

Basic Science Mysteries



Lesson 15 Health

Chapter 1

Lifestyle Factors

Section 3

Lessons 11-15

A HEALTHY FUTURE



You, Rondarius and LaKendrick climbed up into the tree house. The last few days had been exciting for you. Never in your wildest imagination did you anticipate that you and your friends would walk into the middle of a national security issue! Although Agent Gomez's work was finished, and he would be returning to Washington, D.C., he wanted to keep in contact with you. He liked the way you worked under pressure and said that some day you would make a good candidate for a job with the FBI. You would like that. If FBI work would be anything like the last

few days, you would be in for quite an adventure!

Agent Gomez said you would have to finish school and keep yourself out of trouble.

You thought back to what he said about the plastic bag. He said that you should have called the police immediately. Instead, you had hidden the bag in the tree house when the police drove by. But, Agent Gomez said that after you talked with your grandparents, you did right by telling the truth. Mr. Gomez called that a good decision. He said that a good future is made by making good decisions, one at a time.

Your future will be affected by your decisions. Choices you make lead to a great future or to a future filled with hurts and disappointments.

Your health will be a significant part of your future. In fact, where you live, the kind of work you do, the types of

VOCABULARY

Life expectancy: the average number of years a person is expected to live

Lifestyle factors: repeated behaviors which affect your life

Well-balanced meals: meals which contain all the nutrients needed for a healthy life (vitamins, minerals, enzymes, proteins, carbohydrates, "good" fats)

Learned behaviors: non-inherited behaviors we learn or acquire

activities you practice and what kinds of friends you have will be influenced by your health. Some people think that good health means you are free from any kind of disease. Actually, health involves more than simply freedom from disease.

Your body is made up of many factors which contribute to your state of wellness. *Wellness* means an overall state of well-being. Your *physical health* is probably what most

people think of first when they think of health. Physical health does play an important role in wellness. Physical health means that your body and its systems are in good working order. You have enough strength and energy to get through the day. You can perform routine tasks and responsibilities.

Your *mental health* includes how you feel about yourself and others. It also includes how you relate to others and your world around you. It involves expressing your emotions in healthy ways and practicing self-control when faced with temptations such as violence, pornography or other forms of mind pollution. A mentally healthy person develops critical thinking skills and can solve problems effectively.

Spiritual health involves your belief system and includes practice of the U.S. National motto, "In God We Trust." In fact, doctors report that people who pray and attend religious services regularly are more likely to be emotionally stable and experience better physical health than people who neglect religious practices.

Your *social health* involves relationships with people around you. It

involves working cooperatively and sharing ideas to reach a common goal. It includes maintaining friendships and lasting

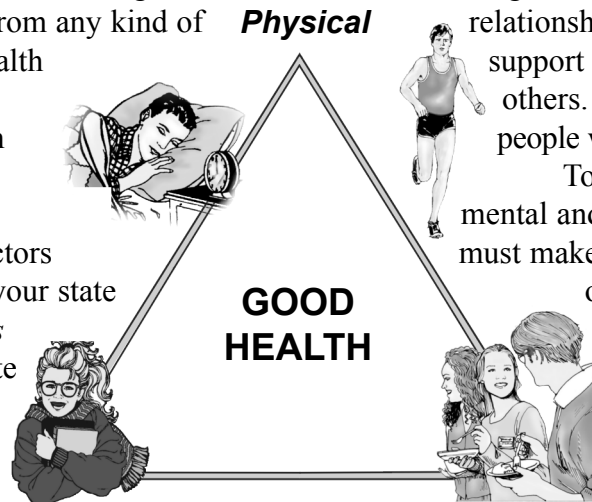
relationships as well as offering support and encouragement to others. It also means avoiding people who practice harmful habits.

To maintain your physical, mental and spiritual/social health, you must make an effort to work on each of those areas. You must make decisions which promote good health, if you want a future marked by enjoyment of life. The current average *life expectancy* is about 80

years. Those 80 years can be filled with a lifetime of activity and personal fulfillment, or they can be spent in a state of disability, injury and regret. Much of your adult life will depend on decisions you make during your teen years, when you may feel the least like seeking wise counsel from those who have "been there" before you.

