♡ THE TEXAS HEART INSTITUTE®

Project Heart
Activities for the Classroom

TOOLBOX
MY FAMILY HEART HEALTH TREE

Introduction
A family tree is a diagram that shows the relationships between people over several generations. Family trees can be used to learn about the history of your family, and they can teach you about your health risks. Many health conditions are genetically linked, meaning they can be passed down from generation to generation. Knowing what health conditions run in your family can help you prepare for the future. For example, making healthy choices like eating well and being physically active can reduce your risk.

Health Conditions
- *Heart Disease* - Heart disease is any disease that affects the heart or blood vessels. Heart disease kills more adults than any other health condition. Fortunately, 80% of heart disease is preventable because certain factors, called risk factors, play an important role in a person's chances of developing heart disease. Many can be controlled with a healthy diet, exercising, not smoking, and reducing stress.
- *High Blood Pressure* - High blood pressure, also called hypertension, happens when the blood vessels are narrowed. Not only does the heart have to work harder to pump the blood, the force of the blood is high enough to damage the vessel walls. This is the most common heart disease risk factor. It is also the number one cause of a stroke.
- *High Cholesterol* - Your body needs fat to function properly, and your liver makes all the fat your body needs for this purpose. High cholesterol is when there is too much bad fat in your blood. When you have too much bad fat in your blood, plaque builds up on the walls of your blood vessels and can cause heart attacks and strokes when it ruptures.
- *Obesity* - Our bodies are made up of water, fat, protein, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals. Obesity means that you have too much body fat. Obesity is the number one indicator of potential cardiovascular diseases. Excess fat can cause high blood pressure, increase bad cholesterol and contribute to developing diabetes.

- *Stroke* - A stroke is a heart attack of the brain. A stroke happens when one of the blood vessels to the brain becomes blocked by a clot or bursts. When that happens your brain can't get the blood and oxygen it needs. Strokes are the number one cause of serious, long-term disability and the number three cause of death in the U.S.
- *Type 2 Diabetes* - People with type 2 diabetes cannot produce enough of a chemical called insulin which delivers energy from food to cells in the body. Risk factors for type 2 diabetes include being overweight or obese and being physically inactive. Heart problems are the leading cause of death among people with diabetes, especially in the case of adult-onset or type 2 diabetes.

Materials
1. Family Health Tree and apple worksheets
2. Scissors
3. Glue
4. Photos of family members
5. Crayons, markers, or colored pencils

Instructions
1. Print out the My Family Health Tree and apple worksheets.
2. Cut out enough apples to cover three generations of your family: you, your parents, and your grandparents.
3. Fill out an apple for each family member, writing their name and how you are related in the space provided. In the white circle, cut and paste a picture of your family member. If you don't have a photo, draw a picture of them.
4. To fill out the "Health Issues" section, you can interview each relative or ask a parent for help. Use the "Health Conditions" list above for examples.
5. To begin building your family health tree, paste your apple at the top of the tree on the My Family Health Tree worksheet.
6. Directly under your apple, paste your parents' apples side-by-side..
7. Under each parent, paste each set of grandparents' apples. Your final tree should look like pyramid.

