

Healthy behaviours

SPECIFIC OUTCOMES

1. Expand practices that provide safety for self and others.
2. Describe and demonstrate ways to assist with the safety of others.
3. Demonstrate effective decision-making, focusing on careful information gathering by
 - examining alternatives to using medicines and legal drugs
 - reviewing safe ways of handling and taking medicines

CONTENT AND TIME (45-MINUTE LESSON)

- 5.1 Opening activity: All about awareness quiz (10 minutes)
- 5.2 A series of scenarios (15 minutes)
- 5.3 Story: Risky business (15 minutes)
- 5.4 Review: What have we learned (5 minutes)

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Handout 5.1: All about awareness

Handout 5.2: A series of scenarios

Handout 5.3: Risky business

Chart paper

Sentence strips

Red and green pencil crayons

5.1 Opening activity: All about awareness quiz (10 minutes)

Introduce this lesson by encouraging the students to engage in a discussion about the meaning of the title “Healthy Behaviours.” Explain that healthy behaviours result from wise decision-making; and in order for this to happen, people need to have accurate information. For example, someone might mix different kinds of medicines without consulting a doctor, if he or she is unaware of the health risks involved.

Photocopy a class set of HANDOUT 5.1. Before distributing this quiz to the class, cut off the bottom section, which contains the answers. Have the students answer the true and false questions independently. Explain that this will help them see how much information they have already learned about drugs and will enable them to make wise decisions. Encourage the students to write their own true and false questions in the bottom two spaces.

When everyone is finished, distribute the bottom section of HANDOUT 5.1 and discuss the answers provided. Encourage the students to take this quiz home to test their parents.

5.2 A series of scenarios (15 minutes)

Discuss with the class the need to make healthy decisions about whether or not to take medicines or legal drugs, and if so, which kinds to take. Explain that drugs have side-effects, even prescription and non-prescription medicines. For example, taking a drug to relieve car sickness can have the side effect of making you too sleepy to stay awake and enjoy the scenery. As a result, people need to decide whether they will take a certain medicine or whether there is a natural choice that they can make instead.

Invite the students to talk about some natural alternatives to drugs, focusing on medicines or legal drugs (such as caffeine). For example, eating yogurt to promote good digestion, doing relaxation exercises to sleep well, exercising to increase energy levels, using acupuncture rather than taking pain medication, eating foods rich in fibre to promote healthy digestion. Record ideas on chart paper and encourage the students to add items to the list after discussing this topic with their families.

The next part of this activity can be completed individually, in pairs, in small groups or as a whole class. You may choose to examine each scenario, or only one or two. Four different situations are provided on HANDOUT 5.2. You may wish to provide this handout to all students so they can work individually or in groups, or have a whole class discussion.

If you choose to divide the class into small groups, you could ask the students to select one person to be the recorder, one person to be the timekeeper and one person to be the reporter for the group. Explain that the groups are to read, discuss and then provide the person in each scenario with at least one natural alternative to using a medicine or legal drug. When this task is complete, ask the recorders to report their group's suggestions as you discuss each scenario with the class.

Emphasize to the class that this is not the time to discuss personal experiences. Should anyone have an issue he or she wishes to talk about, encourage that student to meet with you after class.

The following are suggested answers for each of the scenarios:

1. You have a **pounding** headache.

Suggested answers:

- You could try to relax.
- You could take a nap.
- You could massage your head and neck.
- You could get away from the cause of the headache (i.e., out of the sun or away from noise).

2. Your friend complains of a headache.

Suggested answers:

- Just as you should not take medicine without your parents' permission, neither should your friend.
- You could suggest listening to soothing music, reading a book or doing a quiet and relaxing activity.
- If your friend insists on taking medicine, you need to ask her to return home and come back when she is feeling better.



3. You have very dry skin.

Suggested answers:

- The medicine was recommended by the doctor for your friend, not for you.
- Your body makeup is different from your friend's, and the doctor may recommend something entirely different for you.
- What works for his dry skin may not work for yours.
- You could take a bath using bath oil.
- You could make sure you protect your skin outdoors (i.e., wear sunscreen in the sun and mittens in the cold).
- You could learn about foods that promote healthy skin.

4. You are feeling tired lately in class.

Suggested answers:

- You could get more sleep at night.
- You could exercise more often.
- You could distract yourself with a change of activity.
- You could take a 15-minute nap to rejuvenate yourself.

5.3 Story: Risky business

(15 minutes)

Explain to the class that people's actions depend upon the choices they make, and these choices and actions result in either positive or negative consequences. To help the students explore the connection between choices, actions and consequences, have them provide examples that are relevant to their own experiences. For example, "The choice I made to clean my room resulted in my mom letting me have a friend stay over." Or "I decided not to put my boots in the closet and the dog chewed them."

Provide the class with copies of the story on **HANDOUT 5.3**. Tell the students that the animals in this story make some poor decisions and some wise decisions. Invite them to work with a partner, read through the story and underline the poor decisions that Elephant, Snake or Flamingo make in red and the wise decisions these animals make in green.

