

When Christina Got Smart: Preventing diabetes and heart disease

NR-000-14

This class has a skit which can be performed in a WIC classroom by two people. One of them has the part of Christina, a mom with two children who is on WIC. The other person plays all the other parts, including the phone, piece of chocolate cake and a bag of potato chips. In addition, the WIC class has lines which they say in unison during the play.

The main characters can be played by two staff members or WIC participants, if you have any willing to try. Everyone in the play, including the WIC class, may have a copy of the script and read it throughout. The lines are color coded to make reading them easier. **Christina's lines are in blue. The second person's are in green. And the class' lines are in bold red type.** The class can be printed in color off of the WIC website: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/wichd/nut/nrlessons-nut.shtm>. In place of giving everyone in the class a script, you can use cue cards with the class to tell them their lines. Show the class the appropriate cue card when it is their turn to speak.

Do not worry if the skit does not go smoothly. Missed lines and the unexpected can just add to the fun. Children will also enjoy getting to participate in the dialog.

Feel free to be a ham. Use fake voices for different characters, add to the props or put in your own touches to make the skit more appealing to your audience. This is definitely an off-Broadway production!

This skit does not require a lot of space. It can be performed even in the smallest classroom.

There is a handout at the end of the class for the real WIC nutritionist to go over and for the class to take home. The real WIC nutritionist can also help to answer class questions in the middle of the skit. The class presents information about the metabolic syndrome and diabetes prevention. The term metabolic syndrome is not used, but the information in this class relates to the condition. For more information on the metabolic syndrome see:

- <http://www.clevelandclinic.org/health/health-info/docs/3000/3057.asp?index=10783>
- <http://www.diabetes.org/weightloss-and-exercise/weightloss/metabolicsyndrome.jsp>
- <http://www.mayoclinic.com/index.cfm> then click on "D" under "Find a disease or condition" to locate diabetes

Objectives:

Each person in the class will know

- why a waist measurement over 35 inches matters to their health
- one step to take to prevent diabetes or heart disease.

Materials

Copies of the script for the class and for the two actors. (If you do not have a color printer, you can Xerox the skit for the class. The class lines are in bold type and show up easily. You can highlight the lines for the actors' copies with a magic marker.)

A copy of the handout, "Why Keep Your Waistline Down?"

Props

- Picture of a phone (attached) or a cell phone
- A remote
- TV (optional)
- Can of soda
- A very large bag of chips or use the attached handout taped to a paper bag
- A big bag of cookies or use the attached handout taped to a paper bag
- Four chairs
- Sign: After Eating at Dave's Hamburgers (attached)
- Cue cards (optional, attached). One says "Don't do it Christina." The other says, "Do it Christina."
- Picture of a piece of chocolate cake (attached)
- String or ribbon, cut into 35 inch long pieces; each person in the class will take a piece home.
- Optional: String or ribbon in a different color cut into 40 inch long pieces for class members to take home to WIC dads
- Christina can wear a large sweat shirt or tee shirt stuffed with paper or pillows to make her waist very large

Introduction

To introduce the skit say something like:

Today in place of a talk or a video, we are doing a skit for you. Everyone in class also has a role. Here is a copy of the skit for you to read as we go along. The class says the lines in red, and they are easy to remember. You only have two lines. You either say, “Don’t do it, Christina” or “Do it, Christina.” At one point in the skit, everyone in the class will pretend to measure their waist with an imaginary piece of yarn. It is your chance to be a kid again in a let’s pretend game! Please join in and enjoy today’s skit with us. Here is “*When Christina Got Smart.*”

Note:

Because larger class members may be embarrassed by measuring their waist in front of others, during the skit everyone will pretend to measure their waist. Class members can take pieces of string or ribbon home to measure their waists in private.

When Christina Got Smart

ACT ONE

Christina is sitting in a chair, holding the remote, looking at TV, and eating. By her is a can of soda, a big bag of chips, a bag of cookies. She is eating and watching TV.