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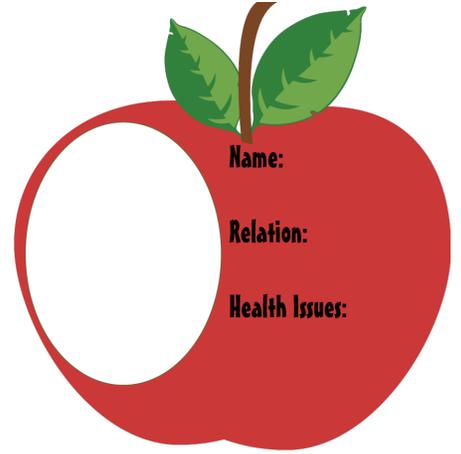Activities for the Classroom
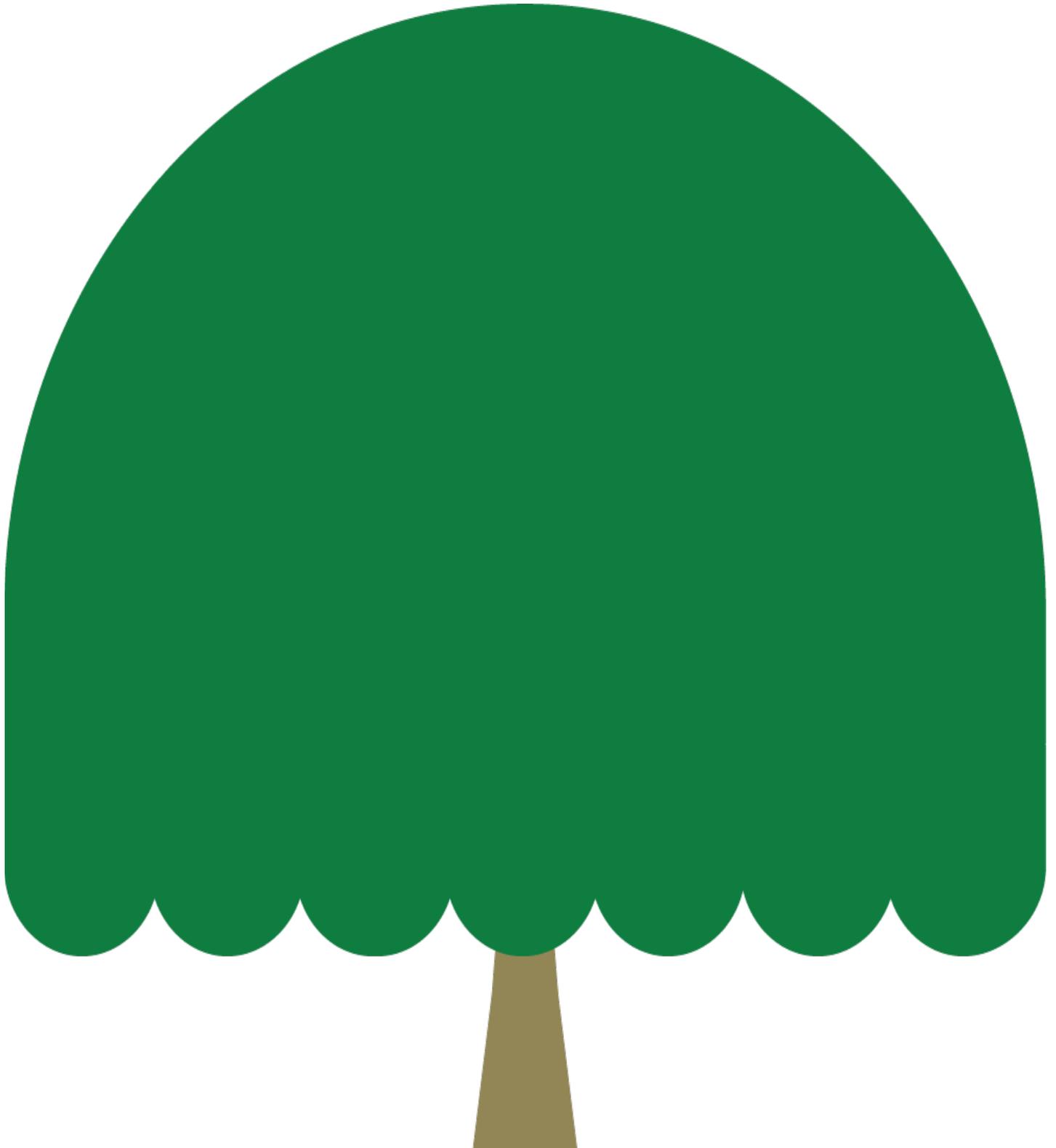
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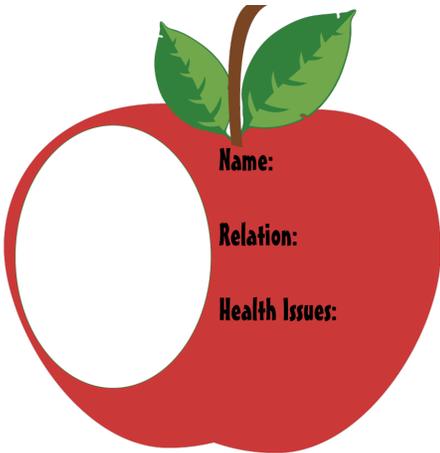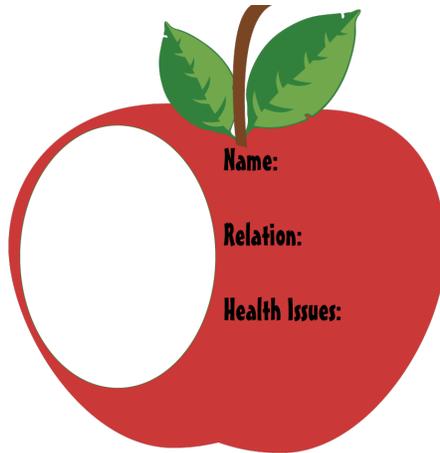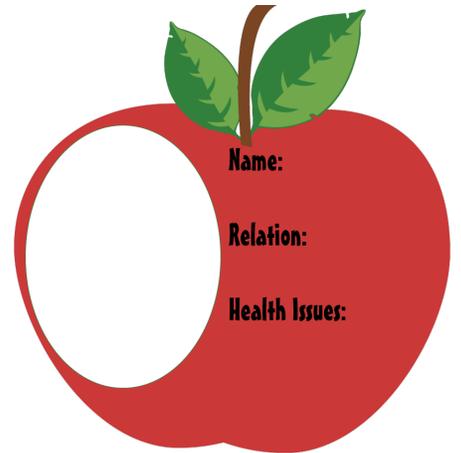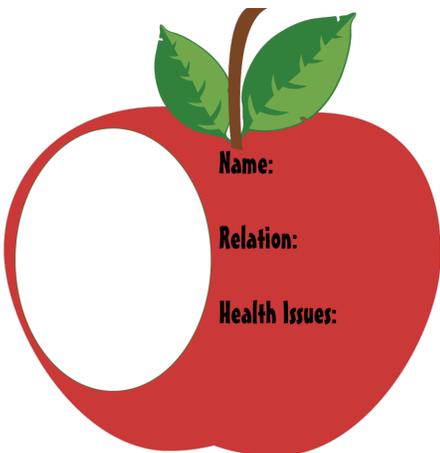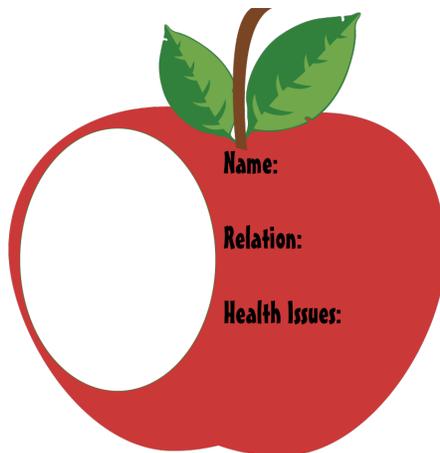# FAMILY TREE APPLES
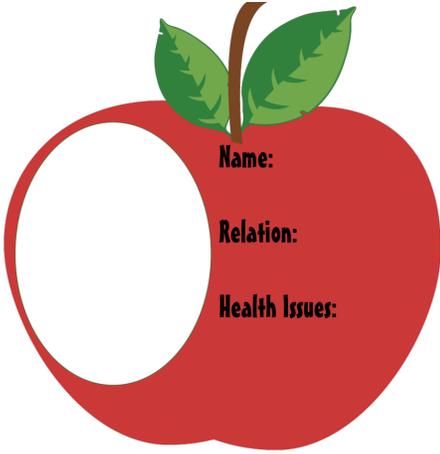
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Relation:

