprised by how much you enjoy it and how much better you feel.

PART ONE

Make a list of at least 10 physical activities that you enjoy doing and that you could reasonably perform during your program. For example, don't write down "mountain climbing" unless you have a nearby mountain to climb! Some examples are bike riding, walking, ice skating, basketball, or walking.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

This activity is continued on the next page.

Name: _____

YOUR EXERCISE PROGRAM

PART TWO

Now, make an exercise schedule for yourself, using the activities you listed. Fill in the calendar, noting which activity you will do each day, when you will do it, and for how long. Don't forget to give yourself rest days!

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat

Name: _____

Obesity can be a controversial topic. Often, people have very different opinions about the health, media and public policy issues that surround the topic of being overweight. Explore some of these opinions by debating them in front of the class.

1. Get into groups of four, and then split into pairs. One pair will debate one side of a topic, and the other pair will debate the opposite side.
2. As a group, choose one of the topics on the following page. Each pair should then decide which side of the topic they would like to defend. It's okay if you don't personally agree with that side; you just need to present a good argument.
3. Research your topic with your partner and prepare a short speech arguing your side of the issue. Come up with several solid reasons for your opinion and back them up with facts, expert quotes and stories. Try to anticipate what the other pair in your group will say and address those points if you can.
4. Debate the other half of your group in front of the class. Use this format:
 - 5-10 minutes: Pair 1 introduces the topic and presents an argument.
 - 5-10 minutes: Pair 2 presents their side of the argument.
 - 2-3 minutes: Pair 2 responds to their opponents' argument.
 - 2-3 minutes: Pair 1 responds to their opponents' argument.
5. Ask the class to vote on which argument was more convincing. Who won the debate? Spend a few minutes discussing the topic as a class—what do your classmates think?

This activity is continued on the next page.

Name: _____

DEBATE TOPICS

Plastic surgery for teens

Side A: Plastic surgery and liposuction are not a good idea for teens who want to lose weight.

Side B: Plastic surgery and liposuction can be good options for teens who can't lose weight any other way.

Obesity and pop culture

Side A: TV shows like "The Biggest Loser" are great motivators for people to shape up.

Side B: TV shows like "The Biggest Loser" can be trivial, misleading and harmful for people who are struggling with weight loss.

Fast-food nation

Side A: Fast-food restaurants deserve some of the blame for the obesity problem in America and should be held responsible.

Side B: Individuals deserve the blame for the obesity problem in America and fast-food restaurants should be left out of it.

D.C. weighs in

Side A: Government agencies like the Department of Agriculture do a great job promoting health with effective, informative public campaigns.

Side B: Government agencies like the Department of Agriculture are falling way short in the fight against obesity; their campaigns are ineffective and need to be reworked.

Choose your own topic

Think up your own obesity-related topic and get it approved by your teacher.

Name: _____

ACTIVITY 8
FAMILY HEALTH GOALS

Getting in shape is a lot easier when you have the support of your family. Not only can they help you stick to your program, but they can encourage you when you need a boost. Sit down with your family members and come up with three health goals each. Then talk about how to achieve each goal. Finally, each family member should think of at least one way he or she can help the others reach their goals, whether by cheering them on, going to the gym with them, or holding them accountable to their plans. Fill in the sheet below, or use a separate sheet of paper.

An example has been done for you.

Name	3 Goals	Plan Notes	Family Help
<i>Ex: Mom</i>	<i>1) Lose 10 lbs in 3 months 2) Eat five servings of vegetables per day 3) Run three miles, twice a week</i>	<i>1) Go to the gym five times per week 2) Stock the fridge with fresh veggies 3) Start with jogging one mile, then walking two more</i>	<i>Dad will join the gym too; Steve will find healthy recipes on the Internet; Hannah will do chores while Mom goes jogging</i>

Name: _____

The road to better health is full of obstacles and temptations—but you can overcome them if you’re prepared. Think of a way to deal with these common health setbacks. Can you think of any other problems you may face?

Sample: “But I’m too tired to exercise today.”

Solution: I’ll go to the gym anyway and start my workout. If I don’t perk up, I’ll exercise at a lighter intensity.

