

Setting Health Goals and Making Responsible Decisions



- I will set health goals.
- I will make responsible decisions.

What You'll Learn

1. Discuss steps you can use to set and reach a health goal. (p. 57)
2. Discuss the two main goals of Healthy People 2010. (p. 58)
3. List the ten leading health indicators that will be used to measure the health of the nation over the next ten years. (p. 59)
4. Describe three decision-making styles. (p. 60)
5. Outline the six steps in The Responsible Decision-Making Model. (p. 61)
6. Explain four steps to take if you make a wrong decision. (p. 62)

Why It's Important

You will have respect for yourself and others will have respect for you when you achieve health goals and form the habit of making responsible decisions.

Key Terms

- health goal
- Healthy People 2010
- life expectancy
- leading health indicators
- inactive decision-making style
- reactive decision-making style
- proactive decision-making style
- Responsible Decision-Making Model
- wrong decision
- restitution

A desired achievement toward which a person works is a **goal**. A choice that a person makes is a **decision**. In this lesson, you will learn steps to take to make a healthful behavior into a habit.



What Would You Do?

Writing About Changing a Habit Suppose that every day after school, you eat five or six cookies or a bag of potato chips. You know these foods are not nutritious, but this is a habit you've had since fifth grade. How should you go about changing this health habit? After you read the information about health goals on page 57, write in your health journal the steps you think you should take to change this habit.

Health Goals

A healthful behavior a person works to achieve and maintain is a **health goal**. A healthful behavior a person plans to achieve in the near future is a **short-term health goal**. A healthful behavior a person plans to achieve after a period of time is a **long-term health goal**. Setting and achieving health goals helps you form healthful habits for a lifetime.

How to Set Health Goals

1. Write your health goal. Write your health goal in a short sentence beginning with “I will.” Review pages 28–31 in this book for a list of possible health goals. A long-term goal may take a month, a year, or a lifetime to accomplish. Long-term goals often can be broken down into smaller, short-term goals, which are easier to accomplish. For example, suppose your long-term health goal is “I will lose ten pounds.” A short-term health goal might be “I will lose two pounds each week.”

2. Make an action plan to meet your health goal. An action plan is a detailed description of the steps you will take to reach a goal. Some people use a health behavior contract for their action plan. Refer to page 32 in this book for how to make a health behavior contract. Have someone you trust review it for you to see if it is realistic.

3. Identify obstacles to your plan. Brainstorm obstacles that might interfere with carrying out your plan. Prioritize them from most to least important and think of ways to work with the most important ones.

4. Set up a timeline to accomplish your health goal. Set a date for each point

along your action plan. When does your action plan begin? What is the date you expect to achieve your health goal? Have you considered all other obligations? Is your timeline realistic?

5. Keep a chart or diary in which you record progress toward your health goal. Keep track of progress. Writing down a goal helps you to stick to your plan to accomplish it.

6. Build a support system. Make a list of people who will support you or be available for advice as you work toward your health goal. Join a support group or associate with others who are working toward the same health goal. Stay away from people who might sabotage your health goal.

7. Revise your action plan or timeline, if necessary. Do not give up on a health goal. There are too many benefits that will come from reaching it. Give yourself more time or ask for the help of others if you can’t make an action plan that works for you.

8. Reward yourself when you reach your health goal. Once you’ve succeeded in reaching your health goal, do something nice for yourself. Just make certain your reward fits with your new healthful lifestyle.

Make the Connection

Health Behavior Contract For more information about making a health behavior contract, see page 32 in Lesson 3.

Mini-Review

1. What is a long-term health goal?
2. Rather than give up on a health plan, what should you do?

Healthy People 2010

During the 1990s, groups of scientists produced a set of national health goals and detailed plans to achieve them by the year 2010. The result, *Healthy People 2010*, outlines goals for disease prevention and includes twenty-eight health-promoting objectives for the nation to achieve by 2010. It also describes ten leading health indicators that are currently the major health concerns for the United States.

The Goals of Healthy People 2010

There are two main goals for Healthy People 2010.

Did You Know?

Longevity Japan ranks first in life expectancy for both men and women.

Goal 1: To increase quality and years of healthy life

Life expectancy The average number of years that people are expected to live is called *life expectancy*. At the beginning of the twentieth century, life expectancy at birth was 47.3 years. One hundred years later, the average life expectancy is nearly 77 years. Life expectancy continues to increase. People who are 65 years old today can expect to live an average of 18 more years, for a total of 83.

