



TEACHING TIPS: KEEPING HEALTHY

All people care about their health. You will find that some people are much more concerned than others. Our main concern is with those who may not be aware of ways they can stay healthy.

One purpose of the handouts is to show that good health is important to each of us in many ways. Notice that this is done by emphasizing six ways that good health affects our lives. For example, research shows that healthy children can learn better in school. It is not enough to go to school. The mental and physical energy needed for learning requires a higher level, or "extra measure," of health. The series will help you emphasize the importance of avoiding ill health.

You can help the family members to think more about the importance of good health by talking with them about some of their own experiences with health problems. For example, if a person is tired because of lack of sleep, she (or he) may get a headache or be cross with the children. These problems could have been avoided by "taking care of yourself."

Many people think that they need pills, lotions and other special health aids to stay healthy. This is not true. But, there are many things that a person can do to improve and keep his or her health without buying special health aids.

The handouts emphasize some of the basic keys to good health: sleep, exercise, disease prevention, dental health and medical check-ups. A separate handout on good nutrition has not been prepared because you already have access to this information.

Try to show the families with whom you work that all of the keys to good health must be used together to unlock the door to health. You

should not forget part of the keys while using the others. A person who lives in a clean home, eats well and exercises properly may not enjoy good health if he or she lacks sleep. Stay healthy by making sure that all the keys to health are a part of your daily life.

Actually, these keys to good health are nothing new. In fact, they may seem too simple to really help improve a person's health—but they can. The trick is to change bad health habits to good ones. For example, a person may not brush and floss his teeth regularly because it "takes too much time." With practice, brushing and flossing the teeth takes no more than a few minutes. Once it becomes a habit, a person becomes used to having a clean, fresh-tasting mouth and will want to continue brushing regularly. That person has started a good health habit. He (or she) has a clean mouth and will have healthier teeth and gums.

Encourage the family to choose some health habits which they would like to talk about in future visits. This will help you decide on the order for the other handouts. As you are planning your visits with the family, write down the keys to good health that you will be discussing at each visit. Keep this information for future visits.

At the end of your visit, you can leave the handout that you will talk about next time.

This information was adapted by Carla Shearer, Extension health education specialist, The Texas A&M University System, from materials prepared by the Illinois Cooperative Extension Service. The author appreciates the assistance of Zelda Williams, Lynne Thibodeaux and Elaine Ward, Extension program specialists—family resource development program, Prairie View A&M University, The Texas A&M University System, in the preparation of this publication.

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