Use HANDOUT 5.3 to facilitate discussion as the students explain their decisions to the class. Encourage them to explain which character decisions were well thought out, which ones were not and why. Have the students focus on the consequences of the animals' actions. Also provide an opportunity for them to consider why this story is entitled Risky Business. Send the story home for the students to read and discuss with family members.

5.4 Review: **What we have learned** (5 minutes)

Draw five light bulbs on the board to represent bright ideas. Have the class think of important concepts learned during this health unit. When a student has an idea, he or she stands up. Select volunteers to provide the answers. With each bright idea, colour in a light bulb. Once all five light bulbs are coloured, the quiz is over.

Using sentence strips, you can add any bright ideas to the class bulletin board.

HANDOUT 5.1

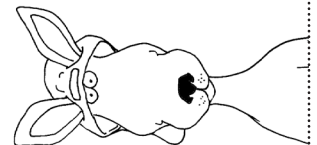
All about awareness

Please read the following questions and answer True or False. Space is provided for you to create two of your own questions. Once you have completed this quiz and corrected your answers, take it home and test your family members.

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| 1. There is a drug in coffee. | TRUE / FALSE |
| 2. Aspirin® can't possibly harm you. | TRUE / FALSE |
| 3. It does not hurt to combine drugs. | TRUE / FALSE |
| 4. Only doctors and trusted adults should give children permission to take medicine. | TRUE / FALSE |
| 5. Medicines are always safe to take. | TRUE / FALSE |
| 6. Some legal drugs, like tobacco, can be harmful to your health. | TRUE / FALSE |
| 7. Prescription drugs are drugs you can buy over-the-counter. | TRUE / FALSE |
| 8. How often you take a drug does not change the drug's effect. | TRUE / FALSE |
| 9. Once you have taken a drug, you can control the drug's effects. | TRUE / FALSE |
| 10. Sharing your medicine with a friend is safe. | TRUE / FALSE |



-
- True - Caffeine in coffee is a stimulant. This drug speeds up the central nervous system.
 - False - Aspirin®, like any drug, can be dangerous if it is used improperly.
 - False - It can be very harmful because you do not know the effects this may have.
 - True - It is not safe to take medicine from a friend or someone you do not know.
 - False - Medicines can be dangerous when they are not used properly.
 - True - Even legal drugs can be hazardous to your health.
 - False - Prescription drugs are drugs recommended by a doctor for a specific person.
 - False - How often you take a drug will directly affect your body's reaction to it; this will change how you feel and act.
 - False - A drug will continue to work in your body until the body breaks it down and removes it.
 - False - Your friend's body makeup is different from yours. What is safe for him/her is not necessarily safe for you.





A Series of scenarios

1. You are at home and your mom is taking a nap. You have a POUNDING headache. There is Tylenol® in the medicine cabinet. You know you do not need a prescription for Tylenol®, and your parents sometimes take it when they have headaches. It would not be wise to take some without your parents' permission. What else could you do to relieve your headache?

2. Your friend is over at your house visiting. She is complaining of a headache and asks you for some Aspirin®. She says it is fine with her mother, who often lets her take this kind of medicine. How do you react to this request? What else could you suggest?

3. You have very dry skin. Your friend has dry skin too. He shows you some cream that the doctor prescribed for him. He offers it to you for you to try. You don't think this is a wise choice. Why? What else could you do for your dry skin?

4. You are feeling tired in class lately. You have thought of drinking a cup of coffee in the morning because you have heard that coffee helps people keep alert (the caffeine in coffee is a stimulant that speeds up the central nervous system). Yesterday, you wanted to take a sip of your dad's coffee to help you wake you up, but you decided against it. What else could you do to stay awake?

Risky business

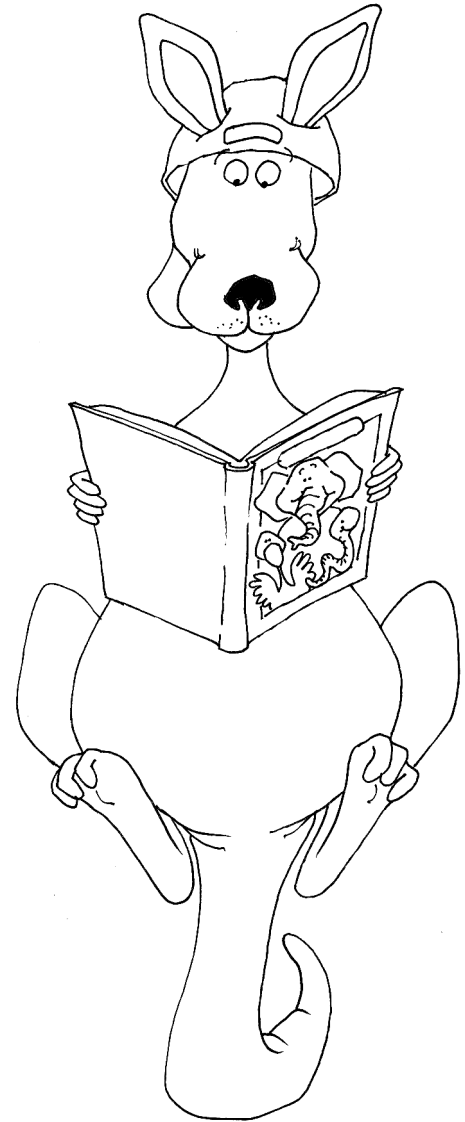
As you read this story about Elephant, Snake and Flamingo, underline any poor choices the characters make in red and any wise choices in green.

