

PURPOSE

To help students make connections between lifestyle choices and physical and emotional health. To explore the influence of media and technology in their lives and the impact it has on their body image and overall health.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson students will be able to:

1. Understand the role that media and tech can have in their lives.
2. Understand the negative impacts that media and tech can have on their self-image and health.
3. Understand how to make healthy choices in the areas of nutrition, exercise, sleep and screen use.

MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- Lesson 7 teenFEMM powerpoint
- Case Study: Aaliyah (preparation needed)
- Health Checklist: Media (preparation needed)

VOCABULARY

- **Media:** channels of communication between a person or persons and their intended audience.
- **Social media:** websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.
- **Habit:** something you do so often that it becomes natural to you.
- **Body image:** how an individual person sees their own body and the feelings that go along with this perception, both positive and negative.

PREPARATION

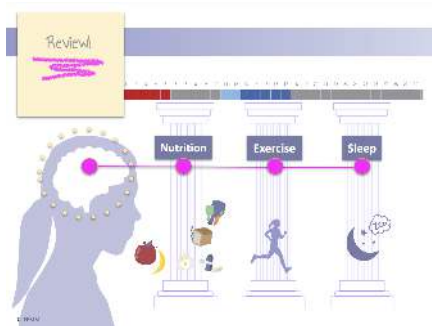
- ☐ Print the **Case Study: Aaliyah** for each group of students.
- ☐ Print the **Health Checklist: Media** for each student.

PROCEDURE

Step 1 (5 minutes): Review + Health Checklist

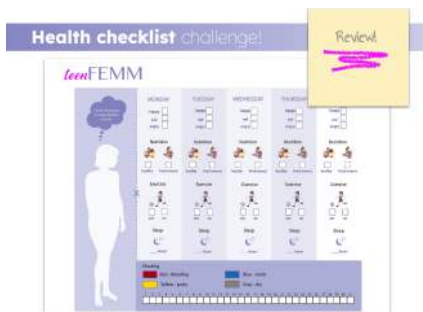
Do you remember what controls the activity of every system in the body?

Yes, hormones. Hormones are directed by your brain.



We learned in the last few classes that there is a lot that we can do to help our hormones stay in balance, such as eating a variety of healthy foods, exercising, and getting adequate sleep. When we don't do these things we make it hard for our bodies to stay healthy and to grow and develop as they should, especially during this important time of puberty. Today, we will talk about how technology fits into this picture, especially when it comes to sleep and **body image**.

Ask the class: What did you notice about your habits this week? How did the pillars of health affect your mood, sleep, habits, etc.?



Step 2 (5 minutes): Healthy Habits + Hygiene

Another area where it is important to develop healthy habits is your personal hygiene. As you grow and mature, you become responsible for keeping your body clean and healthy. (Parents wash and change their young children, keeping them clean and healthy. When you are bigger, you take care of yourself). The things you do to keep yourself clean are your hygiene habits. Your hygiene is important for your health.



- Shower or bathe each day (during puberty the body produces more sweat)
- Use deodorant (when sweat mixes with the bacteria on your skin it produces body odor)
- Brush your teeth in the morning and at night
- Cut your nails once a week
- Brush your hair

Maintaining healthy habits in each of these areas is important for your entire life, but especially in puberty when your body is growing into a mature adult, and many changes are happening quickly. As a result, you need good nutrition and lots of exercise and sleep.

Making good choices in these areas now will help you to develop a strong and healthy brain, healthy hormones, healthy body systems, ultimately leading to a healthier you.

Step 3 (10 minutes): Impact of Technology on the Brain and Health

As you know: because the brain is the organizing center for all this activity, **things that affect your brain will also affect your physical and emotional health.** One thing that impacts your brain? Technology use!

Technology gives us lots of opportunities to connect and have fun.



Maybe your grandparents live far away and you FaceTime them from your family's iPad or iPhone. It's great to be able to do this! Technology can also help us learn many new things or see things in a way that we would never have been able to do 50 years ago.

Technology also carries risks, such as distraction from what's happening around us (have you ever seen someone almost walk into something because they're too busy texting to look where they're going?) Technology also distracts us from relationships as we lose quality family time or are not fully present to friends or others if we're together, but on our phones.

Technology impacts brain development and health! How so?

You might skip a meal to keep scrolling on Instagram or watching Tiktok videos.
Do you know that when you skip a meal, your body sees this as a mini-emergency?



It starts to produce stress hormones. This might not be such a big deal once in a while, but if we do it a lot, it can cause us to not feel very well. It also affects our blood sugar levels, which means that we can get cranky and irritable. Regularly skipping meals can also affect your metabolism, because your body thinks you are in a state of famine! This

can signal your body to gain weight unnecessarily, if you do this a lot.

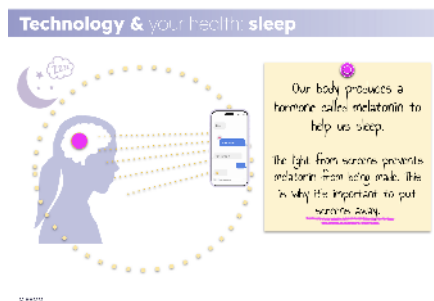
You might stay up really late at night to watch YouTube when you should have been asleep three hours ago! This has very real effects on our body and brain.



