



Teaching Kids Health Literacy

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Health literacy means understanding information about your health. It's important for kids to become health literate as they grow so they can take care of themselves and make good health decisions. Back-to-school time — with physicals, medical paperwork and reviews of school health procedures — is a good time to talk to your kids about health literacy. To be health literate, a person must:

1. Know where to get accurate health information

Help kids understand some of the trusted sources for health information. Some good sources are: doctors, nurses, parents and teachers. Some sources, like friends or TV shows, can give incorrect information. Teach kids to ask, "How does this person or source know about health?" Explain that not all information found on the internet is reliable, and how to find trusted resources that deliver good medical information. Who is the author? Is the information provided complete and current?

Encourage your kids to ask questions. If they have questions or concerns about their health, they should not be afraid to talk to trusted sources. Before their next doctor visit, ask them if they have questions related to their health and wellness. Write them down and prompt your kids to make sure their questions are answered before the end of the visit.

2. Understand the health information

In addition to having a good source with correct information, kids need to understand what that source is saying. If it's not clear what is meant by healthy food or getting enough exercise, it is hard to know what to do next. It's not surprising that health information is sometimes confusing for kids when it can be confusing even for grown-ups. Health and the body are complicated scientific subjects. **Talk to your kids about what to do if they get health information, but don't understand it.** Again, asking questions is the key to understanding, and a great way for kids to take responsibility for their health.

3. Apply the information to make good decisions

Most kids are interested in learning about health. They know that what they do as kids can affect how healthy they will be as adults. For instance, just by eating a healthy diet and being active, kids can help maintain a healthy weight. Wearing a helmet when riding a bike or any wheeled vehicle also is a smart health decision. The more kids learn about health and can start taking these steps on their own, the healthier they can be. **One of the best ways to teach your children the importance of health and wellness is to model it yourself.**

The Kohl's Cares Grow Safe & Healthy Program, a partnership between Kohl's Cares and Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, is a trusted resource for health and safety information for children, parents and caregivers. It offers valuable information to keep kids safe in all of their environments: in the home, outdoors and on the go. Download the free Keep Spriggy Safe App and valuable safety information at KohlsSafeandHealthy.com.