

Examining Dating and Friendships

HEALTH GOALS

- I will develop healthful friendships.
- I will develop dating skills.

What You'll Learn

1. List four questions to ask before beginning a friendship. (p. 159)
2. Discuss ways to initiate a friendship and healthful ways to respond to rejection. (p. 159)
3. Learn communication skills that encourage conversation. (p. 159)
4. Analyze how the age at which a teen begins to date might affect his or her physical and emotional health. (p. 160)
5. Establish dating guidelines with parents. (p. 160)
6. Evaluate your dating skills using the Dating Skills Checklist. (p. 163)
7. Discuss ways that balanced and one-sided friendships affect health status. (p. 164)

Why It's Important

There is a saying, "A friend is a gift you give yourself." You can have balanced friendships and healthful dating relationships.

Key Terms

- healthful friendship
- conversation
- rejection
- dating
- curfew
- dating skills
- balanced friendship
- one-sided friendship
- user

A balanced relationship that promotes mutual respect and healthful behavior is a **healthful friendship**. Having balanced friendships improves the quality of your life. This lesson explains how to initiate friendships, carry on a conversation, and handle rejection. It includes dating guidelines to discuss with your parents or guardian and a Dating Skills Checklist to help you evaluate your dating skills.



What Would You Do?

Writing About Dating Guidelines Suppose you and a classmate want to go out on a date. Before you begin dating, your parents or guardian will set dating guidelines for you. Your parents or guardian will want to know details about your date. Read about dating guidelines on page 161 and make a list of questions in your health journal that you and your classmate might discuss.



Health TEKS covered by Lesson 15: 7J, 8A, 9A, 13A, 13C, 13G, 14A, 15A, 15C, 16A, 16D

Initiating Friendships

Have you ever noticed that people often meet each other for the first time because they are talking about a similar interest? Friendships begin by using communication skills.



Communication Builds Friendships

There are questions to ask yourself about a person before beginning a friendship: What do I know about this person? Does this person have good character? Do my parents or guardian know this person? Will my parents or guardian approve of my spending time with this person? Pursue the friendship only if the person has good character and your parents or guardian approve.

How to initiate friendship There is an element of risk when you want to pursue a friendship. After all, you may not be certain that the person wants to pursue a friendship with you. The reward, however, is the opportunity to develop a new friendship. Ways to initiate a friendship include asking the person to enjoy a social activity with you and/or starting a conversation and asking questions to learn more about the person.

How to carry on a conversation If the person is receptive, your success in developing new friendships often depends on your ability to carry on a conversation. A **conversation** is a verbal exchange of feelings, thoughts, ideas, and opinions. The Conversation Keepers and Conversation Killers show what to do and what not to do when having conversations.

How to handle rejection Has someone you like ever ignored you? Has a friend or someone you thought was a friend failed to include you? Everyone experiences rejection at times. **Rejection** is the feeling of being unwelcome or unwanted. How do you respond to rejection? There are healthful ways for you to express your hurt, anger, and disappointment. Use I-messages to share your feelings with the person who rejected you. Share your feelings with a trusted adult. Remember that you are worthwhile even when a person does not want to be your friend or a friend does not include you.

Make the Connection

A Good Listener For more information on being a good listener, see page 44 in Lesson 5.

Conversation Keepers

The left column lists behaviors that keep a conversation going, while the right column lists behaviors that will make conversing hard.

- asking questions
- showing interest in what someone else is saying
- listening carefully
- responding to others
- considering other ideas
- encouraging another person
- being positive
- making eye contact

Conversation Killers

- talking about yourself
- appearing disinterested in what someone else is saying
- interrupting someone
- changing the topic
- being a know-it-all
- complaining
- talking about others
- avoiding eye contact

Dating Guidelines

Stuart Hughes/Getty Images

Health TEKS

13C (covered on page 160): Analyze behavior in a dating relationship that will enhance the dignity, respect, and responsibility relating to marriage.

Quick Quiz:

What should teens look for in a healthy dating relationship?

Having social plans with a person in whom you are interested is **dating**. Teens may use other words instead of dating. Some teens refer to having a date as “going out” or “hanging out” or “seeing” someone. Spending time with people to whom you are attracted is a natural stage of adolescence. Before dating, it is helpful to know how to have healthful balanced friendships (see page 164). It is also helpful to communicate with parents.