When tech use affects sleep, this has negative effects on our ability to pay attention, learn, and remember things in school. It can also make you feel more worried or sad. Sleep regulates our hormones. When we don't get enough sleep, this triggers the release of the **stress hormone** cortisol, which makes us feel annoyed, anxious and moody.



Did you know: our bodies produce a hormone called melatonin to help us rest.

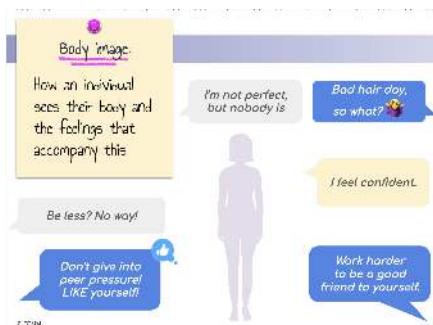


The light from phones and other devices prevents the body from producing proper

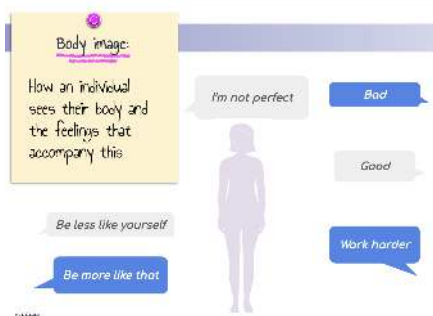
amounts of melatonin. So, the solution is really simple: put screens completely away before bedtime.

Step 4 (5 minutes): Introduce Body Image + Health

What is **body image**? Body image is how an individual girl sees her own body, and the feelings that go along with this viewpoint. This is a very normal time in your life to be thinking more about your body as it grows and changes. But, instead of comparing your body to the girls around you, or to the girls or women on social media or in shows, talk with a trusted grown up to learn and focus on what is healthy and best for **you**.



You know yourself better than anyone else! Each girl will grow at her own pace. And depending on her genetics and the health choices that she makes, each girl will grow into a unique, strong, beautiful woman.



It is so important not to spend a lot of time comparing ourselves to girls and women on social media. **Spending time on Instagram seeing what other girls are wearing and what their bodies look like, can make you feel like your body doesn't measure up.** Have you ever felt this before? Did you know that a lot of girls feel this way? Did you know that almost everyone has felt this way at one point or another?



The people who created Instagram have admitted that using their app causes young women to view themselves more negatively. As many as 1 out of 3 teen girls feel worse about their bodies as a result of time spent on social media! This is not OK.

Comparing ourselves to the lives of others on social media is not good for body image, our health or our happiness. Negative body image increases our stress and anxiety, which harms our hormones and our health. Go against the grain; don't give in to the peer pressure!



Instead of feeling like a collection of body parts (lips, breasts, hips, legs, hair), we need to remember that we are a whole person, valuable as we are.

Make an effort to think and say nice things about yourself, your abilities, and your looks. Negative self-talk is a habit, just like any other habit. If you find yourself thinking negatively about yourself after time online, that's the moment to put the phone down and do something you enjoy. Your physical health and mood will improve!

Step 5 (10 minutes): Case Study: Aaliyah

Divide students into small groups, and pass out the **Case Study: Aaliyah** worksheet.

Give groups a few minutes to read and fill in the answers on their worksheet as a group.
Then, bring the class back together to go over their answers.



CONCLUSION: Health Checklist Challenge!

Handout the **Health Checklist: Media** edition to all students.

Given what you now know about how your brain responds to social media, TV and time on screens, this week we'll take the **Health Checklist: Media** edition challenge!



In addition to the three pillars of health: nutrition, exercise and sleep, this checklist includes quality time versus time on media and asks you to reflect on how you feel after time online. **The goal is to pay attention to:**

- ☐ Do I feel more or less positive after I use social media?
- ☐ Do I feel more or less confident in my choices, abilities, and interests ...
- ☐ Do I feel more or less grateful ... after I use social media?

Maturity means making excellent choices

Check in with yourself:

- ☐ Do I feel 🥳 or 😞 after I use social media?
- ☐ Do I feel 🥳 or 😞 confident about myself, my abilities and my interests after I use social media?
- ☐ Do I feel 🥳 or 😞 grateful for the things that I have in my life after I use social media?

FEMM

Today we learned more about how nutrition, exercise and sleep affect our body and mind. We also learned that the media, images and content we consume affects our body image and our health. Part of growing to maturity means making excellent choices when it comes to our health and healthy body image.

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- Papageorgiou, A., Fisher, C. & Cross, D. (2022). “Why don’t I look like her?” How adolescent girls view social media and its connection to body image. *BMC Women's Health*, 22. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12905-022-01845-4>
- Pedalino, F., & Camerini, A. L. (2022). Instagram Use and Body Dissatisfaction: The Mediating Role of Upward Social Comparison with Peers and Influencers among Young Females. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 19(3), 1543. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19031543>
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