

4-Health: Focus Areas for the Family

The four focus areas described below are simple health practices from Montana State University Extension's 4-Health Program that you can use to maximize your family's health.

Enhancing Healthy Food and Nutrition

Behavior Choices

Description: Consuming a variety of tasty, healthy foods and beverages make up the basics for maintaining and improving health. Providing time for your family to eat together and helping your preteen eat when hungry and stop when full are positive eating habits that go beyond the basics of nutrition to leave lasting impressions on your preteen's health.

Behaviors: Choose healthy foods and beverages based on current nutrition guidelines.

- Choose foods and beverages packed with nutrients
 - Increase fruits and vegetables
 - Increase low-fat dairy foods and beverages
 - Increase whole grain choices
 - Decrease sweetened beverage consumption
- Eat meals and snacks regularly
- Choose food portions appropriate for activity level
- Increase times when families eat together
- Practice the principles of normal, healthy eating
- Avoid unhealthy weight-control practices



Engaging in a Physically Active Lifestyle

Description: Living a physically active lifestyle means incorporating a variety of activity throughout your day and serves as the basic step for enhancing fitness and overall health. Finding creative ways for your family to be active goes beyond the basics and will set the stage for a lifetime filled with healthy and enjoyable movement.

Behaviors: Engage in physical activities that are based on current activity guidelines.

- Create an accessible physical environment that promotes an active lifestyle
- Reduce sedentary time
- Promote physical activity through family communication
- Take advantage of community sites that provide places for physical activity



Enhancing Positive Body

Image

Description: Emphasizing positive personal traits with an appropriate and healthy focus on appearance is the basic step to help people to feel good about themselves and their bodies. Promoting size and body acceptance of self and others and learning how to deal with the media's overemphasis on beauty go beyond the basics to supporting a positive body image.

Behaviors: Focus on each individual's positive traits and capabilities.

- Encourage size and body acceptance of self and others
- Understand media and environmental influences on the development of body image
- Teach and model healthy self-esteem, respect, and confidence



Practicing Active Parenting

Description: Helping your children grow into healthy, responsible, competent individuals is the basic goal of active parenting. By understanding, guiding, nurturing, motivating, and advocating for your children, you will be going beyond the basics of parenting to contribute to their overall health and well-being.

Behaviors: Use an appropriate parenting style to meet the needs of your child's age or situation.

- Practice good communication skills
- Provide high levels of love, warmth, and boundaries
- Advocate for your preteens
- Provide opportunities for your preteens to grow and develop their own identities

ENGAGING IN A PHYSICALLY ACTIVE LIFESTYLE

- Create an accessible physical environment that promotes an active lifestyle
- Reduce sedentary time
- Promote physical activity through family communication
- Take advantage of community sites that provide places for physical activity



ENHANCING POSITIVE BODY IMAGE

- Focus on each individual's positive traits and capabilities
- Encourage size and body acceptance of self and others
- Understand media and environmental influences on the development of body image
- Teach and model healthy self-esteem, respect, and confidence



PRACTICING ACTIVE PARENTING

- Practice good communication skills
- Provide high levels of love, warmth, and boundaries
- Advocate for your preteens
- Provide opportunities for your preteens to grow and develop their own identities



ENHANCING HEALTHY FOOD & NUTRITION BEHAVIOR CHOICES

- Choose foods and beverages packed with nutrients
- Eat meals and snacks regularly
- Choose food portions appropriate for activity level
- Increase times when families eat together
- Practice the principles of normal, healthy eating
- Avoid unhealthy weight-control practices