

# Analyzing Influences on Health



- I will analyze the influence of culture, media, technology, and other factors on health.

**H**ow aware are you of all of the things that influence your health? It can be quite a long list. Family members, friends, and peers might influence you. Ads in magazines and in the media can be strong influences on you. How strong is their influence? Do you respond to advertising by making responsible decisions and practicing healthful behaviors?

## What You'll Learn

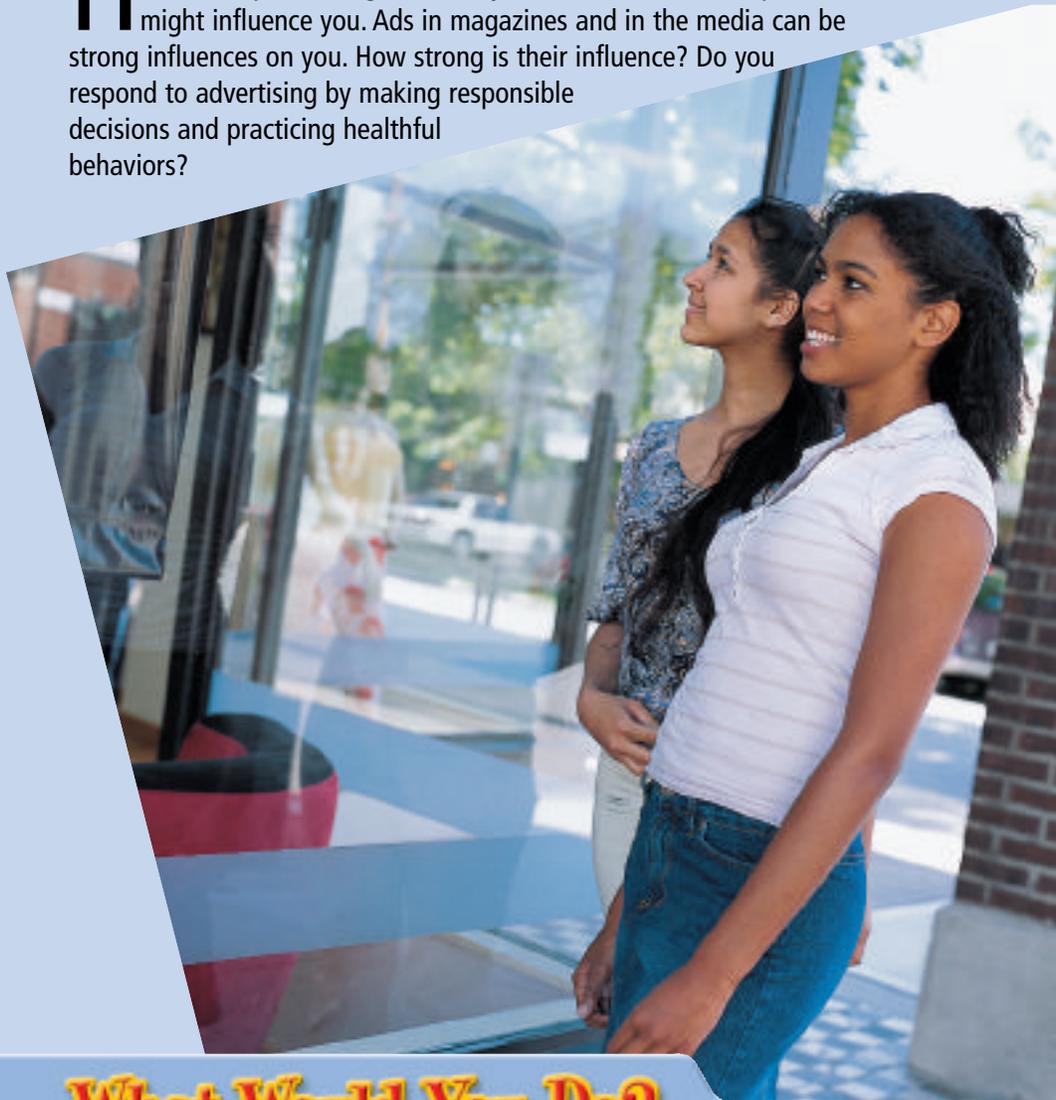
1. Discuss steps to follow to analyze influences on health. (p. 35)
2. Explain why it is important to be media literate. (p. 36)
3. Identify questions to ask when evaluating ads. (p. 37)
4. Identify ten appeals used in advertisements. (p. 38)

## Why It's Important

The influence of media or technology can be very strong. Having the skill to analyze influences helps you to stay in charge, make responsible decisions, and practice healthful behaviors for optimal health.