Research shows that you can take action which will promote a healthy future. Over the past 100 years, history records that health issues have changed dramatically.

In the early 1900s, the average life expectancy was 49 years. The leading causes of death were pneumonia, flu and tuberculosis. Notice this important distinction. The leading causes of death were *communicable* diseases. Today, the four leading causes of death in the United States are heart disease, cancer, strokes and accidents. Notice the differences! Studies indicate the leading causes of death today may be the result of certain negative *lifestyle factors*. Modern medicine has given this generation great freedom from airborne communicable diseases. However, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV/AIDS are increasing. Sexually transmitted diseases are a result of negative lifestyle choices.

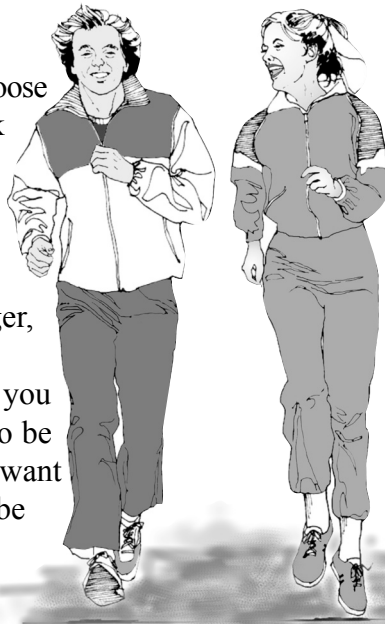


Lifestyle factors have significant roles in health. Lifestyle factors are simply choices you make about how and with whom you are going to live. Among the four leading causes of death today, each was the result of a choice that people made regarding how they would live. Heart disease is number one. Heart disease often results from unhealthy eating habits or substance abuse. A person can choose to limit food intake and to exercise regularly to help reduce weight. A person also can choose to not smoke, drink alcohol or use drugs.

Healthy lifestyle factors will lead to a longer, happier, more productive life. If you are going to live to be 80 years old, you want those 80 years to be healthy and productive. The alternative is to be sick and unproductive. Here are some lifestyle factors recommended by doctors and scientists that can lead to a healthy future:

- *give up (or never start) using tobacco
- *exercise daily
- *eat nutritious, **well-balanced meals**
- *avoid alcohol and illegal drugs
- *save sex for marriage
- *get 8 hours of sleep each night
- *wash your hands frequently
- *learn to respond positively to stress
- *channel anger into something productive
- *emulate positive role models who live by core values
- *participate in spiritual and social activities

Simple things like wearing seat belts, wearing protective headgear and equipment



when you play sports and driving the speed limit will help prevent accidents which could lead to injury or even death.

Relationships in your life can help influence your future as well. Statistics show that married people live longer than single people. Research indicates that families who pray together and attend church together lead happier and healthier lives, stay out of trouble and actually live longer than those families or individuals who do not.



Families who eat meals together produce healthier, happier children who perform better in school, compared with families who do not eat together or share mealtime activities on a regular basis.

Most aspects of most people's health depend on choices they make regarding the physical, mental/emotional, spiritual/social dimensions of their well-being. The kinds of choices we make are **learned behaviors**:

*What we are taught, we learn;
What we learn, we practice;*

*What we practice, we become;
What we become has consequences . . .
healthy or unhealthy. However—*

*Anything I have learned, practiced or
become; **I can change.***

*The **choice** is **mine.***
(Author unknown)

You have only one body. You need to take care of it. Your future depends on it.

Rondarius and LaKendrick climbed down from the tree house, and you followed. They went to their homes while you walked toward your grandparents' house. You smelled your grandmother's homemade bread and heard your grandfather working in the garage. You smiled. You realized that you have a great future ahead of you and people who care about you.

Life Principle



**“No matter what a
man’s past may
have been, his
future is spotless.”**

—John R. Rice