What to Know About Dating Guidelines

When to begin dating A common concern of parents, guardians, and teens is identifying the appropriate time to begin dating. Parents and guardians do not want dating to interfere with their teen’s education or emotional, social, and psychological development. Evidence shows that dating at a young age may have negative consequences.

Teens who begin dating before age 15 may seem to be confident and

self-assured, but they can be more superficial than their peers. Early dating may interfere with the development of an independent identity. Teens who begin dating early may base their identity on their dating experiences rather than on developing their unique personality.

Parents or guardians are concerned about the effects of early dating on practicing abstinence from sex. Their concerns are backed up by research findings. Teens who begin dating at a young age and form steady relationships are more at risk for becoming sexually active. This increases their risk of becoming a teen parent and being infected with HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases.

Discuss the appropriate age to begin dating with your parents or guardian. Know that they want to protect you from the risks of dating too early.

Follow your parents’ dating guidelines

Before you begin dating, your parents or guardians will set dating guidelines for you. Their guidelines may include these sample dating guidelines. Share these dating guidelines with any person with whom you plan to have a date.

E Make the Connection

Self-Esteem For more information on self-esteem, see page 78 in Lesson 8.

Dating different people, casually, allows you to have fun and experience different dating situations while you’re young.



TABLE 15.1 Important Dating Guidelines

Guideline	Description of Guideline	
	<p>Give your parents or guardian information on the person with whom you will have a date.</p>	<p>What is his or her name? How old is he or she? Where does he or she attend school? How can his or her parents or guardian be reached? This information is needed in order to discuss the appropriateness of dating this person.</p>
	<p>Tell your parents or guardian your exact plans.</p>	<p>When will the date occur? What activity has been planned? You need to share details. The timing of the date should not interfere with family activities or with school or work responsibilities. The activity should be appropriate.</p>
	<p>Arrange for safe transportation.</p>	<p>If you have your driver's license, your parents or guardian will emphasize that you obey traffic laws and speed limits and do not drink alcohol or use other drugs. You might rely on older teens for transportation. Your parents or guardian will want to check out anyone who is driving you. Make it clear that drinking alcohol or using other drugs will not be tolerated. Never get into a car if the driver has been drinking alcohol or using other drugs. Call home for help if a problem occurs.</p>
	<p>Establish a reasonable curfew.</p>	<p>A curfew is a fixed time when a person is to be at home. Your parents or guardian will establish how late you can stay out. Having a curfew helps guarantee your safety and relieves your parents or guardian of needless worry. Some cities have passed curfew laws that set a time that those under a certain age must be home.</p>
	<p>Establish your code of conduct.</p>	<p>The privilege to date is accompanied by the responsibility to use wise judgment. Issues regarding wise judgment need to be clear. For example, your parents or guardian will have certain expectations regarding adult supervision of activities. Are you permitted to be at someone's home when no adults are present? Money is another issue to discuss. How much can you spend when you go out? Who should pay for what? Be aware of your parents' or guardian's guidelines for sexual behavior. Remember, your parents or guardian establish guidelines to protect you.</p>
	<p>Establish the expected code of conduct for the person you date.</p>	<p>Your parents or guardian may discuss the importance of being respected by anyone you date. Respect is high regard for someone or something. A person you date should never act in a way that shows disrespect for you or your parents or guardian. A person you date should never encourage you to disobey your parents' or guardian's guidelines, say cruel words to you, hit or shove you, force you to show affection or be sexually active, or drink alcohol or use other harmful drugs. Your parents or guardian can discuss what to do if these actions occur.</p>

Dating Skills

Skills that help a person when he or she is dating are *dating skills*. This two-page section includes questions and answers teens have about dating. Read through the problems and solutions below to learn more about dating. Then use the Dating Skills Checklist to rate your dating skills.

Check Out Your Dating Skills

Did You Know?

Internet Risks Some teens have been harmed by persons they met through the Internet. Remember, a person who contacts teens on the Internet could be a dangerous person pretending to make friendships.

Suppose you are dating only one person. Your parents discourage this steady relationship. They want you to go out with different people and spend more time with your friends. What are the advantages of dating several people versus dating one person seriously?