1. “I’m trying to eat healthy, but I want to enjoy the munchies at my friend’s party this weekend.” Your solution could be:

2. “I have too much homework. Who has time to work out?” Your solution could be:

3. “I just don’t like vegetables. They’re gross.” Your solution could be:

4. I can’t exercise—I’m no good at sports.” Your solution could be:

5. “Healthy food takes too long to prepare. I’d rather just get fast food.” Your solution could be:

6. “I can’t afford a gym membership and fancy athletic equipment.” Your solution could be:

7. “My family stocks the kitchen with junk food. It’s too tempting.” Your solution could be:

Name: _____

What are calories, exactly? And why is it bad to eat too many calories? Here's your chance to find out. A calorie is a unit of energy. Our bodies need energy to survive. When we exercise, our bodies burn off the calories that we've consumed. But if we eat more calories than we need, the extra calories are stored in the body as fat. The more you eat, the more exercise you'll need to burn off the calories.

For this activity, you'll have to figure out how many calories are being consumed in the meals described. You'll also have to figure out how much exercise is needed to burn off the calories. You will need a copy of the *Calorie Chart* fact sheet to complete this activity. The *Calorie Chart* fact sheet gives you details on how many calories are burned when you perform different kinds of exercise. When you have finished calculating all three meals, consult the Answer Key.

HINT: To find out how many calories you would burn per minute, divide each rate by 60. To find out how many minutes you would need to burn off all the calories, divide the number of calories in the meal by the number of calories you would burn per minute. Remember to use the figures that are closest to your own body weight!

Meal 1: McDonalds

A Big Mac (600 calories, 33 grams of fat), medium fries (350 calories, 17 grams of fat) and a 21-ounce Coke (210 calories, 0 grams of fat)

How many calories does this entire meal contain?	_____
How many grams of fat does this entire meal contain?	_____
How many calories would you burn per minute of Frisbee?	_____
For how many minutes would you need to play Frisbee to burn off this meal?	_____

Meal 2: Arby's

A beef & cheddar sandwich (480 calories, 24 grams of fat), cheddar curly fries (460 calories, 24 grams of fat) and a 21-ounce Coke (210 calories, 0 grams of fat)

How many calories does this entire meal contain?	_____
How many grams of fat does this entire meal contain?	_____
How many calories would you burn per minute of ice-skating?	_____
For how many minutes would you need to ice skate to burn off this meal?	_____

The Answer Key for this activity appears on the next page

Name: _____

Answer Key

Meal 1: contains a total of 1160 calories, 50 grams of fat

75 lbs:	1.8 calories/minute, 644 minutes
100 lbs:	2.4 calories/minute, 483 minutes
125 lbs:	3 calories/minute, 387 minutes
150 lbs:	3.6 calories/minute, 322 minutes
200 lbs:	4.8 calories/minute, 242 minutes
250 lbs:	6 calories/minute, 193 minutes

Meal 2: contains a total of 1150 calories, 48 grams of fat

75 lbs:	3.35 calories/minute, 333 minutes
100 lbs:	4.6 calories/minute, 250 minutes
125 lbs:	5.75 calories/minute, 200 minutes
150 lbs:	6.9 calories/minute, 167 minutes
200 lbs:	9.2 calories/minute, 125 minutes
250 lbs:	11.5 calories/minute, 100 minutes

Name: _____

When fighting a national health problem like obesity, the first step is educating people about the dangers of being overweight, and help people recognize what they can do to lose weight and stay healthy. Sometimes government agencies or private organizations try to educate citizens through a public health campaign: a series of print ads, TV commercials, brochures or even bumper stickers and billboards designed to catch people’s attention and teach them at the same time. Have you ever heard of the Center for Disease Control’s “Five a Day” campaign urging people to eat five servings of fruits and vegetables per day? That’s a great example of a successful public health campaign.

Imagine you’re in charge of creating a new public health plan to combat obesity: you’ll need a theme, the facts that you want to communicate to the public, and an interesting way to reach people. Use this sheet to brainstorm ideas and take notes, then write a short proposal explaining why you chose to educate the way you did and outlining the way you’ll present your message. Include an example of one of your outlets; draw a print ad or billboard, cut out a bumper sticker, record a radio ad, etc.