This is a story about Elephant, Snake and Flamingo. They are the best of friends. Elephant, Snake and Flamingo were planning to spend the day bike riding. They decided to bring a lunch with them and have a picnic at the park as well.

On the morning they were to leave, Elephant woke up and went to the fridge to get a glass of milk. Normally he would eat his breakfast and then have an exciting day with his friends. That day, however, he did not feel like doing anything. His head hurt, his ears hurt and even his trunk hurt. He was also covered with big purple spots. Two weeks ago he felt sick and went to the doctor. The doctor gave him a prescription for his illness. After taking it, Elephant thought his medicine had done the trick, but he was wrong. He was very upset!

He had to get better quickly; he didn't want to miss the bike ride. Elephant went to his mother to ask for help. Together, they looked in the medicine cabinet and found the medications the doctor had prescribed for Elephant. His mother read the instructions carefully aloud:

- a. Take each of the following once per day – two yellow capsules for your headache and earache and one teaspoon of trunk pain reliever.
- b. Rub the powerful skin medication onto the affected areas in the morning and at night.



Elephant and his mother were quite concerned about taking so much medicine. They read the instructions two times just to make sure they were doing the right thing. He and his mother telephoned the doctor. The doctor explained that Elephant could continue to take his medication until he felt better. So Elephant took the dose his doctor prescribed for him, and then he went to lie down.

As luck would have it, Snake also woke up feeling poorly. His head hurt, his body hurt and he was covered in many spots – more spots than he usually had. Some of his regular spots had even turned blue! Without telling his dad about how he was feeling, he slithered over to Elephant’s house to ask when they were leaving for their bike ride. Elephant noticed that Snake looked ill. Elephant told Snake that he woke up feeling the same way, but since he took some medicines he was feeling a little better. He showed Snake the medicines. Snake thought what was good enough for his friend Elephant would also be fine for him. When Elephant left his room for a moment, Snake opened his mouth and popped in everything Elephant had taken. Next, he rubbed the medicated cream all over his body, even in the areas that were not affected. When Elephant came back, he was very upset with what Snake had done. Elephant knew that showing Snake his medicines was a mistake. Snake pleaded with Elephant to keep this a secret. They decided not to tell Elephant’s mom, just in case they got into trouble.

Just then, Flamingo arrived. She was horrified to see both of her friends covered in spots and feeling miserable. Elephant calmed her down by telling her that he was feeling much better since he had taken his medicines. Some of his spots were already fading. Having learned a lesson with Snake, he chose not to show his medicines to Flamingo and put them in the medicine cabinet. He invited his friends to come back later and went to take a nap. Snake said goodbye and slithered home slowly. Instead of feeling better, he was beginning to feel worse.

While waiting for her friends to recover, Flamingo decided to get herself ready for the bike ride. While she was taking her bike out of the garage, Flamingo began to worry that she might get sick too. Purple or blue spots would look dreadful on her gorgeous pink feathers. Right then she decided to take matters into her own hands.

She rode straight to the drug store and found different medicines for headaches, earaches, beak aches and big spots. The bottles seemed similar to the medicines that Elephant and Snake had taken, but these were non-prescription drugs. Flamingo figured they must be safe, so she bought them without asking the pharmacist for his advice. She rushed home and took a full dose of each medicine. “There,” she

thought, "I won't get sick now." Then Flamingo began to feel a little dizzy. She figured it was because she hadn't eaten breakfast yet. She decided to bike ride to the store to pick up a snack – one for now and one for the picnic later in the day.

At noon, Elephant woke up and stretched. He ran to the mirror to look at himself. He was relieved to see that he was as handsome as ever and that the spots hardly showed at all. Elephant prepared a big lunch. His friends, Snake and Flamingo, would be here any minute. He was so excited. Two hours passed, and Snake and Flamingo did not arrive.

Elephant decided he should go and see what was keeping them. Snake was still lying in bed. He felt worse than ever. Elephant hardly recognized him. Snake had lost ALL his spots, even the ones he had been born with! Elephant told Snake's dad. Snake's dad rushed him to the hospital immediately. Elephant went to tell Flamingo the bad news.

When Elephant got to Flamingo's house, he found her in a terrible state! She complained that she was feeling dizzy and very sleepy. On her way home from the store, she almost fell asleep while bike riding. She scraped her knee and scratched the side of her beautiful bike. She still had not told her parents about what she had done. Should she?

Will Elephant, Snake and Flamingo ever go on their picnic?

What went wrong?