**Healthy body**

Think about things you can do that affect the health of your body.

Draw a picture of you doing something that is **healthy** for your body.

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| **Me doing something that is healthy for my body** |

Now, draw a picture of you doing something that is **unhealthy** for your body.

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| **Me doing something that is unhealthy for my body** |

*Biology > Big idea BHD: Health and disease > Topic BHD1: What are health and disease? > Key concept BHD1.1: Good and ill health*

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| **Diagnostic question** |
| **Healthy body** |

**Overview**

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| Learning focus: | The physical health and the mental health of an organism can range from good to ill, and are affected by numerous factors. |
| Observable learning outcome: | Identify factors associated with good and ill physical health in humans, other animals, and plants. |
| Question type: | Drawing |
| Key words: | Health, disease |

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| **P** | **PRIOR UNDERSTANDING**  This diagnostic question probes understanding of ideas that are usually taught at age 5-11, to aid transition from earlier stages of learning. |

**What does the research say?**

Research suggests that children up to age 11 primarily equate healthiness with eating a healthy diet and being physically active (Hesketh et al., 2005; Protudjer et al., 2010).

When children aged 5-9 in Australia (Brindal et al., 2012), 9-11 in the US (Reeve and Bell, 2009) and 14-15 in Turkey (Çetin et al., 2013) were asked to draw and write about healthy and unhealthy things, most of the students’ answers related to food and drink (over 60% in the US study) and physical activity. Emotional or mental health was not commonly depicted or described by the children up to age 11 (although depictions of healthy activities usually included people who were smiling), but featured more commonly in answers from the children aged 14-15. Ideas about social health and wellbeing were rarely seen. A separate study found that some adolescent children also referred to fresh air in relation to healthiness (O’Higgins, Sixsmith and Gabhainn, 2010).

Asking children to draw, discuss and write is an established technique for probing their understanding of health and disease, which has been said to enhance participation by children; the drawing aspect in particular enables children to convey personal preferences and concepts that may be beyond their current vocabulary (Wetton and McWhirter, 1998; Backett-Milburn and McKie, 1999; Harrison, 2002).

**Ways to use this question**

Students should complete the drawing tasks individually (the drawings will be discussed in small groups in the response activity ‘Improving physical health’). To reduce sensitivities when the drawings are shared, students could be told **not** to put their names on their drawings.

*Differentiation*

In some cases it may be helpful to prompt students to think about things they do on a healthy day, or things they have been told to do (by parents/teachers/TV/books) that are good for their health.

**Equipment**

For each student:

* pencils, pens or crayons
* paper (if not drawing on the student worksheet)

**Expected answers**

There is likely to be a wide range of depictions, but in the studies by Reeve & Bell and Brindal et al. most drawings were categorised as relating to either dietary habits or physical activity; very few children drew pictures related to both. Depictions of hygiene may also be seen.

 

*Examples of children’s drawings on the theme “Me being healthy” (from Brindal et al., 2012)*

**How to respond - what next?**

Asking children to draw, discuss and write is an established technique for probing their understanding of health and disease (Wetton and McWhirter, 1998; Harrison, 2002). Thus, the drawings that students have produced could be used as the basis for small group discussions, which give students the opportunity to explore their thinking and encourage social construction of new ideas (meaning making) through dialogue.

The following BEST ‘response activity’ describes just such a small group discussion activity and could be used in follow-up to this diagnostic question:

* Response activity: Improving physical health

**Acknowledgments**

Developed by Alistair Moore (UYSEG), from techniques described by Wetton and McWhirter (1998), Harrison (2002), Reeve and Bell (2009), and Brindal et al. (2012).

Images: hand holding pencil - pixabay.com/HeatherPaque (1515895)

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