TIPS

- Choose a specific theme. Trying to teach people too much might make them lose interest in what you’re saying. “How to be Healthy” is way too broad. Stick to a focused theme like “Easy Ways to Exercise Outdoors” or “Say No to Trans Fats.”
- A short but catchy slogan will help people remember your message.
- Don’t use overly scientific language. You want your campaign to be understood easily.
- Think about the type of person you want to reach most, and then decide the best ways to reach that type. Do you want to educate couch potatoes? Try a TV ad. Aiming at teenagers? Maybe ads in popular magazines would be effective.

IDEAS AND NOTES

Name: _____

Just how healthy are you? You might be happy with your weight, but that doesn't mean you're doing all the right things for your health. Eating right and getting a good amount of exercise will make you feel better and more energetic, no matter what your weight—and it will prevent health problems that could pop up in the future.

Take a close look at your own health by keeping an exercise/food journal for five days in a row. Create your own journal on a separate sheet of paper, using the format shown in the example below.

In the **exercise** column, write down any physical activity you do that day, how long you do it, and the intensity of the exercise.

In the **food** column, write down everything you eat at meals and snacks, including how much of each item you eat.

When you're done, answer the questions on the next page.

Day 1	Exercise	Food
<i>Sample day</i>	<p><i>30 min basketball in gym class, moderate intensity</i></p> <p><i>15 min running, high intensity</i></p>	<p><i>1 Pop-Tart</i> <i>1 cup 2 percent milk</i></p> <p><i>2 beef tacos</i> <i>2 cups soda</i></p> <p><i>1 apple with 2 Tbsp peanut butter</i></p> <p><i>4 oz grilled chicken</i> <i>½ cup lima beans</i> <i>1 cup spinach salad w/dressing</i></p> <p><i>1 cup low-fat ice cream</i></p>

This activity is continued on the next page.

Name: _____

JOURNAL EVALUATION

1. How many days did you exercise for at least 30 minutes?

2. Did you mostly exercise at low, moderate, or high intensity?

3. Do you think you included enough exercise in your routine? Why or why not?

4. What do you need to work on to improve your physical fitness?

5. Did you eat several servings of fruits and vegetables every day? Why or why not?

6. Did you eat mostly lean proteins or high-fat proteins? Which ones?

7. Did you limit your intake of sugar and dessert? Explain how.

8. What part of your diet do you need to work on the most? Explain your answer.

Name: _____

You've probably heard about a few of the diets out there—maybe you even know somebody who's tried one. Weight-loss companies and diet book authors do their best to convince you that cutting out certain foods or eating certain combinations of meals are the only ways to lose weight, but is that the truth or is it hype? Investigate a so-called “fad diet” or weight loss program to find out how effective—and healthy—it really is.

1. Pick a fad diet to investigate. Think about ads you may have seen, popular books, diets mentioned in the news, or diets that friends or family members have tried. Some possible diets include:

Atkins diet
South Beach diet
Sugar Busters
Weight Watchers
Grapefruit diet

2. Research the diet, keeping track of your sources. Keep these questions in mind as you go:

What's the premise of the diet or program? How does it work?

Is there a cost to using this diet?

How popular is the diet? How many people use it?

How effective is the diet or program? How many people have successfully lost weight?

How long does it take to lose five pounds? Ten pounds?

What do doctors say about it? Are there any risks? Does the diet or program allow for proper nutrition?

Do you know anybody who has tried it? What does he or she say?

Is this diet or program more effective than simply cutting calories and exercising more?

3. Write a brief paper (2-3 pages) explaining your findings. Make sure you include your own opinion about the diet or program—should people use it? Why or why not?

FACT SHEETS

GREAT GRAINS

What are grains? Grains are carbohydrate-rich foods like bread, rice, or oatmeal. Carbohydrates are sugars; simple carbohydrates are found in things like white sugar, milk, and fruit, while complex carbohydrates come in grains.

