

Making Responsible Decisions

You will learn . . .

- steps to follow to make responsible decisions.
- steps to follow to resist negative peer pressure.

Vocabulary

- priority, 19
- peer pressure, 20
- resistance skills, 21

Many of the choices you make affect your health. You can choose to avoid risk behaviours and lessen your chances of illness and injury. Choosing to make responsible decisions keeps you and others healthy and safe.



How to Make Responsible Decisions

Making responsible decisions about your health has many benefits. Responsible decisions will help you avoid injury and illness and improve your self-esteem. Some decisions may have little effect in the short term, but others have long-term effects. For instance, the decision to avoid smoking cigarettes may have its biggest payoff years down the road.

When you make a decision, you reveal what you value most. You call something that you value a **priority**, something that deserves first attention. To make a responsible decision, clearly describe the situation. Then:

- 1. Identify your choices.** That is, list the possible decisions you might make. Share the list with a parent or another trusted adult.
- 2. Evaluate each choice. Use the Guidelines for Making Responsible Decisions™.** These are questions you ask about each of the choices. If any of the answers is “no,” then that choice is not responsible.
 - Is it healthful?
 - Is it safe?
 - Is it legal?
 - Does it show respect for myself and others?
 - Does it follow my family’s guidelines?
 - Does it demonstrate that I have good character?
- 3. Tell what the responsible decision is. Check this out with your parent or another trusted adult.**
- 4. Evaluate your decision.** Did your decision have the results that you expected?

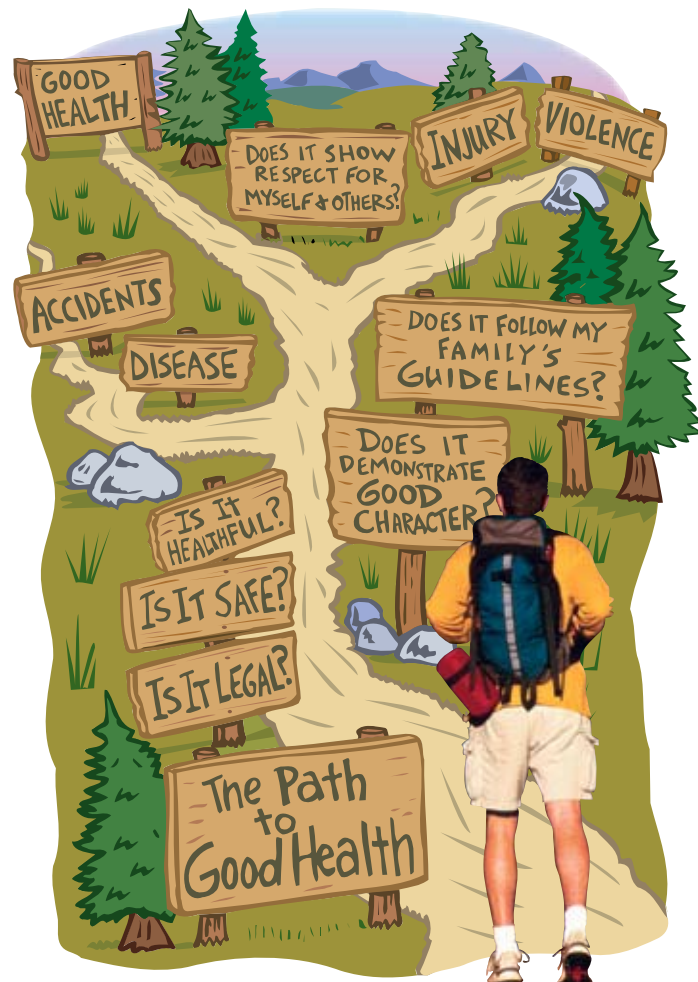
 **What is a responsible decision?**

ACTIVITY

On Your Own
FOR SCHOOL OR HOME

Chart Your Chores

Ask a parent or guardian how you could contribute at home. Decide to assume some new responsibilities, such as washing the dishes without being asked. Design a chart of chores you could do. Try to help out with a new task each week.