Although life expectancy has increased, it is not what it could be in the United States. At least 18 countries with populations of one million or more have life expectancies greater than the United States.

Quality of life Health-related quality of life includes physical and mental well-being and the ways people respond to their environment. Quality of life is more difficult to measure than life expectancy. It might be measured by having people describe their lives by rating their overall life as poor, fair, good, very good, or excellent.

A Healthy People 2010 report found that too many people reported

experiencing days of less than optimal health. For many people in this nation, health-related quality of life could be better. Healthy People 2010 hopes to see an increase in life expectancy and improvement in the quality of life by helping people become more knowledgeable and more motivated about the choices they can make to improve their health.

Goal 2: To eliminate health disparities in the population

Health disparities There are measurable differences, or disparities, in opportunities for optimal health in the United States. Some factors that were found to create health disparities are gender, race and ethnicity, education and income level, disability status, sexual orientation, and whether a person lives in a rural or urban area. For instance, individuals with less education are less likely to be healthy than people with more education. Injury rates are 40 percent higher for people living in communities with fewer than 2500 residents than for people living in urban areas. Healthy People 2010 promotes reducing such disparities in health by helping people access valid health information and care.



Activity: Using Life Skills

Using Goal-Setting and Decision-Making Skills: Setting a Health Goal

Setting goals can help you focus your energies and motivate you to take action. Be realistic about your goals and the time it will take to reach them. The activity below will give you practice in setting goals that are relevant and reachable.

1 Write your health goal. Think of a short-term goal that you would like to achieve within the next month. Make the goal one that will improve your physical or emotional health.

4 Set up a timeline to accomplish your health goal and keep a chart or diary in which you can record progress toward your goal. Measure progress regularly. Keep a daily written record.

2 Make an action plan to meet your health goal. Write down your goal. Be realistic and specific. State your goal in a positive way. Include a deadline. Stating your goal clearly also gives you a way to measure your progress toward your goal.

5 Build a support system. When you reach your goal, tell someone. Be proud of yourself. After all, you have just improved your health.

3 Identify obstacles to your plan. Post your goal statement in a place where you will see it—the refrigerator, bathroom mirror, or on a notebook. Seeing a goal helps to reinforce it and keep you on track.

6 Revise your action plan or timeline, if necessary, and reward yourself when you reach your health goal. What do you do if you fall short of your goal? Revise it. Maybe a month is too long of a time for you. How about setting a goal of one week? When you accomplish this revised goal, then try two weeks.

The Nation's Top Ten Health Concerns

Scientists will know if the nation's health has improved from 2000 to 2010 by studying the **leading health indicators**, the ten national health concerns that will be evaluated during this period. What changes can you make in your health behavior that would improve the nation's health?

Ten Leading Health Indicators

Physical activity Increase the number of adolescents who engage in vigorous physical activity.

Overweight and obesity Reduce the number of overweight or obese children and adolescents.

Tobacco use Reduce cigarette smoking in adolescents.

Substance abuse Increase the proportion of adolescents not using alcohol or illicit drugs.

Responsible sexual behavior Increase the number of adolescents who abstain from sexual intercourse.

Mental health Increase the proportion of adults diagnosed with depression who receive treatment.

Injury and violence Reduce homicides and motor vehicle deaths.

Environmental quality Reduce non-smokers exposed to tobacco smoke.

Immunization Increase the proportion of young children who receive all recommended vaccines for at least five years.

Access to health care Increase the proportion of people with health insurance coverage.



▲ Choices that you make every day may seem trivial, but they add up to important effects on your health status.

Decision-Making Styles

An individual can achieve a goal by learning how to make informed decisions. Do you weigh information carefully and consider the consequences before you make a decision? Do you make decisions based on what your friends are doing? Do you discuss important decisions with your parents or guardian? You can analyze your decision-making style and change it if necessary.

How to Evaluate Your Decision-Making Style

Make the Connection

Self-Confidence For more information about self-confidence and assertiveness, see page 48 in Lesson 5.

Mini-Review

1. What are the goals of Healthy People 2010?
2. List the ten leading health indicators.
3. What is a reactive decision-making style?