Which kinds are the best? The best grains to eat are whole grains: those are grains that haven't been processed, so that the entire grain kernel remains. They're much better than refined grains like white flour or white rice because the milling process that refined grains go through takes away all the fiber, iron, and B vitamins you'll find in whole grains. Look for foods marked "whole grain" or pick up some bulgur, oatmeal, or brown rice to get the most out of your grains.

Why are they good for you? Grains are essential to a healthy diet; not only do they protect you from diseases, they are a great source of nutrients that help you feel your best. For one thing, the fiber found in grains reduces the risk of heart disease and high blood pressure. B vitamins help build a healthy nervous system, and folate aids in the production of red blood cells.

How can I get enough? Up your intake of healthy grains: first of all, substitute whole grains for refined grains whenever you can. You can also try baking with whole wheat flour or oat flour. Whole-grain cereals and popcorn make good snacks—and great sources of complex carbohydrates.

INCREDIBLE VEGETABLES

What are vegetables? Vegetables come in all types, colors and sizes; there are dark green ones like spinach and collard greens, orange ones like carrots, squash, and yams, starchy ones like potatoes, green peas, and corn, and a bunch of others that don't really fit in any category, like artichokes, tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, and onions.

Which kinds are the best? Almost any vegetable is good for you—the key is eating a variety of them, so you can get as many different nutrients as possible. Corn doesn't offer the same benefits as tomatoes do, and peppers pack a different health punch than yams, so sample all of them to make sure you're getting all you need. Fresh and frozen vegetables will give you the best health benefits—avoid too many canned veggies because they contain a lot of sodium.

This fact sheet is continued on the next page.

Name: _____

Why are they good for you? Eating lots of vegetables is one of the best habits you can have, because veggies reduce the risk of stroke, heart disease, type II diabetes, some cancers, and kidney stones. Their many nutrients keep your body running at top speed: potassium maintains healthy blood pressure, folate builds red blood cells, fiber reduces cholesterol, vitamin A helps the immune system, and vitamin C helps wounds heal and keeps teeth in good shape.

How can I get enough? Buy lots of fresh, easy-to-prepare veggies. Plan some meals around vegetables, like a stir-fry or dinner salad. Make a side salad to go with every dinner. Order lots of vegetables on your pizza. Pair veggies with low-fat dips for flavor.

FANTASTIC FRUITS

What are fruits? Fruits include apples, pineapples, oranges, mangoes, strawberries, blueberries, bananas, papayas, lemons, peaches, and watermelon. You can find them fresh, canned, dried, or in juices.

Which kinds are the best? Like vegetables, almost all fruits are good for you. Just try to limit your intake of canned fruit or fruit cocktail, because they contain added sugar.

Why are they good for you? Fruits reduce the risk of heart disease, some cancers, stroke, kidney stones, and type II diabetes. Like vegetables, they're chock-full of nutrients and vitamins; potassium helps maintain healthy blood pressure, folate aids in producing red blood cells, and vitamin C protects teeth and boosts the immune system, to name a few.

How can I get enough? Keep a bowl of fresh fruit around the house. Make smoothies with fresh or frozen fruits of your choice. Make most of your fruit choices fresh, not juices. Top your cereal with bananas, blueberries, or strawberries. Mix fruit into yogurt. Try fruits for dessert instead of sweets. Include dried fruit as an on-the-go snack.

DYNAMITE DAIRY

What is dairy? Foods that contain milk fit into the dairy category. Examples of dairy products are skim milk, yogurt, cheddar cheese, butter, cream cheese, and pudding.

This fact sheet is continued on the next page.

Name: _____

Which kinds are the best? Low-fat or nonfat dairy products are definitely the best; choose reduced-fat or lean dairy items whenever you can to save unnecessary fat and calories.

Why are they good for you? The big nutrient supplied by dairy products is calcium, a mineral that builds bone mass and teeth. Getting enough calcium, especially when you are young, helps protect you from osteoporosis—a disease in which the bones deteriorate. Vitamin D, which is also found in milk products, helps the body process calcium and phosphorus (another bone-strengthening mineral). The potassium in dairy products helps maintain healthy blood pressure.

How can I get enough? Try eating yogurt as a snack or use it as a dip for fruits. Add low-fat cheese to casseroles, soups, or as a vegetable topping. Drink skim milk with meals. Order cappuccinos and lattes with skim milk.