Consumer Wise

Sole Searching

You have been saving for new sneakers. You just found out that you can buy sneakers for half the price, but they are not name brand. It is your friend's birthday tomorrow. If you buy the name brand sneakers, you will not be able to afford to buy your friend a present. With two classmates, act out your response to this situation, using the Guidelines for Making Responsible Decisions™.



Resisting Negative Peer Pressure

Peer pressure is influence or pressure that people of a similar age place on a person to behave in a certain way. Peer pressure can have positive results. For example, friendly competition with classmates may encourage you to work harder to do well on your math test.

Peer pressure can have negative results, too. It might tempt you to make wrong decisions. For example, you might be pressured to engage in risk behaviours such as smoking or riding a bicycle without a helmet.

Peer pressure can be hard to resist. You may worry that people will laugh at you if you do not join in the risk behaviour. You may think your friends will get angry. You may feel that you have no choice. You *do* have a choice, though. You are responsible for the choices you make.



CRITICAL THINKING

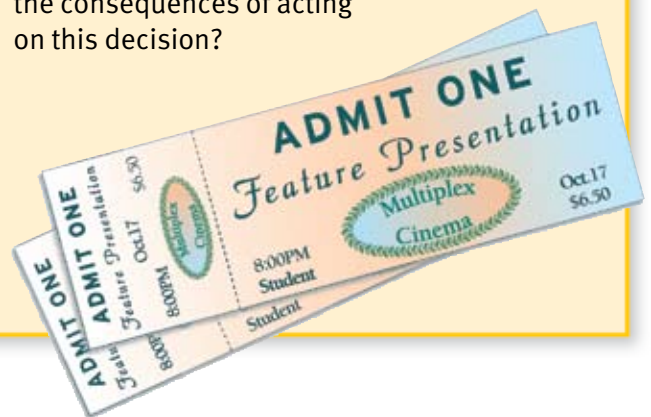
Make Responsible Decisions

Suppose your friends plan to see a movie that you know your parents won't approve of. Your friends pressure you to go and you want to see the movie, but you don't want to break family guidelines. You need to make a responsible decision.

- 1 Identify your choices.** What are your options? You could make up a story for your parents and go to the movie. You could tell your friends that you won't join them. Which choice will you make?
- 2 Evaluate each choice. Use the Guidelines for Making Responsible Decisions™.** Ask yourself the following questions:
 - Is it healthful?
 - Is it legal?
 - Will this decision result in actions that show respect for myself and others?

- Will this decision result in actions that follow the guidelines of responsible adults, such as my parents and other responsible adults?
- Will this decision result in actions that demonstrate good character?

- 3 Tell what the responsible decision is.** Ask your parents or a trusted adult to help you make the right decision.
- 4 Evaluate your decision.** What are the consequences of acting on this decision?



Resistance Skills

Resistance skills are skills that help a person say “no” to an action or leave a situation. The following demonstrates resistance skills for peer pressure.

1. **Say “no” in a firm voice.**
2. **Give reasons for saying “no.”** You may need to repeat your “no” several times.
3. **Be certain your behaviour matches your words.** Use nonverbal behaviour to match your verbal behaviour. Avoid situations in which there will be pressure to make wrong decisions. Avoid people who make wrong decisions. Resist pressure to engage in illegal behaviour. Influence others to make responsible decisions.
4. **Ask an adult for help if you need help.**

Using resistance skills is not easy. Some people may laugh at you or argue with you. Practising the skills can help. Work with a friend or a parent. And remember—your decisions reflect your character.

 **What is peer pressure?**




▲ **Make the responsible decision to wear proper safety equipment.**

LESSON 3 REVIEW

Review Concepts

1. **List** the steps to follow to make responsible decisions.
2. **Recall** the skills you can use to resist peer pressure.

Critical Thinking

3. **Compare and contrast** negative and positive peer pressure.
4. **Explain** How could using resistance skills help build character?
5.  **Make Responsible Decisions** Why is it not a responsible decision to drink alcohol?