Dating only one person provides a comfort zone. You feel secure when you always have someone there for you. This person can help you feel accepted. But staying in the comfort zone has disadvantages too. During your teen years, you have the opportunity to practice your dating skills. You can take risks by asking out different people and accepting invitations. You can learn to handle rejection when someone does not want to go out with you. Different dating experiences help you meet new people and gain self-confidence.

Suppose there is someone in math class whom you think is attractive. You'd like to ask this person to a party your friend is having, but you get tongue-tied whenever you begin to speak. What can you do?

To calm your nerves, do a practice run first. Rehearse with a family member, trusted friend, or in front of a mirror how you will ask this person out. Be honest and share your feelings. It's OK to be up front and tell a person you wish to date that you are

nervous. It will ease the tension. Then, take a deep breath, smile, and ask for the date. Now consider your dating attitude. If you ask someone for a date, do not consider yourself a success or failure based on the person's acceptance or rejection of your invitation. Instead, give yourself credit for doing the asking. Always remember, if a person turns you down for a date, it does not mean you are unlikable.

Suppose someone you have wanted to date asks you out. The plans involve going out with people who have a reputation for drinking. Should you accept the date?

Ask questions and get the facts before you accept the date. Explain that you do not drink and that you do not hang out with people who do. You need to know if there will be any drinking before you can accept. Your potential date may reassure you that there will be no alcohol. You need to make it clear that if there is drinking, you will leave immediately. You also may suggest going out with other people who do not drink. However, suppose your potential date does not reassure you that there will be no drinking. Turn down the date and do not be too disappointed. Remember, dating situations that include drinking lead to trouble.



Suppose someone you do not like asks you out. How can you keep from hurting his or her feelings when you say “no” to the date?

Tune in to your social graces and handle the situation with class. Thank the person for asking you. Say directly, but gently, that you are not interested in going out. Avoid dishonesty. For example, do not say you are busy when you are not.

Suppose you are at a party where teens are drinking alcohol or experimenting with other drugs. You tell your date you want to leave. Your date suggests staying another hour. Should you stay or make a fast exit?

Easy decision: make a fast exit. The faster you leave, the better. There can be serious consequences if you stay. Suppose someone calls the police to report alcohol and other drug use at the party. The police arrive and find teens drinking and using other drugs. You will appear guilty even though you did not drink or use drugs. People who hear about the party will believe you were drinking because you were at the party. Remember, your parents or guardian gave you the privilege to date. They believe that you are trustworthy and responsible. Now, what should you do if your date will not leave? Make a fast exit yourself. Call your parents, or guardian, or another responsible adult to pick you up.

Suppose you have plans to go on a date with someone this Saturday. Then, you run into another person you like better. The second person asks if you have plans Saturday. Should you try to get out of your other plans?

Character is essential when dating. You must always treat people with respect. How would you feel if someone cancelled plans with you for someone he or she liked better? Always keep the commitments that you make to others. Set a date with the second person for a different night.

Suppose your friends talk about going out all the time, and you are not interested in dating. Is there something wrong with a person who is not interested in going out? Should that person go out anyway to keep up an image?

Going out, or dating, is a choice. Teens develop physically, mentally, and emotionally at different rates. Some teens will have developed an interest in dating while others have not. You may not be ready, or you may not be interested right now. Do not doubt yourself because you are not interested in dating. Do not date because you feel pressured to do so.

Mini-Review

1. What are some of the benefits of waiting until age 15 to start dating, and how does waiting enhance the dignity, respect, and responsibility relating to marriage?
2. What are some benefits of dating a few people casually instead of dating one person seriously?

Dating Skills Checklist

Rate your dating skills. Pat yourself on the back for each of the following statements that describes your behavior.

- I do not base my self-worth on my ability to get a date.
- I ask questions and get the facts before I accept a date.
- I decline a date when there will be pressure to drink or be sexually active.
- I honor my dating commitments and do not change plans if someone better comes along.
- I recognize the advantages of dating different people rather than having one serious boyfriend or girlfriend.
- I would make a fast exit from a date instead of being or staying in a situation that is against my parents' or guardians' guidelines.
- I would not hesitate to call my parents or guardian if I were on a date and needed help.
- I am comfortable staying home when I do not want to date.
- I am clear as to my expectations when I give or receive a gift in a dating situation.
- I am honest and kind when I turn down someone for a date.