MIGHTY MEATS & PROTEINS

What are meats and proteins? This category contains meats like beef, pork, and ham, as well as other foods that contain a lot of protein: nuts (almonds, peanuts, cashews), eggs, fish, beans, and poultry (chicken, turkey).

Which kinds are the best? Lean cuts of meat have the least saturated fat and fewest calories, making them the best choice when it comes to beef, ham, and poultry. Certain nuts, such as almonds, contain unsaturated or “healthy” fats. Fish also contain healthy fats like omega-3 fatty acids.

Why are they good for you? Proteins are the building block of cells—that means they’re essential for bones, blood, muscles, skin, hormones, and vitamins. Protein-rich foods often contain iron, which carries oxygen to the blood. Meats also have B vitamins that build tissues and keep the nervous system healthy, and vitamin E, and antioxidant that can protect from cancer. Also found in meats are magnesium, used in energy release and bone development, and zinc, a tool of the immune system.

How can I get enough? Choose the leanest cuts of meat possible. Take the skin off poultry before eating it. Trim all visible fat off meat before cooking and drain liquid fat. Grill, broil, roast, or boil meats instead of frying. Include more fish in your diet. Eat nuts as a snack, in salads, or mixed in yogurt.

Source: www.mypyramid.gov; www.kidshealth.com

Name: _____

Need more information about obesity in the United States? Consider these facts:

- In the United States, 97 million adults are considered overweight and nearly one adult in five is obese. Among teenagers and children, about 15 percent are overweight (*www.kidshealth.com*).
- Almost 26,000 deaths each year are linked to obesity (*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*).
- Obesity among teenagers and children has tripled in the last 20 years (*Department of Health and Human Services*).
- Obesity cost the US about 117 billion dollars in 2000 (*Department of Health and Human Services*).
- The Surgeon General recommends that adults exercise at moderate intensity at least 30 minutes most days of the week, but only about one-third of adults get this much exercise (*Department of Health and Human Services*).
- Overweight children or teens have a 70 percent chance of becoming overweight adults (*Department of Health and Human Services*).
- About 1.2 billion people worldwide are overweight; 300 million of them are obese (*www.kidshealth.com*).
- About 62 percent of women 20 and over are overweight in the United States—compare that to 67 percent of men in that age group. About 33 percent of women 20 and over are obese, while about 27 percent of men 20 and over belong to that category (*Weight-Control Information Network*).
- Black and Hispanic people are more likely to be overweight or obese than Caucasians—black women are at the highest risk (*Weight-Control Information Network*).
- Americans spend \$33 billion per year on weight-loss products and services (*Weight-Control Information Network*).

Name: _____

CALORIE CHART

Any kind of exercise—from walking the dog to mountain climbing—will burn calories. But some people burn calories faster than others. That depends on your weight, among other things. This chart shows an estimate of how many calories you would burn doing different kinds of activities. The rate is calories burned PER HOUR. Use the number closest to your weight to estimate how many calories you would burn if you performed any of the activities below for an hour.

	75-lb person	100-lb person	125-lb person	150-lb person	200-lb person	250-lb person
Walking fast	198	264	330	396	528	660
Jogging	337	450	562	675	900	1125
Swimming	301	402	502	603	804	1005
Biking	220	294	367	441	588	735
Tennis	274	366	457	549	732	915
Basketball	202	270	337	405	540	675
Frisbee	108	144	180	216	288	360
Ice skating	207	276	345	414	552	690
Jumping rope	342	456	570	684	912	1140
Roller-blading	238	318	397	477	636	795
Sledding	238	318	397	477	636	795
Dancing	171	228	285	342	456	570

