



# Lesson One: Making Healthy Choices

## Background

This lesson focuses on helping students understand the importance of making healthy choices. The video segment addresses some of the risk-taking behaviors of many teens, and reviews the problems associated with negative peer pressure. It also talks about the need to “choose your friends wisely.” While they will hear about the choices that confront today’s teens, they will also learn responsible ways to deal with the peer pressure to take those risks – risks that could lead to injury or death.

## Discussion Questions

1. The video showed that a person’s decision-making process sometimes changes when he/she is with a group of friends. Are your decisions influenced when you are with your friends? Does risk-taking increase? Why does this sometimes happen?
2. Why do teens take risks? Is taking risks good or bad?
3. What is character? (Answer: It is moral and ethical strength; also integrity. It is also what helps individuals gain self-respect). Who can give us an example of a person with strong character who took personal risks to make this country or our world a better place for all people to live?
4. The video talked about the relationship between boredom and teens taking risks. Is it worth taking a risk because you are bored? Why or why not? What are other ways you have found helpful to cope with boredom?
5. If a friend of yours was trying to persuade you to do something that felt uncomfortable to you, what reasons could you give that illustrate setting limits for yourself?
6. Have your friends ever said to you, “But everyone’s doing it!” or “C’mon, don’t you want to be like us?” Has that kind of talk ever persuaded you? Who can name a few examples of the negative consequences of taking risks? Why do teenagers think “it will never happen to me?”



## Vocabulary Builders

Use the Vocabulary handout to teach the terms and definitions. These words are pretty “heavy” – they convey actions that typically require serious thought and maturity.

Term	Definition
<b>Decision-making</b>	A term used to describe the process of reaching a decision; the act of making up your mind or creating a plan of action.
<b>Health risks</b>	<b>A term</b> used to describe the potential consequences of certain behaviors (i.e., the health risks of smoking are cancer, heart attack and stroke).
<b>Limit-setting</b>	A term used to describe the act of creating boundaries, or setting a pre-determined level of expected behavior (i.e., curfews, number of hours allowed to watch TV, driving at the speed limit).
<b>Self-responsibility</b>	Accepting one’s own role or responsibility (i.e., not blaming others) in a decision or an action.
<b>Risk-taking</b>	Undertaking a task associated with a risk. It could be a good risk – going for a desirable goal, meeting a challenge; it could simply be an action that you decide to do even if there is a risk of failing. Or it could describe an action or behavior that is likely to have a negative or unhealthy outcome; something that presents a dangerous risk.



## Activity

# Children's Health: The Top Risks

1. Begin the discussion with a review of the top health concerns for kids, according to a national poll on children's health conducted by the University of Michigan C.S. Mott Children's Hospital. In May 2011, the Poll asked 2,130 adults to rate 20 different health concerns for children living in their communities. Review the concerns by distributing the Top Risks Handout. How many of these concerns do you feel you have control over?
2. Now, place a trash can at the front of the room, take three to five steps back from it, and put a piece of tape on the floor at that spot. You'll also need a soft (Nerf) ball for this activity. Put a trash can at the front of the room, take three to five steps back from it, and put a piece of tape on the floor at that spot. You'll also need a soft (Nerf) ball for this activity. Explain to your students: Several students in the video mentioned that taking risks is a part of life. While that may be true, some risks that have life-changing consequences. Who can give us an example?
3. Request three volunteers for the next activity. Say: I've put a trash can at the front of the room. Each volunteer, standing behind the taped line on the floor, will have three chances to make a basket with this Nerf ball. (The basket should be close enough that it is easy for the students to make the majority of the shots).
4. Have the first two students shoot five shots each. Record the number of times they made a basket. With the rest of the class's help, convert the 10 shots into a percentage (i.e., 9 out of 10 would be 90%).
5. Now say to the third student: Based on the number of baskets the first two students made, YOUR chances of making a basket are 90%. Here's the ball. I'll give you \$10 if you get it in, but you'll need to give me \$10 if you miss. Before the student attempts a basket, ask him/her: Do you want to take my challenge? Why or why not? (If the student declined, ask: If I placed you one foot closer to the trashcan, would you accept my offer? Why or why not? (If the student agreed, ask): If I placed you one foot further away, would you still accept my offer?
6. Now ask all students: some of the health risks we've discussed have serious consequences – injury, unplanned pregnancy, contracting a dangerous sexually-transmitted disease, even death. Would you risk a chance on any of these consequences? Some people believe that everything involves risk. Do you think that is a good enough reason to take risks or to try something seriously risky?



## Top Risks for Kids

### C.S. Mott Children's Hospital 2011 National Poll on Children's Health

<b>Childhood Obesity</b>
<b>Drug Abuse</b>
<b>Smoking and Tobacco Use</b>
<b>Teen Pregnancy</b>
<b>Bullying</b>
<b>Internet Safety</b>
<b>Stress</b>
<b>Alcohol Abuse</b>
<b>Driving Accidents</b>
<b>Sexting</b>



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