Balanced Friendships

A friendship in which two people give and receive acts of kindness with each other is a **balanced friendship**. A friendship in which one person does most of the giving and the other person does most of the receiving is a **one-sided friendship**. These two kinds of friendships have very different effects on your health.

What to Know About Friendships

How Balanced Friendships Affect Health Status

You give and receive in balanced friendships. For example, friends help celebrate success and listen to feelings of disappointment. Balanced friendships have positive effects on health status.

Emotional and physical health Acts of giving stimulate the brain to release endorphins. You feel increased energy, relaxation, and improved mood as a result of giving. Acts of receiving help you to feel cared about which makes you more resilient.

How One-Sided Friendships Affect Health Status

Some teens form one-sided relationships. Consider teens who do all or most of the giving in a relationship. There are at least two reasons why. First, teens who do most of the giving might be people pleasers. A **people pleaser** is a person who constantly seeks the approval of others. Teens who are people pleasers are usually insecure. They choose to do most of

the giving so they will be liked and noticed by others. People who are takers often seek them out.

Another reason why some teens do most of the giving might be that they do not know how to receive acts of kindness from others. They are uncomfortable asking for support or accepting gifts or other kind gestures.

Teens who do most of the receiving in a relationship often are described as **takers** or **users**. They take from others or use others to meet their needs. They are self-centered and selfish. One-sided friendships have negative effects on health status.

Emotional and physical health Teens who are people pleasers might feel others take advantage of them. This contributes to negative self-esteem. People pleasers often keep their feelings inside, which can cause headaches, stomachaches, and other stress-related symptoms. Teens who are takers have difficulty being close to others. This also contributes to negative self-esteem. Often, takers are controlling. They also can have stress-related symptoms.

Make the Connection

People Pleasers For more information on people pleasers, see page 179 in Lesson 17.

Health TEKS

13G (covered on page 164): Evaluate the dynamics of social groups.

Quick Quiz:

What are the dynamics of a healthful friendship?

balanced friendship
conversation
curfew
dating
dating skills
healthful friendship
one-sided friendship
user
rejection

🔑 Key Terms Review

Write a sentence using each lesson Key Term correctly. Do not write in this book.

1. user
2. balanced friendship
3. curfew
4. conversation
5. healthful friendship
6. dating
7. one-sided friendship
8. dating skills
9. rejection

Recalling the Facts

10. What are four questions to ask yourself before beginning a friendship with someone?
11. What are three healthful ways to respond to rejection?
12. What are conversation keepers that encourage others to stay in a conversation with you? Name at least six.
13. What are conversation killers that discourage others from talking to you? Name at least six.
14. How might having balanced friendships affect a teen's emotional and physical health?
15. How might being a people pleaser affect a teen's emotional and physical health?
16. How might dating at an early age affect a teen's physical and emotional health?
17. What are six dating guidelines to discuss with your parents and/or guardian?
18. What are ten dating skills for you to consider?

Critical Thinking

19. List and explain some of the risks of dating someone who drinks alcohol or uses drugs.
20. Discuss why it is not a good idea for a person to talk about himself or herself all the time.
21. How might you evaluate the dynamics of social groups, such as groups of friends and people who are dating?
22. Why do people pleasers and users often become friends? How could a former people pleaser and user form a healthful relationship?

Real-Life Applications

23. What would you do if you went to a party with a date and some teens at the party had illegal drugs?
24. Why do you think parents and guardians set a curfew for teens?
25. What would you do if a friend always expected you to do what he or she wanted to do?
26. What would you do if your boyfriend or girlfriend began to say cruel things to you, treated you cruelly, or harmed you physically?

Activities

Responsible Decision Making

27. **Role-Play** You and a friend have not been invited to another friend's party. Your friend who was not invited wants to crash the party and cause a scene. Role-play the situation with a classmate. Refer to the Responsible Decision-Making Model on page 61 for help.

Sharpen Your Life Skills

28. **Advocate for Health** Review the dating skills on page 163. Pretend you are an advice columnist at a teen magazine. Write three letters for your column. Each letter should focus on a specific dating concern a teen might have. Then write a response to each of the letters.