



Health, Not Weight

Grade 7/8

Lesson

2

Lesson Objectives – Students provide at least two nonweight-related reasons to eat a healthy diet and be physically active.

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Prepare Students	5 min.	126
Attention Grabber	5 min.	126
Explain/Demonstrate/Practice Healthier Me Worksheet	12 min.	127
Review	3 min.	129
Total Time	25 min.	

Equipment & Materials

- ✓ Brown paper bag and 5-7 objects that relate, in some way, to health. (See “Teacher Preparation” below.)
- ✓ Chalkboard/chalk or poster paper/markers
- ✓ “Healthier Me” Worksheet in Appendix 7/8-2, p. 131.

Teacher Preparation

Prior to the start of this lesson:

- ✓ Make one copy for each group of 4-5 students of “Healthier Me” Worksheet.
- ✓ Assemble a paper bag containing 5-7 different items that relate, in some way, to health. Here are a few ideas for what to put in the bag:
 - A smiling-face sticker
 - An orange
 - A pair of sunglasses or a bottle of sunscreen
 - A friendship bracelet
 - A toothbrush
 - A tennis ball
 - A small water bottle

This lesson addresses the following content standards:

Michigan Standards		National Standards	
Physical Education	Health Education	Physical Education	Health Education
Standard #12	Standard #1	Standard #6	Standard #1
Standard #14	Standard #3	Standard #7	Standard #3

This lesson relates to Michigan Model for Comprehensive School Health Education:

Grade 7-8 Lesson: “What’s Food Got to Do with It?” and “It’s Time to Move!”

Additional Preparation

This lesson may generate discussion that reveals a risk of eating disorders among students. Before presenting the lesson, verify procedures for referring a student for evaluation and intervention.

Key Message & Background Information for Teachers**Key Messages:**

I value my body and do my best to keep it healthy, especially by eating healthy foods and by being physically active.

Background Information:

Americans of all ages are in need of a “lifestyle overhaul.” Newspapers, magazines, and television specials arouse concern about the “obesity epidemic” caused by poor diets and physical activity patterns. These stories, along with a multi-billion dollar diet industry, lead us to believe that thinness is synonymous with health. The truth is that there are many health benefits associated with eating well and being physically active that are independent of weight. Having a healthy lifestyle can help us achieve the weight that’s right for us. This “natural weight” is different for each person, depending on genetic make-up. This lesson emphasizes the importance of health rather than weight as a motivating factor for healthy eating and physical activity.

Prepare Students**5 min.**

Gather students in a circle.

Introduce the lesson:

- People are always saying, “This is healthy,” or “That’s not healthy.” Today we’re going to spend a little time sorting out these definitions and what they might mean to us in our everyday lives.

Attention Grabber**5 min.**

Ask for a volunteer. Have him or her draw one object out of the bag (without looking) and then explain what that item has to do with health.

- Allow other students in the class to add to what the volunteer has already said.
- Repeat for all the other objects in the bag

***Teacher tip:** Encourage students to think broadly. For example, the link between a toothbrush and health seems obvious: dental hygiene. However, having clean teeth enhances our social health as well, since dirty teeth and bad breath is a real turn-off for most people.*

Emphasize:

- Health is a broad concept that includes not only our physical health, but our social and mental health as well.

Healthier Me Worksheet

12 min.

Explain/Demonstrate

Practice

Introduce the “Healthier Me” Worksheet activity by saying:

- We can’t completely control the size and shape of our bodies, but we can control choices we make that affect our bodies. This worksheet will remind you of some of the ways you can take responsibility for being healthier.

Have students complete the worksheet:

- Divide class into groups with 4-5 students per group.
- Distribute copies of the worksheet and ask groups to choose one person in their group to record the main points of the discussion.
- Briefly review the prompts and clarify, if necessary. While reviewing the questions, give one “sample answer” for each question to make sure students are on the right track.

Teacher tip: Provide a true sample answer from your own life, so the students can see you as a positive role model:

I help meet my need for physical activity by . . .

