

## Who Influences Your Food Choices?

**Directions** Think about the food choices you make. Many different people may affect those decisions. Fill in the chart below. Then discuss in class how the influences on food choices can change over time.

Questions		Family	Friends and Peers	Teachers, Doctors, Other Adults	Advertising
1	Does this influence have a BIG, MEDIUM, or SMALL impact on your food choices?				
2	What foods do you choose because of this influence, if any? (Otherwise write "none.")				
3	What foods do you avoid because of this influence, if any? (Otherwise write "none.")				
4	Does this influence encourage healthy eating patterns? How?				
5	Does this influence encourage unhealthy eating patterns? How?				

## Food Fads Among Friends

**Directions** Read the information below about peer pressure and food. Then on separate paper write an appropriate reply to each of the numbered comments that follow.

### The Influence of Peers

Peer pressure can lead teens to change their eating habits. This may be good or bad. Teens with healthy food habits may influence others to eat better. On the other hand, some pressure may come to follow fad diets. Some of these diets leave out essential food groups, which can be harmful. Fad dieters may get sick, and they almost always regain the weight they lost. For good health, get plenty of exercise and eat a well-balanced variety of healthful foods.

While obesity leads to health complications, thinking too much about weight causes other problems. Teens who obsess about their weight may adopt a dangerously unbalanced diet or develop serious eating disorders. Calling someone fat is not only unkind, but it can also contribute to low self-esteem and depression.

### What Would You Reply?

1. Your friend tells you: "If you want to lose weight fast, you should only drink liquids. That is what I'm going to try."
2. Your friends tell you: "We are going to start bringing snacks from home so we can eat fresh fruits instead of what is in the vending machine."
3. Your friend tells you: "It is too hard to keep track of how much fat is in which food. I have decided just to avoid fat completely."
4. Your friends tell you: "We are forming a group to try foods from different countries. Sometimes we might eat at a restaurant, and other times we might cook. Would you like to join us?"
5. Your friend tells you: "No matter which diet I try, I'm just too fat. I only eat 800 calories a day, and I still weigh too much. I think about food all the time."
6. Your friends tell you: "We have decided to be vegetarians. What about you?"