Three Parts of Good Health

Samantha eats plenty of fruits and vegetables each day. Three days a week, she runs two miles after school. However, some mornings she has a hard time getting up because she stayed up too late the night before. On those days, Samantha is cranky and argues with her friends. She is also too tired to pay attention in class. Is Samantha as healthy as she could be?

Like Samantha, your total health involves all the parts of your life. Health is a combination of physical, mental/emotional, and social well-being. These different parts affect each other throughout your life. They are like the sides of a triangle. You need all three sides to complete the triangle, and each side supports the other two sides to make up your total health. Figure 1.1 shows the three sides of the health triangle.

Physical Health

One side of the health triangle is your physical health. Physical health involves the condition of your body. If you feel strong and have lots of energy, you probably have good physical health. Eating a well-balanced diet and doing plenty of physical activity, such as participating in a sport or individual fitness activities, are keys to good physical health. Getting plenty of sleep is also important. Most teens need about nine hours each night.
What else can you do to have good physical health? See your doctor and dentist for regular checkups. Brush your teeth every day and practice healthful hygiene habits. Always wear a safety belt when you ride in a vehicle. Wear proper protective gear when you are involved in physical activities. When you are at school, follow the safety rules. All of these actions are strategies for improving and maintaining personal health.

Some activities can harm physical health. You take chances with your health when you smoke cigarettes or use other forms of tobacco. Tobacco products can harm your mouth, heart, and lungs. Using alcohol or other drugs can harm your health, too. They can damage your liver, brain, and other organs. Taking unnecessary risks can also lead to accidents and injuries.

**FIGURE 1.1**

**The Health Triangle**

Your total health is made up of three parts, like a triangle. Give an example of how physical, mental/emotional, and social health are interrelated during adolescence.
Mental/Emotional Health

Another side of the health triangle is your mental/emotional health. Mental health refers to your ability to solve problems and handle the daily events of your life. When you have good mental health, you are able to see new ways of doing things. Emotional health involves feelings, such as happiness, sadness, and anger.

If you are mentally and emotionally healthy, you can face challenges in a positive yet realistic way. You are patient with yourself when you try to learn new subjects or new skills. You understand that everybody makes mistakes—including you! There is usually a “next time” when you can try to do better.

Taking action to reach your goals is another part of mental/emotional health. This can help you focus your energy and give you a sense of accomplishment. Making healthful choices, keeping promises, and taking responsibility for your actions also contribute to your mental/emotional health, because they help you to feel good about yourself. If you have good mental/emotional health, you feel in control of your life.

Reading Check  
Recall What is emotional health?

Social Health

Another part of the health triangle is your social health. Social health describes how you relate to people at home, at school, and everywhere else in your world. Strong friendships and warm family relationships are signs of good social health.

There are skills you can develop for building and maintaining relationships. Be friendly and open toward other people. Be supportive of family members and friends. Encourage them when they are learning new skills. Whenever you can, help them to reach their goals. Show friends and family members that you care about them and that they can count on you to be truthful and reliable. Be considerate and accept who they are. Listen carefully when they need someone to talk to. Follow through when you make promises.
Sometimes, your opinions will differ from those of others. When you disagree, choose your words carefully. Pay attention to your tone of voice. You can disagree and express your opinions. However, you do not have to argue or show disrespect.

Reading Check Name What are the three sides of the health triangle?

Your Overall Wellness

What is the difference between health and wellness? Wellness is a state of well-being or balanced health over a longer period of time.

Your health constantly changes. One day you might feel tired. Maybe you slept poorly. Maybe you pushed yourself too hard at sports practice. The very next day, you might feel well rested and full of energy. Your emotions change, too. You might feel sad one day but happy the next. Your overall health at any given time is a kind of snapshot of your physical, mental/emotional, and social health. Your overall wellness takes a longer view. It is the balance between the three sides of your health triangle over weeks and months.

How can you maintain overall wellness? You can practice good health habits and make smart health choices for your mind and body. The smart choices that you make every day can contribute to your wellness over your lifetime. When you practice positive health behaviors, you help to prevent injury, illness, disease, and other health problems.

Reading Check Recall What is wellness?
Brushing your teeth regularly is a simple but important way to support your total health and wellness. List three other activities that you can do regularly to maintain your health and wellness.

The Mind-Body Connection

Your emotions have a lot to do with your physical health. Think about an event in your own life that made you feel sad. How did you deal with this emotion? Sometimes people have a difficult time dealing with their emotions. This can have a negative effect on their physical health. For example, they might get headaches, backaches, upset stomachs, colds, the flu, or even more serious diseases. Why do you think this happens?

Your mind and body connect through your nervous system. This system includes thousands of miles of nerves. The nerves link your brain to every part of your body. Upsetting thoughts and feelings can affect the signals that go out from your brain to other parts of your body.

The mind-body connection is how your emotions affect your physical and overall health and how your overall health affects your emotions. It shows how important it is to keep the three sides of the health triangle in balance. If you become very sad or angry, or if you have other strong emotions, talk to someone. Sometimes just talking to a good friend helps. Sometimes you may be in a situation that requires the professional health services of a counselor or medical provider.

Go Online
Visit glencoe.com and complete the Interactive Study Guide for Lesson 1.

Reading Check Explain How are your emotions and your physical and overall health interrelated?

To make sure that your physical, mental/emotional, and social health all work together in a positive way, practice the suggestions on the Healthful To-Do Lists in Figure 1.2.
HEALTHFUL TO-DO LISTS

Take responsibility for your personal health by keeping all three sides of your health triangle in balance. Which of the items on these lists do you already do? Which do you need to work on?

**For My Physical Health**
1. Eat a well-balanced diet, including eating a healthy breakfast, every day.
2. Sleep at least nine hours each night.
3. Be physically active for at least 60 minutes each day.
4. Bathe and wash my hair regularly.
5. Brush my teeth at least twice a day.
6. Avoid using tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs.
7. Wear a safety belt when riding in a vehicle.
8. Visit the dentist and doctor for regular checkups.
9. Wear protective gear when I bike, skate, or ride a skateboard.

**For My Mental/Emotional Health**
1. Understand my strengths and weaknesses.
2. Express my feelings clearly and calmly.
3. Be patient with myself.
4. Accept helpful feedback and suggestions.
5. Find activities that I enjoy.
6. Be open to learning new skills and information.
7. Take responsibility for my actions.
8. Manage feelings in healthy ways.

**For My Social Health**
1. Show that I respect and care for others.
2. Learn to disagree without arguing.
3. Learn to be a good listener.
4. Be open and friendly toward others.
5. Be loyal, dependable, and truthful.
6. Pay attention to the words I use when speaking to or about others.
7. Support my friends and family members.
8. Become close friends with at least one other person.

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**Lesson 1 Review**

**After You Read**

Review this lesson for new terms, major headings, and Reading Checks.

**What I Learned**
1. **Vocabulary** Define health.
2. **Give Examples** List three activities that can contribute to your total health.
3. **Distinguish** What is the difference between health and wellness?

**Thinking Critically**
4. **Analyze** Reread the story of Samantha on page 4. What parts of her health triangle are out of balance? Suggest ways she could balance her health triangle.
5. **Describe** Name and describe at least three traits that you might find in a person who has good social health.

**Applying Health Skills**

6. **Goal Setting** Write down three strategies that you could use to improve and maintain your personal health. Choose one strategy from each side of the health triangle. Keep a journal for at least one week. Record what steps you took to carry out your plan.