



**Topic:** Healthy Living

**Badge:** Women's Health

**Suggested Supplies:** Mood tracker, poster board, writing & coloring utensils, computer with internet access

**Helpful websites:**

Center for Young Women's Health

<https://youngwomenshealth.org/>

Nothing's more important than good health-and, as I women, we have unique health issues at every stage of our lives. How can you make the health decisions that are right for you, and what kinds of support are out there to guide you? Do this badge to find out! Identify health topics facing women in your community and across the globe, explore those that matter most to you, and-in the last step-reach out and raise awareness to spread good health to the women in your world.

Steps:

**Step 1: Investigate the tests that help women stay healthy**

Screenings are medical tests that can spot problems before they turn into something serious. For instance, you might have your blood pressure checked to test for general health, a mammogram to test for breast cancer, or a Pap smear to test for STDs and cervical cancer. Become familiar with the tests that are available for women to help us manage our good health throughout our lives.

CHOOSE ONE:

**Find five steps to good health and prevention.** Who should get a flu shot? Why does a high cholesterol level put someone at risk for diabetes? How is skin cancer preventable? You might focus on one part of your body, such as your heart, skin, or bones, and recommend the proper nutrition, exercise, and screenings to take care of it.

OR

**Speak with a health professional.** Speak with one via phone or e-mail to discuss tests and procedures that are important for women's health. Prepare some questions in advance.

OR

**Create a women's health poster or brochure.** In it, include a chart showing all the procedures and tests you will need from puberty through menopause. What is involved with each procedure? At what age should girls start having each of them? How often? What are the benefits of each test?

## **Step 2: Find out how fads and beauty practices impact health**

Fads generally fit into one of three categories. In the first category are things we do to our internal systems, including diets and eating fads. In the second category are things we do cosmetically, such as cosmetic surgery, tattoos, manicures, piercings, hair dye, wearing contacts, tanning, etc. The third category is habits: smoking, using drugs, drinking alcohol, wearing high heels, carrying heavy purses and backpacks, using portable listening devices, or not wearing protective sports equipment. Pick one issue in any of the three categories, then do one of the choices below.

CHOOSE ONE:

**Interview a medical expert about a health or beauty fad.** This might be a foot specialist who can share the problems brought on by wearing high heels or a skin doctor who can talk about infections from tattoos, piercings, or manicures and pedicures. Or the expert could be a hearing specialist with info on dangerous decibel levels. Find out how prevalent the problems are and what you can do to protect yourself.

OR

**Follow a fad through time.** Trace stories, evidence, and statistics about one fad over a period of at least 20 years. Try to speak to someone with personal experience. Was that person offered any warnings about possible complications or infections? What impact does the experience have on their life today? Take time to understand the long-term effects of the activity.

OR

**Explore fads and beauty in other places.** Other cultures have different views on beauty and health issues, such as weight, tattoos, piercings, and more. Gather images of women from other places--from international magazines, online, or in books--and make a beauty collage to compare the different outward expressions of beauty. How have those images of beauty impacted the culture where you live? What do you find beautiful? What makes the women in your life beautiful? You could include images from your own life as well.

### **Step 3: Focus on techniques to help you stay emotionally healthy**

How you feel mentally impacts how you feel physically. Emotional conditions, such as stress and anxiety, can lead to alcohol or drug abuse, dangerous eating habits, and erratic sleep cycles, all of which can lead to physical problems. Paying attention to your emotional health is as important as overseeing your physical health, and this will be true throughout your lifetime.

CHOOSE ONE:

**Get to know your moods.** For two weeks, record your mood levels three times a day. At the end of each day, read them over, and then make notes: What do you think triggered each strong emotion? Did you get enough sleep? Did you exercise? Where are you in your menstrual cycle? See if you find any specific pattern to your moods. Then find three recommendations from a reliable health source on healthy ways to lift your mood. (You might try the Truth Seeker badge to help you determine the reliability of information!)

OR

**Explore healthy relationships.** All our relationships affect our health those with friends, family, romantic partners, mentors, peers at large. Knowing the research can provide helpful ideas and tips for our own lives. Find three studies that offer some insight into relationships. For instance, some studies have found that close friendships can lengthen our life spans, that abusive relationships erode our health, and that a good marriage makes us happier. Other ideas you might look into include:

- What are the differences between how men and women communicate? . Is there such a thing as a healthy breakup?
- How can we choose our friends and relationships to increase our happiness?
- How does family life fit into mental health?

OR

**Explore a psychological topic.** Interview a medical expert or read three or more articles about a topic you're interested in: perhaps depression, teen suicide, eating disorders, anxiety, or schizophrenia. Find out the causes, how widespread the issue is, and what treatments exist. Do more women than men suffer from it? If so, why might this be-and does the issue have a greater impact on younger or older women? Are there prevention measures available?

#### **Step 4: Take a closer look at a women's health issue**

Choose a health issue that resonates with you, and explore its impact on girls and women. Perhaps it's something that has affected someone in your own family or another woman close to you. Perhaps it's something you discovered in one of the previous steps and want to look at through a different lens. (The boxes on pages 6 and 7 also have some ideas.) In this step, check into causes, consequences, and possible preventative measures and treatments.

CHOOSE ONE:

**Take a global look at the issue.** In what country/region is the health issue most commonly found? Is it avoidable? How? What health support do women in that area have access to? What can be done to help?

OR

**Take a local look at the issue.** Find out the statistics for the issue in your area. Talk to a local health care professional to explore the impact on your community. Are there any protective measures or awareness campaigns in place?

OR

**Take a close-up look at the issue.** Interview a medical expert or someone with firsthand experience via e-mail or phone. It might be a cancer survivor, a woman who has been treated for severe PMS, or a cardiologist who treats women. If appropriate, ask about diagnosis and treatments: What were the symptoms? What tests were taken? How was the patient treated? Can this issue be prevented?

#### **Step 5: Get the word out on a women's health topic**

Focus on one area you learned about, and inform people in your community and the women in your life. Get creative! Use one of these choices to help you frame your message.

CHOOSE ONE:

**Design a public service announcement or presentation.** Use your audio/visual skills to create a video, presentation, or Web slide show about your topic. Post it online or e-mail it to friends, or present it to one of your classes or at a place of worship, a library, or a community center. You might tie your topic into an awareness event, such as National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Prematurity Awareness Month, or World AIDS Day.

OR

**Design a prevention program!** Focus on one women's health issue and come up with a program that includes exercise, diet, and other prevention tips. Share it as a brochure, website, exhibit/poster display, or slide presentation.

**\*Once completed, this badge can be purchased at the following direct link:**

<https://www.girlscoutshop.com/SENIOR-WOMENS-HEALTH-BADGE>

**Please visit the following link to complete a quick survey on this virtual badge:**

<https://gswestok.wufoo.com/forms/virtual-badge-completion-survey/>