## Key Terms

- media
- advertisement (ad)
- commercial
- technology
- culture
- media literacy
- advertising



## What Would You Do?

**Writing About Influences** Suppose that you are shopping with a friend when you see an advertisement in a store window promoting a new brand of skin cleanser. The ad states that the cleanser will solve teens' acne problems overnight. Your friend is very excited about the ad and wants to go into the store and buy the cleanser right away. After you read the information about advertisements on page 37, write an entry in your health journal about what you would tell your friend about the ad she saw.



Health TEKS covered by Lesson 4: 4A, 5A, 5D, 13G

# Influences on Health

Influence is the ability to indirectly sway an opinion, a choice, or an outcome. A quick look around will tell you that you are surrounded every day by any number of things that affect what you wear, read, eat, or say. You can't easily escape their influence. But you can take charge of the amount of influence these things have on your health. There are four steps you can take to master this life skill.

## How to Analyze Influences on Health

**1. Identify people and things that might influence you.** Make a list of the people who have the most influence on you. What family members influence you? What friends or peers have the most influence on you? Don't forget famous people, such as politicians, movie stars, and sport heroes, and people in your community, such as doctors or members of the clergy.

Now think about things that influence you. One possible influence is the media. **Media** are the various forms of mass communication. There are commercials and advertisements in the media. An **advertisement (ad)** is a paid announcement about a product or service. A **commercial** is an advertisement on television or radio. Ads appear online, on TV, radio, and billboards, in magazines and newspapers, and even during movie previews. Ads are paid for by companies and people who want to influence consumers.

**Technology** in media takes the form of using high-tech equipment to communicate information. Think about the computer games you might

have played. Some of these may have a very strong influence on mental health and how an individual looks at other members of society. Advertisements that pop up when you log on to the Internet can affect what you purchase or how often you might want to use services. CD-ROMs, videos, or DVDs also might include behaviors that could influence you.

Culture also can have a strong influence on your life. **Culture** is the arts, beliefs, and customs that make up a way of life for a group of people at a certain time.

### Did You Know?

**Commercials** The average American child may view up to 40,000 commercials on television each year.

Computer or video games can have an influence on physical and mental health.



## Make the Connection

**Media** For more information on evaluating the effects different forms of entertainment have on behavior and decisions, see page 558 in Lesson 52.

**2. Evaluate how the influence might affect your health behavior and decisions.** How do you react to each of the influences in your life? Use the Guidelines for Analyzing Influences on Health shown below. If you answer “yes” to the questions, then a particular influence has a positive effect on you. If you answer “no” to one or more of the questions, then that particular influence has a negative effect on you.

For example, think about the person who influences you the most. Write down three behaviors this person practices and ask yourself the questions in the guidelines. Then you will know whether or not to imitate this person’s behavior.

Using these guidelines to evaluate media messages can help you to develop media literacy. **Media literacy** is the skill of being able to recognize and evaluate the influence of messages in media.

**3. Choose positive influences on health.** Your goal is to be influenced only in positive ways. Suppose a

person encourages you to exercise regularly. Your answer to each question in the guidelines will be “yes.” This person is making a valuable contribution to your health by influencing you in a positive way. Suppose you watch a television commercial in which a star talks about being drug free. This commercial makes a valuable contribution to your health by influencing you in a positive way.

Associating with people who influence you to make responsible decisions and practice healthful behaviors is a smart choice. It also is wise to watch television programs, play computer games, and listen to music or lyrics that encourage positive responses from you.

**4. Protect yourself from negative influences on health.** As you analyze different influences, you will become aware of some that are more negative than positive. Negative influences can motivate people to choose behaviors that are harmful, unsafe, illegal, disrespectful, in disagreement with family guidelines, or demonstrate bad character. Whenever possible, reduce your exposure to negative influences on health.

For example, suppose you turn on the radio and begin to hear lyrics to a song that include inappropriate language and suggest using violence. These are negative influences. What can you do to protect yourself from being influenced to curse or act in violent ways? You could choose to change to a station that plays music that doesn’t promote these negative influences. Other choices include not to sing the lyrics or purchase the CD made by this group or individual.

## Guidelines for Analyzing Influences on Health

These questions will help you to develop evaluation criteria for health information so you can decide whether to let it influence you.

- Does this influence promote healthful behavior?
- Does this influence promote safe behavior?
- Does this influence promote legal behavior?
- Does this influence promote behavior that shows respect for myself and others?
- Does this influence promote behavior that follows the guidelines of responsible adults, including my parents or my guardian?
- Does this influence promote behavior that demonstrates good character?



