

Teens in the Media

Every day, you make decisions about the media—you choose what television shows to watch, what music to listen to, and what books and magazines to read. These choices can have a significant influence on your overall health.

Think about the TV shows you watch, the music you listen to, and the magazines and books you read. To get an idea of how teens are portrayed in the different forms of media, answer these questions:

Are the teens eating nutritious foods and engaging in regular physical activity?

Do the teens have a positive outlook on life?

Do the teens have healthful family relationships?

Do the teens avoid violence and try to resolve conflicts peacefully?

Do the teens avoid tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs?

Do the teens practice abstinence from sexual activity?

ACTIVITY

Begin a daily journal of your interaction with various forms of media. Record in your journal the names of the programs you watch, the titles of songs you listen to, the titles of books and magazines you read, and the names of Web sites you visit. Ask yourself whether or not the teens depicted in a particular form of media are modeling healthful behaviors and making responsible choices, and write answers to the questions above. Keep the journal for a week.

On the basis of the data in your journal, would you say that there are

plenty of healthful images of teens in the media, or do you believe that there is a lack of images of teens making healthful choices and leading healthy lives? Write a paper discussing your view.

EXPRESS YOUR VIEWS

Write a paragraph on how watching TV shows, reading books and magazines, listening to music, or visiting Web sites that promote a healthy lifestyle might positively influence your own health.