Three possible decision-making styles are described here. Each style has its own consequences. Which of these three styles might produce healthful results and which will produce results that are not healthful?

Inactive decision-making style A person who fails to make choices has an *inactive decision-making style*. The failure to make a decision determines the outcome. Teens who use the inactive decision-making style may have the following habits. They postpone something until a future time. They take little control over the direction of their lives. They have difficulty gaining the self-confidence that would result if they took responsibility for making decisions when they should.

Reactive decision-making style A habit in which a person allows others to make his or her decisions is a *reactive decision-making style*. Teens using the reactive decision-making

style are easily influenced by what others think, do, or suggest. They lack self-confidence and have a great need to be liked by others. They give control of the direction of their lives to others.

Proactive decision-making style A habit in which a person describes the situation that requires a decision, identifies and evaluates possible decisions, makes a decision, and takes responsibility for the outcome is a *proactive decision-making style*.

Teens who use the proactive decision-making style demonstrate the following characteristics in their lives. They are not driven by circumstances and conditions. They are not easily influenced by peers. They have principles, such as integrity, honesty, and dignity, which guide their decisions and behavior. They are empowered. A person who is empowered is energized because he or she has some control over his or her decisions and behavior.



Responsible Decisions

You can develop a proactive decision-making style. When you have decisions to make, use the Responsible Decision-Making Model. The **Responsible Decision-Making Model** is a series of steps to follow to assure that people make good decisions.

How to Use the Responsible Decision-Making Model

Step 1: Describe the situation that requires a decision. Describe the situation in writing if no immediate decision is necessary. Describe the situation out loud or to yourself in a few sentences if an immediate decision is necessary. Being able to describe the situation in your own words helps you see it more clearly.

Step 2: List possible decisions you might make. List all the possible decisions you can think of in writing, if no immediate decision is necessary. If you must decide right away, review the possible decisions out loud or to yourself.

Step 3: Share the list of possible decisions with a parent, guardian, or other responsible adult. Share possible decisions with a responsible adult when no immediate decision is necessary. If possible, delay making a decision until you have had a chance to discuss the possible decisions with a parent, guardian, or other responsible adult. The adult may help you evaluate the possible consequences of each decision.

Step 4: Use six questions to evaluate the possible consequences of each decision.

- Will this decision result in actions that promote health?

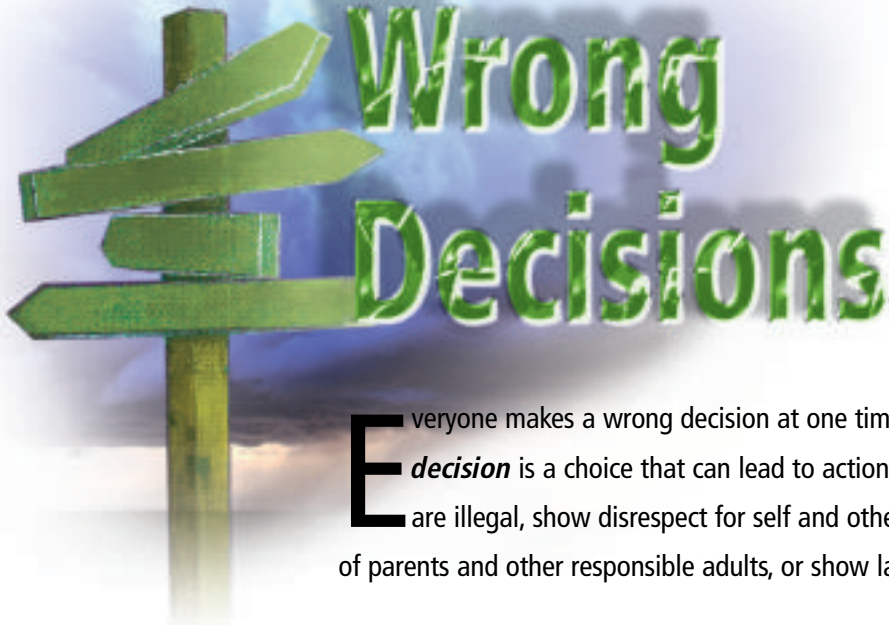
- Will this decision result in actions that protect safety?
- Will this decision result in actions that follow laws?
- Will this decision result in actions that show respect for myself and others?
- Will this decision result in actions that follow the guidelines of my parents and of other responsible adults?
- Will this decision result in actions that demonstrate good character?

