

INVESTIGATING MEDIA MESSAGES

Model

The media (television, movies, radio, newspapers and magazines, and the Internet) have two common goals:

1. To entertain and inform you
2. To sell products

One way the media sell products is through advertisements. Advertisements often make claims such as: “Mint•E Mouthwash freshens your breath and makes people want to be near you!”

“Eating Nutsy Cereal provides you with all the vitamins you need to get through the day!”

“Listening to the new CD by Jane81 will put you in a good mood!” Each of these products claims to positively affect your physical, mental/emotional, or social health. When you understand the ways advertisers try to convince you to buy their products, you can make better choices about your health.



Practice

You have observed how advertisements in the media try to influence choices that affect your health. See how well you can detect these advertisers' messages. Look at each ad below to determine how the advertiser is trying to influence you. As you look at each ad, answer these questions:

1. How does the advertiser suggest that this product will help you?
2. Which side of the health triangle does the ad claim would be most affected by using this product?



Compare your analysis with those of several classmates to see if you agree.



Apply/Assess

Media are just one type of outside influence on health choices. Friends and peers can also have a strong influence on the health of other teens. What kind of influence do you have on your friends and peers?

Use what you've learned about advertisements to influence someone your age to make a healthy choice. Design your own advertisement for a product. The product should contribute to the physical, mental/emotional, or social health of teens. Use poster board and colored pencils, markers, or crayons to create your advertisement. Use pictures and words to send the message: "This product will help you."

Present your advertisement to other students in your class. In your presentation, include the message you are trying to send and the side of the health triangle that would be most affected by using this product.



Analyzing Influences

Both internal and external influences affect your choices. These influences may include:

Internal

- Interests
- Likes/dislikes
- Fears
- Curiosity

External

- Family
- Friends
- Media
- Culture

Self-Check

- Did I advertise a product that helps teens?
- Does my product affect the physical, mental/emotional, or social health of teens?