



Healthy adolescents make healthy choices. The first step to a healthy future is having a healthy NOW. Busy families have many commitments and sometimes don't take the time they need to make those healthy choices. Research shows that adolescents that have a healthy lifestyle are less impulsive, less anxious, get better grades, have greater self-control and are more likely to make the healthy choices that will lead to a drug and alcohol-free future. Talking about health in general makes it easier to also talk about not using alcohol. **Keep talking – they really are listening.**

STEP 1: How is your family doing? Have each member of your family fill in the blanks:

- I eat about ___ servings of fruits/vegetables each day.
- I eat breakfast ___ days each week.
- When I eat breakfast, I usually eat _____
- I do some form of exercise for _____ minutes, ___ days each week.
- On average, I sleep ___ hours each night
- We eat one meal together as a family ___ days each week.
- I spend about ___ hours in front of a screen (computer, TV, phone, video game) each day



STEP 2: Talk about it. Discuss your family's answers from Step 1. What are the similarities? Differences? What do you think about your answers?

Medical professionals offer these standards for healthy individuals:

- 3-5 servings of fruits/vegetables each day (see Build a Healthy Base for more guidelines)
- Eat a healthy breakfast every day that includes protein
- Exercise 3-5 days a week for a minimum of 30-60 minutes each day. Remember, a walk around the neighborhood with a family member is a great way to exercise.
- Preteens and teens need 8-10 hours of sleep every night. Adults need 7-8 hours. Sleep deprivation leads to unhealthy choices, impulsivity, stress and anxiety.
- Eat a meal together as a family at least once each day. When families eat meals together (without interruptions), they are able to talk, reduce stress and build supportive, strong relationships
- Limit "screen" time (computer, TV, phone, video games). Adolescents who spend too much time in front of a screen can have difficulty developing necessary social skills, have trouble sleeping and have higher levels of anxiety.

STEP 3: MAKE A PLAN! It's important to make a plan if we want to make any changes in our lives. Each change begins with small steps. Here is your chance to "make a plan" for a healthier future. As a family, choose at least one goal—something you want to do to improve the physical health of your family members. Use this process to create the plan.

Plan to Reach Your Goals:

1. Name it- identify the goal
2. Believe- picture yourself/your family reaching it to help you believe that you can do it
3. Plan- make the "to-do" list of how to get there, get the resources that you will need, and people that will help
 - What steps do we need to follow to achieve our goal?
 - Who will help us to achieve our goal?
4. Go for it-act out your plan step by step
5. "Good Job"- it is important to celebrate your success and to recognize your accomplishments

STEP 4: EVALUATE PROGRESS. At the end of 2 weeks, look at this plan again. How are you doing? Do you need to keep working on this goal or can you add another goal? Keep going! Your family is worth it!