Step 5: Decide which decision is most responsible and appropriate. Rely on the six questions in Step 4 as you compare the decisions.

Step 6: Act on your decision and evaluate the results. Follow through with your decision with confidence.



◀ Share a list of possible decisions with a parent, guardian, or other responsible adult.







Everyone makes a wrong decision at one time or another. A **wrong decision** is a choice that can lead to actions that harm health, are unsafe, are illegal, show disrespect for self and others, disregard the guidelines of parents and other responsible adults, or show lack of good character.

What to Do if You Make a Wrong Decision and Want to Correct It

What can you do if you suddenly realize that you intentionally made a wrong decision and now wish you hadn't? Do something to correct your wrong actions. If you do, you take

steps to earn back the respect of others. This helps you keep your self-respect. In **Table 6.1** below, read the four steps you can take if you make a wrong decision.

TABLE 6.1 Four Steps to Take if You Make a Wrong Decision

Step to Take	What This Means for You
 <p>1. Take responsibility and admit you made a wrong decision.</p>	<p>Wrong is wrong. Do not make excuses if you make a wrong decision. Do not try to cover up what you have done.</p>
 <p>2. Do not continue actions based on wrong decisions.</p>	<p>The very moment you recognize that you have made a wrong decision, think about what actions you have taken based on your wrong decision.</p>
 <p>3. Discuss the wrong decision with a parent, guardian, or other responsible adult.</p>	<p>Your parents or guardian are responsible for guiding the decisions that you make. If your decisions are wrong, your parents or guardian need to know. They can help you correct what you have done.</p>
 <p>4. Make restitution for harm done to others.</p>	<p>Restitution is making up for any loss, damage, or harm you have caused. An apology is not always enough to correct the harm done. You might have to replace something, pay money, or volunteer time to make things right.</p>

LESSON

6 STUDY GUIDE

health goal
Healthy People 2010
inactive decision-
making style
leading health
indicators
life expectancy
long-term health
goal
proactive decision-
making style
reactive decision-
making style
Responsible
Decision-Making
Model
restitution
short-term health
goal
wrong decision

Key Terms Review

Match the definitions below with the lesson Key Terms on the left. Do not write in this book.

1. health objectives for the nation
2. ten major health concerns
3. failing to make choices determines outcome
4. decision that is harmful, unsafe, illegal
5. making good for loss or damage
6. allowing others to make choices for you
7. average number of years you are expected to live
8. series of steps to follow to make responsible decisions
9. empowering style of making decisions
10. healthful behavior you work to achieve

Recalling the Facts

11. What are eight steps you can take to reach a health goal?
12. List the ten leading health indicators.
13. Describe three decision-making styles.
14. What are six questions you might ask to proactively evaluate the possible consequences of a decision?
15. What are ways of making restitution for loss, damage, or harm?
16. What are the two main goals of Healthy People 2010?
17. Give an example of a health goal.
18. How has life expectancy changed from the twentieth to the twenty-first century?

Critical Thinking

19. Why is making restitution for a wrong decision important? Give several examples of ways to make restitution.
20. How does eliminating health disparities in the population promote health for all people?
21. Why might sharing a possible decision with a responsible adult help make your decision-making process easier?
22. How does following a law show respect for self and others?

Real-Life Applications

23. What can you do to help the nation reach its goals for 2010?
24. Explain why you should write down a health goal and make a plan for it.
25. Describe the difference between short-term and long-term health goals.
26. Select one of the ten areas of concern in the leading health indicators and, using a proactive decision-making style, plan how to improve that area in your own life.

Activities

Responsible Decision Making

27. **Record a Message** Imagine that you are playing softball with friends. You hit the softball, and it breaks a car windshield. Your friends convince you to leave, but you feel guilty. Record a message in which you tell the owner of the automobile about your wrong decision and offer to make restitution. Refer to the Responsible Decision-Making Model on page 61 for help.

Sharpen Your Life Skills

28. **Set a Health Goal** One of the leading health indicators for Healthy People 2010 is physical activity that promotes cardiorespiratory fitness three or more times a week for 20 or more minutes per occasion. List exercises you can do this week to meet this health goal. List things that might keep you from exercising this week. Tell what you can do to overcome these obstacles.