# Advertisements

All natural Clinically tested #1 preferred choice  
Recommended by doctors 100% Guaranteed

A form of selling products and services is **advertising**. The advertising industry is big business. Advertising agencies help companies by designing ads to influence people's choices. A lot of money, time, and effort goes into the production of ads. People who create ads carefully develop them to appeal to the wants and needs of a certain audience.

## How to Evaluate Advertisements

### Ads are designed to influence people.

A person's feelings as to what life will be like if he or she used a certain product are influenced by ads. For example, ads for beverages or cigarettes often show people, usually young adults, having a great time with lots of friends. These ads send a strong message that people who smoke and drink alcohol will have a good time and will be popular.

Most teens want to be popular. People who create ads know this and design ads to appeal to this need. Ads usually show young, healthy, vibrant, happy, attractive people. As a result, people who see these ads get a message that the product shown will make them attractive, youthful, and happy.

Advertisers think very carefully about when and where to place their ads. They want to place them where they will have the greatest effect. For example, commercials for children's toys often are shown during Saturday morning cartoons. Commercials for beer and cars often appear during televised football, baseball, and basketball games. Advertisements for clothes for teens often are placed in teen magazines and the other places where teens will see them.

Tobacco and alcohol ads are not allowed in teen magazines, but many teens read young adult magazines

and are exposed to these products anyway. Advertisers pay athletes to wear company logos during sports and social events.

Products that actors and actresses use in movies and on television programs are intended to influence your choices. At one time, fake brands of soft drinks or household products appeared in movies. Now, companies with name brands pay to have their products appear in the media. Practice media literacy. Always evaluate ads before being motivated to purchase a product or service just because it is being used by someone who is famous. The Questions to Evaluate Ads listed here can help you make healthful choices.

### Make the Connection

**Smoking** For more information on tobacco use (a leading cause of death), see page 426 in Lesson 38.

### Mini-Review

1. List five places advertisements can appear.
2. What is media literacy?

### Questions to Evaluate Ads

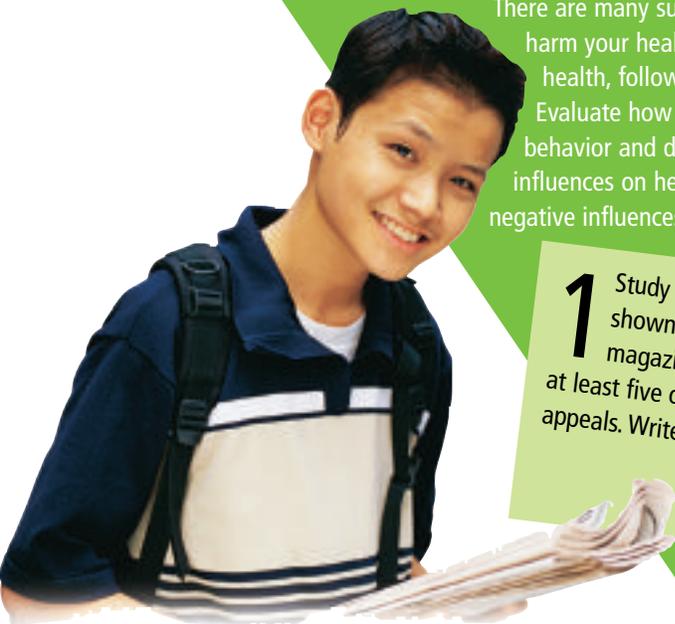
These questions will help consumers analyze health messages delivered through media and technology.

- What is being advertised?
- Where and when did the ad appear?
- Why was this particular type of media selected?
- Who appears to be the targeted audience?
- What advertising appeals (page 38) are used in the ad?
- What does the advertiser want me to believe?
- What do I know to be fact?
- Will the product or service in the ad promote health and safety? Is it legal? Will its use promote self-respect and respect for others, follow family guidelines, and demonstrate good character?

# Activity: Using Life Skills

## Analyze Influences: Evaluating Ads

There are many subtle ways to influence people's choices. Certainly not all of these things will harm your health, but influence is a strong factor in your life. To analyze influences on health, follow these four steps: 1) Identify people and things that might influence you; 2) Evaluate how the influence might affect your behavior and decisions; 3) Choose positive influences on health; and 4) Protect yourself from negative influences on health.



**1** Study the ten advertising appeals shown on this page. Find ads in magazines that demonstrate at least five of the advertising appeals. Write the name of the advertising appeal on the back of each ad.