A person off stage pretending to be a phone goes : Ring, Ring. The person hands Christina the phone. Christina ignores the fact that the phone is handed to her, mutes the TV, takes the phone and starts talking.

- ▶ Christina: Hello, Mary. Yes, this is Christina. How am I? This was an exhausting day at work. I was tired this morning when I got up. Plus, I was late and skipped breakfast. There was no time for lunch. I'm starving. When I got the kids, they were wild. Just bouncing off the walls and fighting. I got them calmed down. They are in the bedroom now playing a video game and eating cookies. I'm in the living room with a few minutes to myself. (She keeps eating as she is talking.) I'm too tired to even cook dinner. What, you are putting on weight too! I really am. (She reaches for another cookie.) I can't figure it out. Yes, I'm going to WIC tomorrow. I will see you there. Oh, your kids are starting to yell. Call me back later. (She reaches for the soda and chips.)

◆ **WIC class says in unison: Don't do it, Christina.**

Christina does not hear them and eats.

Christina reaches for the remote. She pretends to turn on the sound. A voice off stage pretending to be the TV announcer says: "Hungry? Come to Dave's Hamburgers where everything is bigger. Get the 5 pound burger for \$1.99, the really giant size soda for \$1.00 and super huge French fries for just 99 cents."

- ▶ Christina stands up and turns off the TV. She yells: Kids, come on. We're going to Dave's Hamburger's for supper!

◆ **The WIC class says in unison: Don't do it. Christina!**

She ignores them. She sets up four chairs to look like the seats in a car.

She gets in the driver's seat and pretends to drive.

Hold up a sign saying: Later After Eating at Dave's Hamburgers

- ▶ Christina: Kids, thank you for being so great at Dave's Hamburgers. And I'm glad that you enjoyed playing on the slide. Joseph, can you finish your hamburger?

A voice says: No, mama, I can't.

- ▶ Christina says: Give it to me and I will finish it for you. Anna, give me your left over soda to wash it down.

◆ **The WIC class says: Don't do it, Christina.** She ignores them.

Christina gets out of the car pretending to hold the leftover food.

- ▶ Christina: Time for bed kids. Go brush your teeth.

Christina moves the three extra chairs away that make up the passenger seats of the car. She sits down again at her place in front of the TV. She turns on the TV and starts to eat.

- ▶ Christina says to herself: I will eat the kid's leftovers. I just hate to waste food.

◆ **The WIC class says: Don't do it, Christina.** She ignores them.

A staff member, holding a picture of cake, comes on stage.

Voice of the cake says seductively: Christina.

- ▶ Christina hears this. She says back: What???
- Christina then says to herself: I think I'm hearing things lately.

Voice of the cake says seductively: Christina, I am the chocolate cake in the kitchen. Come to me my darling!

Christina is obviously listening to this intently.

Voice of the cake says seductively: Come to me my darling. Let me touch your lips and I will stay with you forever.

◆ **The WIC class says: Don't do it, Christina!**

Christina glares at the audience. She stands and runs towards the cake. She grabs it and pretends to eat the picture.

Dim the lights to indicate the end of Act One.

ACT TWO

The voice off stage says: The next day at WIC.

Christina comes and sits on the front row with the WIC class.

The WIC nutritionist says: Diabetes is getting to be more common in America. A big reason that people get it is our lifestyle. We sit a lot. We sit in cars, in front of the TV or a computer. Then we eat too much of foods high in fats and sugar. Some of the foods we overeat are greasy hamburgers, French fries, sodas, chips and cookies. And we don't eat just a small amount of these foods. We eat portions that are much bigger than we need. This is making many people gain weight.

- ▶ Christina turns and says to the audience: This sounds just like me, and my pants don't fit any more.

The WIC nutritionist says: There is a way to tell if you might be heading for diabetes. Will everyone take the ribbon that you have and stand up. (The nutritionist holds up a 35 inch piece of ribbon. The class and Christina pretend to also.)

