21. Risk Assessment
Online Surveys
(computer-based session)

Objectives

Learners will:

• Understand the term “risk factor.”
• Be able to name two lifestyle risk factors (e.g., smoking cigarettes is a risk factor for lung cancer; overeating is a risk factor for diabetes).
• Complete three online risk assessments and the accompanying worksheet.

Materials Needed

Board or chart paper
Markers
Computers with Internet access *(required)*
Pictures for discussion in activity 2
Handouts: 21a (Risk Factors), 21b and 21c (Look at the photo), 21d (What’s Your Risk?),

Background Information for the Teacher

*From the Harvard University School of Public Health website, www.hsph.harvard.edu/cancer/risk/index.htm:*

**Risk Factors** are those things that increase or decrease the risk of developing a disease. They can be lifestyle factors (like diet and activity level), exposures (like air pollution), and personal characteristics (like family history and age). While we can’t do anything about risk factors that are out of our control, it’s been shown that lifestyle can have a huge impact on cancer risk. Healthy choices could prevent over half of all new cancer cases in the United States.

Activity 1

Introduction

1. Tell the learners they are going to do find out their risk for some diseases. Hand out worksheet 21a, Risk Factors. Read and discuss the first section.
2. Read the first risk factor on the checklist as a class. Ask learners if it is a risk factor that we can change. Ask learners to work with a partner to complete the checklist.
3. Check answers as a class.

Activity 2

Taking Risk Assessments

1. In preparation for completing the online risk assessment, hand out worksheet 21b (Look at the photo).
2. Show the photo of the man “Sam.” As a class, answer the questions about him, making sure that learners understand all the questions.
3. In small groups, give the learners pictures of different people. Give them the questionnaire for a man (21b) or woman (21c) as appropriate.
4. Ask learners to share the picture, and talk about their photo (e.g., “This is Lisa. She is 42 years old. She doesn’t smoke,” etc.)

6. Point out the five listings on the left side of the screen: Cancer, Diabetes, Heart Disease, Osteoporosis and Stroke. Review the terms, if necessary. [Note: Use the translation worksheets from the Health History lesson plan, if needed.]

7. Demonstrate how to access information and answers. Use the information that you collected about “Sam” to answer the questions.

8. Go through the diabetes screening. [Notes: (1) Discourage learners from reading the entire web page; (2) You may want to add some negative lifestyle factors — such as smoking — so that learners will see some risk factors that can be changed.]

9. Ask learners to do the diabetes risk factors. Then ask them to complete the worksheet on their own. Show the results, and talk about it. If there are any tips, talk about those.

10. Repeat for the subsequent examples on the worksheet.

**Activity 3 Additional Risk Assessments**

(If time permits)


2. Demonstrate the assessment [Note: Use your real or imaginary information.]

3. Ask learners to complete the screening alone.
Sam
Lisa
Sofia
Brian
Lan
Yasmeen
Luis
Monique
Risk Factors

What is a risk factor?
It is something that may increase or decrease your chance of getting a disease.
For example, smoking cigarettes is a risk factor for lung cancer.
A parent who had heart disease is a risk factor for getting heart disease.

What are some other risk factors? Write them here:
Not eating vegetables, not eating fiber, mother with breast cancer, not exercising, stress, eating too much salt, etc.

Some risk factors we cannot change. For example, we can’t change our family history. Some risk factors we can change. For example, we can stop smoking cigarettes. This lowers the risk of getting cancer.

Here are some possible risk factors (not for all diseases). Check the box for Can Change or Can’t Change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk factor</th>
<th>Can Change</th>
<th>Can’t Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eating a lot of refined foods</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(for example: white bread, pasta, white rice)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating very few vegetables</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating very little fruit.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father had heart disease</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living in a big city</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother had cancer</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not exercising</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overweight</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking cigarettes</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High blood pressure</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Look at the photo. Answer the questions about the man.

What's his name?
How old is he?
Is he male or female?
Does he have diabetes?
Does he have heart disease?
Does he have cancer? What kind of cancer?
What's his height?
What's his weight?
What is his waist size?
Does he exercise 30 minutes every day?
Does he drink alcohol?

a. Does anyone in his family have diabetes?

b. Does anyone in his family have heart disease?

c. Does anyone in his family have cancer?

Does he eat **3 or more servings** of whole grains per day (wheat bread, whole grain pasta, brown rice, oatmeal, whole grain breakfast cereal, bran or popcorn)?

* A serving is one slice of bread, 1 ounce of breakfast cereal or ½ cup of cooked cereal, pasta or rice.

Does he eat **more than 3 servings** of refined starch per day (white bread, white rice, white pasta, white potatoes or low fiber cereals like crispy rice and corn flakes)?

* A serving is one slice of bread, 1 ounce of breakfast cereal or ½ cup of cooked cereal, pasta or rice.

Does he eat oil-based salad dressing or use liquid vegetable oil for cooking on most days?

Does he usually eat butter, lard, red meat, cheese or whole milk 2 or more times per day?

Does he take a multivitamin?
Look at the photo. Answer the questions about the woman.

What's her name?

How old is she?

Is she male or female?

Does she have diabetes?

Does she have heart disease?

Does she have cancer?  What kind of cancer?

What's her height?

What's her weight?

What is her waist size?

Does she exercise 30 minutes every day?

Does she drink alcohol?

d. Does anyone in her family have diabetes

e. Does anyone in her family have heart disease

f. Does anyone in her family have cancer?

Does she eat 3 or more servings of whole grains per day (wheat bread, whole grain pasta, brown rice, oatmeal, whole grain breakfast cereal, bran or popcorn)?

A serving is one slice of bread, 1 ounce of breakfast cereal or ½ cup of cooked cereal, pasta or rice.

Does she eat more than 3 servings of refined starch per day (white bread, white rice, white pasta, white potatoes or low fiber cereals like crispy rice and corn flakes)?

A serving is one slice of bread, 1 ounce of breakfast cereal or ½ cup of cooked cereal, pasta or rice.

Does she eat oil-based salad dressing or use liquid vegetable oil for cooking on most days?

Does she usually eat butter, lard, red meat, cheese or whole milk 2 or more times per day?

Does she take a multivitamin?
What’s Your Risk?

Open the website www.yourdiseaserisk.harvard.edu.

Click on Diabetes.

Click on the blue arrow.

Answer the questions. Then click on next.

My health risk of diabetes is...

- Much below average
- Below average
- Average
- High

Risk factors I can change:

Open the website www.yourdiseaserisk.harvard.edu.

Click on Heart Disease.

Click on the blue arrow.

Answer the questions. Then click on next.

My health risk of heart disease is...

- Much below average
- Below average
- Average
- High

Risk factors I can change:
Open the website www.yourdiseaserisk.harvard.edu.

Click on Cancer.

*Women:* Choose Breast Cancer.
*Men:* Choose Prostate Cancer.

Click on the blue arrow.

Answer the questions. Then click on next.

*My health risk of [breast or prostate] cancer is…*

☐ Much below average ☐ Below average ☐ Average ☐ High

*Risk factors I can change:*

________________________________________

Open the website www.yourdiseaserisk.harvard.edu.

Click on Cancer.

Choose another type of cancer. Write the name here: _________________________

Click on the blue arrow.

Answer the questions. Then click on next.

*My health risk of [name of cancer] cancer is…*

☐ Much below average ☐ Below average ☐ Average ☐ High

*Risk factors I can change:*

What’s my risk?
You have **below average risk:** You will probably not get this.
You have an **average risk:** This may happen.
You have **above average risk:** You are more likely than most people to have this.