**3** Share the ads in class. Classmates can read the ads and label them with the type of advertising appeal used. Have your classmates explain why they think it is that type of appeal.

**2** Keep track of the type of magazine that the ad is in. It could be a magazine for teens, men, women, health, science, tools, cooking, news, or fishing.

▲ When you are looking at the ads in a newspaper, magazine, or catalog, keep in mind that photographers work for hours to create the perfect photos in which all the models look attractive and happy.

### Ten Advertising Appeals

Companies often use advertising appeals to influence people to choose their product. Learn to recognize the hidden message behind the appeal.

**Brand loyalty appeal** This technique tries to convince a person that one particular brand is better than all the others.

**False image appeal** This advertising technique tries to convince people that they will have a certain image by using a particular product or service.

**Bandwagon appeal** This advertising technique implies that everyone you know is using this brand. Teens who want to be “in” may “jump on the bandwagon” and buy the product.

**Humor appeal** This advertising technique contains something that sticks in the mind. It may be a catchy slogan, jingle, or cartoon. A teen may remember this “hook” and purchase the product.

**Glittering generality appeal** This technique contains an exaggerated

appeal that gets to your emotions. Teens may believe that a product will take care of their needs and buy it.

**Scientific evidence appeal** This technique uses data from surveys and laboratory test results to try to convince you this product is the best. Teens may believe that because data is shown, it has to be the best choice.

**Progress appeal** “The latest version is the best one to buy because it is new!” People often want to be known for having purchased the “latest.”

**Reward appeal** This advertising technique often offers a special prize, gift, or coupon. People can be tempted by this technique because they think that they will get something for nothing.

**Sex appeal** This technique tries to convince you that a certain brand will make you attractive and alluring beyond your wildest dreams.

**Testimonial appeal** This technique uses a spokesperson, who sometimes is famous, to name the benefits of the product or service.

### Health TEKS

**4A (covered on page 38):** Analyze the health messages delivered through media and technology.

#### Quick Quiz:

Analyze how four of the advertising appeals on this page, which are delivered through media and technology, could send health messages that could influence people's health behaviors.

# 4 STUDY GUIDE

advertisement  
advertising  
commercial  
culture  
media  
media literacy  
technology



## Key Terms Review

Complete these fill-in-the-blank statements with the lesson Key Terms on the left. Do not write in this book.

1. A(n) \_\_\_\_\_ is a paid announcement about a product or service.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ is the arts, beliefs, and customs that make up a way of life for a group of people at a certain time.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ is skill in recognizing and evaluating the messages in media.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ is a form of selling products.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ are the various forms of mass communication.
6. A(n) \_\_\_\_\_ is an ad on TV or radio.
7. In media, \_\_\_\_\_ takes the form of using high-tech equipment to communicate information.

## Recalling The Facts

8. Name four influences that can affect health behavior.
9. What is the difference between an advertisement and a commercial?
10. Name four places where commercials can appear.
11. What are the six guidelines for analyzing influences on health?
12. What six behaviors can result from negative influences?
13. What are advertisements designed to do?
14. What eight questions can you ask to evaluate an ad?
15. Name five advertising appeals and make up an example to illustrate each one.
16. Why is it important to know how to analyze the influences in your life?
17. Name two places ads are placed to influence a specific group.
18. What is the goal of an advertising agency?

## Critical Thinking

19. How can teens analyze influences on their health behavior and decisions?
20. Create two strategies to show disapproval of people using inappropriate language in front of your peers.
21. Discuss the following statement: Being media-literate means disregarding all health-related ads and commercials.
22. Today, ads and commercials appear in innovative places. Describe several unexpected places you have seen ads.

## Activities

### Responsible Decision Making

27. **Write a Response** After your friend sees a TV commercial in which a well-known athlete promotes a brand of athletic shoes, he wants to buy the shoes. How can you help your friend make a responsible decision? Refer to the Responsible Decision-Making Model on page 61 for help.

### Real-Life Applications

23. What strategies would you use to evaluate information in a televised news report about West Nile virus? Explain your choices.
24. Describe a situation in which you responded to a positive health influence.
25. Describe a situation in which you responded to a negative health influence.
26. What questions might you use to evaluate an ad for a fungal foot powder in which a sports figure is the spokesperson?

### Sharpen Your Life Skills

28. **Analyze Influences on Health** Compose a television commercial for an imaginary product. Target the commercial to teens. Include one or more of the advertising appeals from this lesson. Present your commercial to your classmates. Have them tell which appeal(s) were used.