The WIC nutritionist says: This ribbon is 35 inches long. Women whose waists are bigger than this may have put on enough weight to be setting themselves up to get diabetes. Men may get diabetes if their waist is bigger than 40 inches. But the good news is that anyone at this stage can lose weight and avoid or delay getting diabetes. Now, let's all pretend to put this yarn around our waists.

Christina and the WIC class all stand and pretend to measure their waists.

Christina turns around and faces the class. Christina's waist is much, much bigger than the yarn. She looks surprised. She talks quietly to the other class members around her about how large she is.

The WIC Nutritionist says: Everyone can sit down now. Women who have waists bigger than 35 inches and other conditions like high blood pressure and high cholesterol may be heading towards getting diabetes and heart disease. But you can avoid both by losing weight. To do that you need to exercise and eat healthy foods in healthy amounts.

Does anyone know somebody who has had diabetes or heart disease?

Christina raises her hand. The WIC nutritionist calls her by name: Christina.

- ▶ Christina says: My grandmother has diabetes. She has gone blind from the disease, and her brother has heart disease. He has to take a lot of pills every day and cannot work as much as he used to. I know I don't want to go through all they go through.

The WIC nutritionist says something like: Does anyone else know someone with diabetes? How are they handling having this disease? Have they had any health problems caused by the diabetes? (Allow time for the class to respond.)

Christina stands up, faces the class and the WIC nutritionist steps back.

- ▶ Christina says: I don't want diabetes or heart disease for my children or myself, I want us to be healthy. I know what I need to do, and I am going to make some changes for my family. We are going to eat much better. I'm going to give us healthy foods. Plus I won't skip breakfast again and get too hungry. We will cut off the TV and dance in the living room when I get home or go out for a walk. And I'm not going to fast food restaurants and supersizing like I have. What I'm really supersizing is me!

At this moment the chocolate cake reappears and says to Christina: Come to me my darling!

Christina takes the picture and puts it in the garbage.

◆ **The WIC class says: Do it, Christina!**

Then the large bag of potato chips comes up to Christina and says: Hey, girlfriend!

◆ **The WIC class says: Do it, Christina!**

Christina takes the bag and also throws it in the garbage.

- ▶ Christina says: Joseph, come on. (She pretends to hold his hand.) We are going to play in the park after we leave here.

◆ **The WIC class says: Do it, Christina!**

▶ Christina says: Then we are going to pick up your sister and go to the grocery store. Each of you can pick out one fruit and one vegetable to eat in the next few days. And I'm going to buy a few more that I know we need. We might get them canned, we might get them fresh or we might get them frozen. We can pick the best buys. But we don't need all those sodas, chips and cookies. I'm buying us foods on the Pyramid for us to eat. I want all of us to be healthy.

◆ **The WIC class says: Do it, Christina!**

▶ Christina turns to them and says: You bet I will! It is important.

Christina walks out the door of the classroom still pretending to hold her son's hand.

The staff member who played Christina and the staff member who did all of the other parts then take a bow.





Discussion

If you had to pick one thing for Christina to do first to change how she and her family live, what would it be? Allow the class time to respond.

Christina was very ambitious and decided to do it all: eat well and start exercising just as soon as she left WIC. In real life making that many changes at once is really hard. Most people pick one thing. After doing that, then they move on to another important change. What you may do first depends on your life and your situation. The most important thing is that you start.