Source: www.caloriecontrol.org

Name: _____

1. Whenever you can, walk or bike instead of driving. Those extra minutes you spend going to school, heading to a friend's house or running errands can really add up.
2. If you're not used to working out, start slowly. Keep track of how much you do each session, then increase it gradually. You'll be surprised at how far you can go!
3. Ask your friends to become workout buddies. You'll be more likely to stick to your program if others are counting on you, and workouts will be more fun when you share them.
4. Mix things up: go hiking one day, lift weights another day, and go roller-blading the next. The variety will keep you from getting bored with the same old thing.
5. Make sure you drink plenty of water before your workout—the better hydrated you are, the better you'll feel and the longer you'll be able to exercise. Drink water after your workout as well to replenish the fluids you lost.
6. Plan exercise into your day. If you don't mind getting up early, schedule workouts for each morning. If you have some free time right after school, decide to exercise during that period. If you plan your workouts ahead of time, you'll be less likely to skip out on exercise.
7. Design a workout plan that fits you rather than just doing what your friend is doing or copying a routine in a magazine. Do you prefer to work out alone, or in groups? Do you like competitive sports, or do those make you nervous? Is there a gym, ice-skating rink, pool, etc, nearby, or would it be a hassle to get there for your workouts? Pick activities that are both convenient and enjoyable for you.
8. Give yourself rewards every time you reach a goal—maybe you stuck to your workout every day for a week, or you managed to swim for 30 minutes without stopping. Whatever your accomplishment, reward yourself with something that will motivate you to continue: a movie, a night out with friends, or a new CD are all good ways to pat yourself on the back.
9. Don't worry if you miss a few days or miss out on a goal you set—it's okay! Just regroup, set some new goals, and get back on your program. A few setbacks won't make a difference in the long run, and nobody's perfect.

Name: _____

FACT SHEET 5
BODY MASS INDEX

The Body Mass Index, or BMI, is a useful tool when it comes to assessing physical fitness. Using a formula based on your height, weight, age, and gender, BMI estimates how much body fat you have. It's also a way to compare yourself to others, so that you can get an idea if you're underweight, overweight, or just the right weight.

Find your BMI by locating your weight and height on this chart. Make sure you're using accurate measurements—a doctor's office or your school nurse can give you a valid reading.

BMI	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35
<i>Height</i>		<i>Weight (in pounds)</i>															
4'10" (58")	91	96	100	105	110	115	119	124	129	134	138	143	148	153	158	162	167
4'11" (59")	94	99	104	109	114	119	124	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	173
5' (60")	97	102	107	112	118	123	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	163	168	174	179
5'1" (61")	100	106	111	116	122	127	132	137	143	148	153	158	164	169	174	180	185
5'2" (62")	104	109	115	120	126	131	136	142	147	153	158	164	169	175	180	186	191
5'3" (63")	107	113	118	124	130	135	141	146	152	158	163	169	175	180	186	191	197
5'4" (64")	110	116	122	128	134	140	145	151	157	163	169	174	180	186	192	197	204
5'5" (65")	114	120	126	132	138	144	150	156	162	168	174	180	186	192	198	204	210
5'6" (66")	118	124	130	136	142	148	155	161	167	173	179	186	192	198	204	210	216
5'7" (67")	121	127	134	140	146	153	159	166	172	178	185	191	198	204	211	217	223
5'8" (68")	125	131	138	144	151	158	164	171	177	184	190	197	203	210	216	223	230
5'9" (69")	128	135	142	149	155	162	169	176	182	189	196	203	209	216	223	230	236
5'10" (70")	132	139	146	153	160	167	174	181	188	195	202	209	216	222	229	236	243
5'11" (71")	136	143	150	157	165	172	179	186	193	200	208	215	222	229	236	243	250
6' (72")	140	147	154	162	169	177	184	191	199	206	213	221	228	235	242	250	258
6'1" (73")	144	151	159	166	174	182	189	197	204	212	219	227	235	242	250	257	265
6'2" (74")	148	155	163	171	179	186	194	202	210	218	225	233	241	249	256	264	272
6'3" (75")	152	160	168	176	184	192	200	208	216	224	232	240	248	256	264	272	279

Source: Evidence Report of Clinical Guidelines on the Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults, 1998. NIH/National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI)

Other Body Mass Index charts can be found on the Internet:

- <http://www.consumer.gov/weightloss/bmi.htm>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bmi/calc-bmi.htm>
- http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/obesity/bmi_tbl.htm