- Give students about 6-7 minutes to answer the prompts and then review the answers as a group.

The worksheet contains the following prompts:

I am making healthy food choices when I . . .

Good answers include:

- o Eat breakfast everyday.
- o Eat at least 1.5 cups of fruit every day.
- o Eat at least 2.5 cups of vegetables every day.
- o Eat when I am hungry.
- o Stop eating when I am full.
- o Eat according to “My Pyramid.”
- o Limit “junk food.”
- o Drink milk or water (instead of soft drinks).
- o Eat at meal times.

Review and discuss student responses. Prompts (in bold) with notes appear below.

Teacher tip: “Red Flag” answers include any extreme behaviors including skipping meals, unbalanced diets, or anything explicitly having to do with weight loss. Emphasize that it’s important to take care of our bodies by giving them what they need and by eating fewer foods that aren’t nutritious.

I help meet my need for physical activity by . . .

Good answers include:

- o Playing (any sport).
- o Taking the stairs instead of the elevator.
- o Riding my bike.
- o Walking.
- o Taking my dog for a walk.
- o Raking leaves in my backyard.

Teacher tip: “Red Flag” answers include any extreme behaviors, such as exercising many hours a day. Too much physical activity is happening when people spend so much time exercising they do not have time for social life or school work. Tell students that a good “rule of thumb” is to be physically active for about an hour on most days. Remind students that this can be accomplished in a variety of ways and doesn’t require playing a sport or working up a sweat every single time.

Give five reasons why it is important to make healthy food choices.

Answers might include:

- o More energy.
- o Better hair/skin/nails.
- o Play sports better.
- o Better concentration in school.
- o Prevent “unnatural” weight gain.
- o Decrease risk of disease later in life.

Teacher tip: “Red Flag” answer: “lose weight.” Some people wrongly assume that thinner people eat healthy while bigger people eat a lot of junk food. It is impossible to tell anything about people’s eating habits just by looking at them. Eating well is very important for good health, regardless of one’s body size or shape. The danger of weight loss being a goal of eating healthy is that a person’s weight or shape won’t necessarily change if he or she starts to eat well; however, people who eat well will almost certainly be healthier. The bottom line is that a person’s weight or shape is a poor indicator of his or her overall health.

Give five reasons why it is important to be physically active.

Answers might include:

- o It’s fun!
- o More energy.
- o Better muscle tone.
- o Feel strong.
- o More flexible.
- o Better endurance.
- o Better concentration in school.
- o Prevent “unnatural” weight gain.
- o Sleep well.

Teacher tip: “Red Flag” answer: “lose weight.” This explanation parallels the one above. Some people wrongly assume that thinner people are more active while bigger people are “couch potatoes.” Many large people are very fit, while many thin people are not fit at all. It can be hard to tell how active people are just by looking at them. Being physically active is very important for good health, regardless of one’s body size or shape. The danger of weight loss being a goal of physical activity is that a person’s weight or shape won’t necessarily change if he or she becomes more active; however, people who are more active will almost certainly be healthier. The bottom line is that a person’s weight or shape is a poor indicator of his or her overall health.

Review

3 min.

Ask students:

- Think of one change you can make to improve your eating habits and one change you can make to improve your physical activity habits.

Wrap up the lesson by reminding students of the following:

- While eating well and being physically active are important, they are just a part of an overall picture of good health.
- Remember this definition of health by the WHO (World Health Organization): “Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease.”
- What do you think physical well-being, mental well-being, and social well-being are?

Teacher tip: *Sample responses:*

- o Physical well-being—having energy, feeling strong, etc.
- o Mental well-being—feeling happy, confident, hopeful, etc.
- o Social well-being—feeling connected to family, having good friends, etc.

Healthier Me Worksheet

Instructions for recorder: Ask everyone in the group to give ideas for each of the four topics. Record the answers.

- I am making healthy food choices when I . . .

- I help meet my need for physical activity by . . .

- Give five reasons why it is important to make healthy food choices.

- Give five reasons why it is important to be physically active.