I have a handout for you. (Pass it out to the class.) Go over it briefly with the class. Other points you may choose to cover in your own words include:

- ① Having fat in the abdomen or waist area is associated with developing the diabetes and heart disease. Abdominal obesity often reflects fat being in around the liver and muscles. This fat can lead to diabetes. Fat just under the skin is not as harmful to the body. People who store most of their fat into their thighs and buttocks are also not as much at risk for diabetes and heart disease as people who store fat in their abdomen.
- ② People who have three of the symptoms on the handout, including a large waist circumference, would be wise to talk to their doctor or clinic about their health.
- ③ People with a large waist might go on to develop diabetes and heart disease. But the good news is that losing weight, eating healthy and exercise can decrease your chances of getting these diseases. Taking action at this stage can protect your health.
- ④ Children are also at risk for diabetes and heart disease, but waist measurements are different for them. Again, you need to talk to your doctor or clinic if you have any concerns about your child's health.
- ⑤ You may want to tell them about upcoming WIC classes which will discuss ways to eat a healthy diet, exercise, quit smoking and decrease risk factors for diabetes and heart disease.

Ask the class to fill in the back of the handout.



Why Keep Your Waistline Down?


Putting on extra weight can make you more likely to get diabetes and heart disease. This is especially true if the extra weight is around the waist and abdomen.

■ How do you know if your waist is too big?

- For women a waist of 35 inches or more is too big.
- For men a waist of 40 inches or more is too big.

If your waist is too large, check with your doctor or clinic to see if you have two or more of these conditions:

- High levels of bad cholesterol in your blood
- Low levels of good cholesterol in your blood
- High triglycerides in your blood (Triglycerides are a form of fat in the blood.)
- High blood pressure
- A high blood sugar before eating in the morning.

 If your waist is large and you have two or more of these conditions, you may develop heart disease or diabetes later.

■ What Can You Do?

You can get off a path that might lead to heart disease and diabetes. You can do this by

- Getting and keeping the best weight for you
- Eating healthy foods in healthy amounts
- Getting exercise most days of the week
- Quitting smoking

Get more information on how to do all these things. Talk to your WIC nutritionist and take WIC classes on each of the topics listed above.



Steps I can take for my health and my family's health:



① Here is what I will do in the next month to eat a healthier diet or start exercising most days of the week:

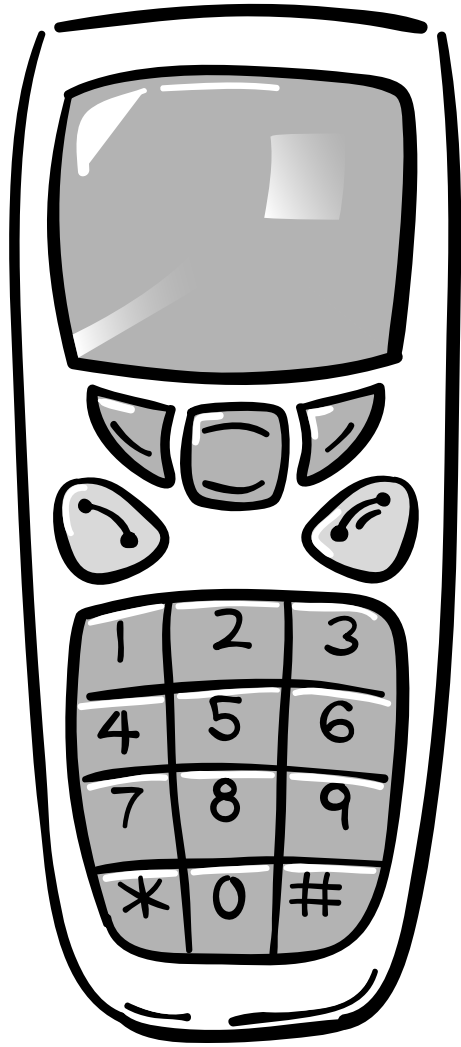
② This is how making the change could improve my family's health:

Later After Eating at Dave's Hamburgers

Don't do it,

Christina!

**Do it,
Christina!**



Cut out the picture. Place it on a brown paper bag to use in the skit.

Double Stuffed
Cream Filled
Cookies



Cut out the picture. Place it on a brown paper bag to use in the skit.



**SUPER
BIG BAG!**

**FRIED
BBQ
POTATO
CHIPS**