Health Issues:

Name:

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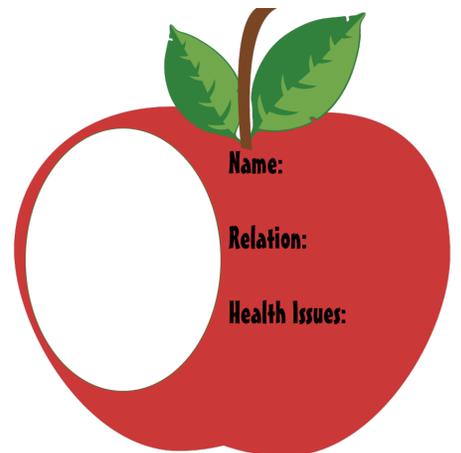Relation:

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Health Issues:

Toolbox
Cool-E's Example Family Tree

Name: Cool-E

Relation: Me!

Health Issues: None

Name: Art-R.E.

Relation: Dad

Health Issues: High blood pressure

Name: Em-D

Relation: Mom

Health Issues: High cholesterol

Name: Grandpappy Valve

Relation: Grandfather

Health Issues: Heart Disease and Stroke

Name: Granny Circuit

Relation: Grandmother

Health Issues: None

Name: Grandpa Crank

Relation: Grandfather

Health Issues: High Blood Pressure

Name: Grams Bolt

Relation: Grandmother

Health Issues: Type 2 Diabetes