

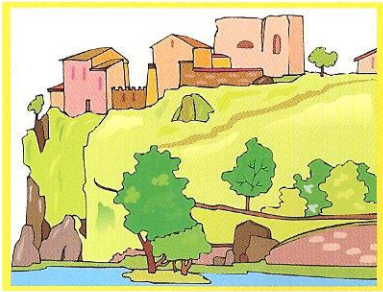
STEPS TO WELLNESS – LESSON 10

Healthy Homes

IS YOUR HOME SAFE TO LIVE IN?

Your home is the perfect place to learn good health habits. Each part of the home life, as well as the habits of the mother and father, teaches children, even when very young, either right or wrong health habits.

A story is told of a town built on a hillside. At the edge of the town was a steep, dangerous cliff. Often in the darkness or in bad weather the people slipped over the cliff and were seriously injured or died.



After one tragic accident, the townspeople became so alarmed that they called a town meeting. All the village assembled to give their opinions. One wise old man said, “It is obvious that we need a clinic at the bottom of the cliff. A doctor and a nurse should be there at all times. Then if anyone falls over the cliff he can get immediate treatment.”

Many people thought this was a wonderful idea, for their conception of good health was having a doctor nearby to care for the injured. Another important official objected. “You people do not understand the modern way to handle health problems. All you need is an ambulance parked at the bottom of the cliff. Whenever anyone falls off the cliff, he can be rushed to get expert medical attention in the city.”

The people cheered this brilliant idea. One after another offered to donate money for the ambulance, But then a very wise man stood up and said, “Friends, please listen to me. Do you not see that our problem is caused by a dangerous cliff? It would be much better to prevent people from falling than try to save them after they have been injured. Why not simply build a fence around the edge of the cliff to protect our citizens from this danger?”

“Oh, that cliff is all right if you’re careful,” the people said. The plan to purchase the ambulance carried. Day after day the ambulance picked up the injured people. This modern way to handle the health problem was praised as one of the best in the country.

But at the next town meeting the wise man again begged for a more reasonable plan. “Put up a fence to stop this suffering and expense.”

However, the citizens said he was not only destroying public spirit, but also the charities of the town. They declared, “We will support our ambulance forever. We are picking up people daily. Our medical team is always busy. We cannot stop to build fences when there are so many casualties to look after.”



PREVENTION IS THE BEST WAY

Foolish people, you say. But do we not sometimes view health in the same way? If my children get sick, I can give them medicines. If I am constipated, I can take a laxative. If I get cancer, I can have surgery.

Is it not more important to learn how to stay well than to spend money to be cured? The time to teach young people health principles is in the home.

The following **10 Laws of Health** can be like a fence to you and your family against the causes of disease which cripple and kill. These can be learned by young children as well as adults.

1. **Exercise daily.**
2. **Breathe fresh air deeply with good posture.**
3. **Drink at least 6 - 8 glasses of water a day.**
4. **Practice regularity in all life’s activities – sleeping, eating, working, and playing.**
5. **Eat a balanced, nourishing diet .**
6. **Think of others, not self. Have an optimistic, cheerful attitude.**
7. **Get adequate rest and relaxation.**
8. **Practice self-control in all things – eat enough, but don’t overeat.**
9. **Avoid all harmful drugs.**
10. **Trust in God.**

SICKNESS IN THE HOME

The most common symptoms of disease are fever, headache, nausea, vomiting, aches, and pain. Since many diseases begin with these same symptoms, it is often difficult for even a doctor to make a diagnosis. An attempt to diagnose your own illness and give treatment is very unwise, and may be dangerous. Self-medication is foolish at best, and can be fatal at its worst. Every drug, no matter how simple, has side and harmful effects, as well as beneficial effects on the body. Your doctor understands the harmful effects of medicines.



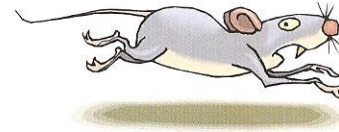
When you see a doctor for an illness, he/she asks you many questions to find out as much as they can of your symptoms. Try to remember everything about your illness, even though it may seem unimportant to you. Call your doctor early in the disease instead of waiting for complications to make it worse.

Many of the common diseases that affect you and me can be alleviated or prevented by giving the body a chance to use its restorative powers, that is, adequate rest, proper diet, and an optimistic, cheerful outlook on life. Even a fever is not necessarily dangerous; it may be the body's way of combating the infection or disease agent. It is better not to give medications at home to lower the fever, except in the case of small babies.

PREVENT SICKNESS

Probably the most common types of sicknesses in the home are caused by germs, such as bacteria, viruses, and fungi. Germs spread from one person to another by direct contact or by contaminated food and water, or by particles in the air.

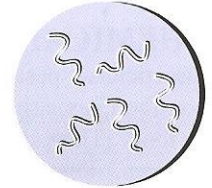
Disease-producing bacteria get into your body through your mouth, usually in the food or water you take in. Bacteria may enter through bruised skin or breathed in through the respiratory tract. Creeping, crawling, flying creatures can be carriers of disease. Every precaution should be taken to prevent their contact with food. If you could follow a cockroach or a fly for one day and see where he walked before he walked on your food, you would not have any appetite for the food.



