How Can You Stay Fit? Lesson Idea

Objectives
- State the influence of peer pressure on personal health decisions.
- Identify how heart-healthy fitness is achieved and maintained.

Prepare
- This lesson will take two days—one day for Steps 1, 2, and 3, and one day for Steps 4 and 5.

Materials
- What's Your Activity I.Q.? Activity Sheet

Explore

1. Ask children to discuss, What is aerobic exercise? (Continuous exercise that makes the heart and lungs work harder) How much aerobic exercise do we need to do to help our hearts get stronger? (We need to get at least a total of 30 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous activity on most, if not all, days of the week.) How can we get aerobic exercise? Emphasize that both organized activities (some team sports, dance classes) and more casual activities (bicycling and playing actively outdoors) are healthy aerobic activities.

2. What should you try to do before you do a vigorous physical activity? (Warm up) Explain that a person "warms up" by doing light to moderate activities, such as jogging in place, walking at a moderate rate, or doing jumping jacks, that help prepare the body for more vigorous activity. Before students play outside at recess or participate in a physical activity in gym class, ask a volunteer to lead the class in warm-up activities.

What should you try to do after you do a vigorous physical activity? (Cool down and stretch) Explain that "cooling down" means gradually slowing down the physical activity. Why is stretching important? (It makes you more flexible and helps keep you from getting sore muscles.) After students return from recess or gym class, ask a volunteer to lead the class in a series of stretches. Point out that stretching should be done gently without bouncing and that stretching by itself is a good activity for relieving tension and stiffness.

3. If possible, take students outdoors or into a gymnasium where they can run approximately 100 meters. (Note: Any students who cannot participate in the activity can act as recorders.) Have students take a one-minute pulse, run the designated distance and immediately take their pulse again. Did you make your heart work harder when you ran? (Yes) How can you tell? Students should recognize that their heart rate, indicated by their pulse rate, went up and that their breathing became deeper and more rapid. What happens after you rest for a few minutes? (Heart rate and breathing rate return to their resting rates.) You just ran 100 meters. Does this physical activity give your heart the best workout? (No, not unless it is part of activities that add up to a minimum of 30 minutes for the day.)

4. Distribute large sheets of drawing paper. Tell students to use the left side of the paper to create a picture and caption showing themselves participating in their favorite nonactive leisure activity, such as reading, watching television, or playing video or board games. Have them use the right side of the paper to create a picture and caption showing themselves participating in their favorite active leisure activity. Point out that this may be an organized activity, such as a dance class or a team sport, or playing active games with their friends.

Encourage students to display and discuss their drawings. Point out that a balance of both kinds of activities is ideal. Have you ever had to stay inside and play quietly for a longtime on a rainy day? How did you feel? Encourage discussion about feeling restless when one doesn’t get enough physical activity.

5. Have students complete What's Your Activity I.Q.? Activity Sheet by circling the letter of each correct answer. Have students discuss their answers as a class or in small groups. Ask students to rate their own Activity I.Q.