Name: _____

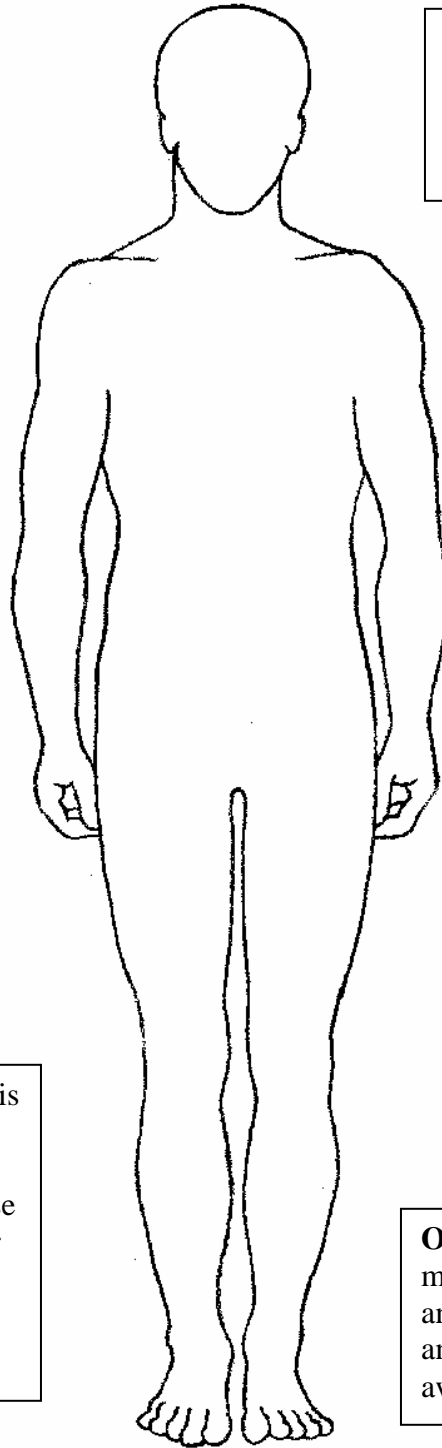
HEALTH RISKS OF OBESITY

Sleep apnea: this disorder causes you to stop breathing for short times while you're sleeping, leading to sleepiness and difficulty concentrating.

Stroke: a stroke occurs when blood and oxygen cannot reach the brain, causing paralysis or even death.

Type II Diabetes: someone with this disease has a pancreas that can't regulate blood sugar levels. Sufferers must constantly monitor their blood sugar and insulin.

Heart Disease: this happens when the heartbeat or blood circulation cease to work normally—it's associated with hypertension, or high blood pressure. Heart disease can cause a heart attack or even cardiac death.



Gallbladder disease: this occurs when clusters of cholesterol and other materials, called gallstones, form in the gallbladder. It leads to abdominal and back pain.

Cancer: this disease is caused when normal cells multiply uncontrollably. Obese people are at a higher risk for colon, gallbladder, prostate and kidney cancer.

Osteoarthritis: extra weight means extra stress on the knees and hips. This causes the bone and cartilage of joints to wear away, causing pain.

Name: _____

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United States Department of Health and Human Services, www.surgeongeneral.gov

Weight-Control Information Network, <http://win.niddk.nih.gov>

Name: _____

HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAMS FROM HUMAN RELATIONS MEDIA

<i>The New Dietary Guidelines: What You Need to Know</i>	grades 7-12
<i>From A to ZZZZ's: What Teens Need to Know About Sleep</i>	grades 7-12
<i>Weighing the Risks</i>	grades 7-12
<i>Portion Control: Seeing the Healthy Way to Eat</i>	grades 7-12
<i>Food, Health and Exercise</i>	grades 7-12
<i>Portion Distortion: Seeing the Healthy Way to Eat</i>	grades 3-6
<i>Ten Reasons to Get in Shape</i>	grades 3-5
<i>To the Max: Understanding the New Diet and Exercise Guidelines</i>	grades 3-5
<i>Total Health: Becoming Physically Fit</i>	grades 7-12
<i>Understanding Anorexia and Bulimia</i>	grades 6-8
<i>Understanding Eating Disorders</i>	grades 7-12

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