Rats and mice are dangerous to health. They carry disease through contamination by their urine or droppings. The best way to control rats and mice is to starve them to death. Be sure that all food and rubbish inside and outside the house is in rodent-proof containers.

There are several types of food poisoning. One is caused by bacteria found in the intestines of animals and chickens. Eggs can harbor this bacteria as well as chicken flesh. The use of cracked, soiled, raw, or partially cooked eggs may infect anyone handling or eating them. Uncooked poultry can contaminate everything it touches, so if you only rinse your hands, knife, and chopping board where you handle uncooked poultry, you can spread the infection to your family. Thorough washing of your hands and utensils will prevent cross infection. Adequate cooking kills this germ.

Another type of bacteria is found in the nose and the throat and in infected cuts, boils, and pimples of persons. Sneezing around food, or handling food after touching the nose or face, will introduce this germ. If the food remains for a while at room temperature, the bacteria will grow and produce a toxin or poison which causes the illness.



Check your health practices in the home. Is food properly stored and adequately refrigerated? Do you wash your hands thoroughly before touching food? Are you and your food protected from rats, flies, and other insects? Can the sun light reach into your house part of every day? Does each member of the family have his own toothbrush and washing materials?

IS YOUR HOME SAFE

Do you experience a feeling of safety and a sense of security when you enter your own home? You have battled the hazards of traffic, have exposed yourself to diseases as you mixed with the crowd of people; now are you safe from all dangers? Is your home really the haven of safety which you think it is?

Most accidents happen in the home. Consider something as simple as a child's toy. Children need toys – they are part of their growing experience. But toys can be hazardous, both to children and to adults. Imagine your young son running to greet you with a sharp toy in his hands. If he should fall, it could injure him severely. Some toys are very dangerous, such as guns, those that are poorly constructed, or are manufactured from toxic substances with paint and finishes that are harmful if eaten. Choose toys carefully, considering durability, construction, materials, and finish. Have a toy box or specific place for toys and teach your children to put them there. If you are walking in the dark you could have a dangerous fall if you stepped on a roller skate or a car left on the floor.

Many homes have bars where alcoholic beverages are served. Every day the children see these bottles of wine, whiskey, or other alcoholic beverages displayed. In their young minds everything they see their parents do is an example for them to copy. Is it safe to teach your children by this silent, yet constant example, that alcohol is an accepted part of every home?

CHEMICALS IN THE HOME

Insecticides, pesticides, cleaning solutions or other non-food items should never be stored in the same area as food. They should be stored out of reach of small children. Sometimes cleaning solutions or paint thinners are stored in empty soft-drink bottles, and a curious youngster may drink from them by mistake.

Almost everyone uses some kind of cosmetics, such as lotions, perfumes, hair dressings, and bath oils. Most of these contain a base of alcohol and other solvents not intended for internal use and may be quite poisonous if swallowed. Home-permanent solutions are extremely dangerous if taken internally. Many baby-dusting powders contain boric acid, which is harmful if inhaled. Choose a baby powder that is free from boric acid and keep it out of the reach of children.



Many household cleaning agents are quite poisonous if taken internally, and may also cause skin irritations. Cleaning agents should never be mixed with other chemicals. Women have been overcome by the fumes caused by mixing a bleach with toilet-cleaning powders, as the resulting chemical reaction produced a very irritating chlorine gas. Also the fumes of dry-cleaning fluids and spot removers can cause severe liver and kidney damage. These fluids should be used only where there is plenty of ventilation.



ELECTRICITY AND FIRE IN THE HOME

Electricity, a blessing and a boon to man, has made it possible to illuminate every dark corner. But electricity can also kill people. Extension cords used in place of an additional wall socket can be hazardous. Worn cords may cause shock or start a fire. An electrical appliance may be dangerous if used near water. The very common practice of overloading circuits and using larger fuse wires than specified has caused many fires. Before touching anyone in contact with "live" electric wires, pull switches.



How fire-safe is your home? You can make it safer by observing a few simple precautions and by training each member of the family in certain procedures.

1. Have you ever thought of having a home fire drill?
2. Are your children trained that if their clothes catch on fire to quickly wrap themselves in a rug, blanket, bath towel – anything that will suffocate the flames – and roll on the floor or ground?
3. Inflammable fluids should never be used indoors.
4. Watch for inflammability of fabrics.
5. Pots which are cooking on the stove should be turned with the handle pointing toward the back of the stove so that children cannot reach the handle and upset the boiling food.

Simple burns are best treated by immersing the burned part into cold, even icy water, and leaving it for five to 10 minutes. If the burn is severe, place the victim in cold water or under a cold shower and wrap him loosely in a wet sheet till you can get medical help.

Simple lacerations, cuts, and bruises are best cleansed by ordinary soap and water and gentle scrubbing. Most bleeding can be controlled and stopped by merely putting pressure over the wound for a few seconds or minutes.

In any sickness or injury it is wise to remember not to do harm, be calm, and think clearly before acting.

Your home should be the safest place in the world for you and your children. With a little bit of thought, careful planning, and adequate maintenance, it can be. The life, health, and happiness of your family and friends depends on how safe your home is.