

CLIP

- PSA

Snake Oil Video

History of Snake Oil



Essential Standard

7.PCH.3 Evaluate health information
and products.

Clarifying Objective

7.PCH.3.1 Recognize health quackery as a false claim for a cure and the ploys quacks use to promote unproven products and services

Statements About Health

1. There are quick, easy and effortless ways of losing weight (which do not require eating less food or the supervision of a physician).
2. A fat child is a healthy child.
3. Vitamins supply energy and protection from disease, such as cold and influenza.
4. Honey can cure bed-wetting and induce sleep.
5. Some foods are fattening in and of themselves.
6. A common sea plant called kelp is an excellent source of vital minerals.
7. Each mouthful of food must be chewed 32 times before swallowing.
8. Sweating is necessary in order to lose weight.
9. Having your body massaged or vibrated is an effective way of reducing weight.
10. Use of sleeping pills and pep pills does not require medical supervision.
11. Mouthwashes eliminate bad breath.
12. All medicines have the same effects on all persons.
13. There is a cure or a pill or effective treatment for every human ailment.
14. Drug potency never changes as medicines sit in bathroom cabinets.
15. Drugs prescribed for one person can be given safely to relatives and friends.
16. Taking aspirin will prevent colds.
17. Smoking cigarettes during youth and early adulthood will not harm you in later life.
18. Quitting smoking is relatively easy especially when a stop-smoking device is used.
19. Rubbing butter on a burn is a good first-aid procedure.
20. Use of a tourniquet is the preferred method of stopping a hemorrhage.
21. All unconscious persons have stopped breathing and therefore require mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.
22. County health departments provide free extensive health examinations and services to all citizens.
23. Daily bowel movements are essential for health.
24. An apple a day keeps the doctor away.
25. If you always chew gum, you will never have to brush your teeth.
26. If you rub a wart with a raw potato, the wart will disappear.
27. A frostbitten body part should be rubbed vigorously with snow.
28. Drinking coffee and taking a cold shower help sober up a drunk person.
29. Drinking alcohol warms the body and acts as a stimulant.
30. Most alcohol abusers are homeless and living on the street.
31. One cannot get drunk by drinking beer.
32. Only dirty-looking people can transmit disease-causing organisms.
33. Copper bracelets or wires worn around one's wrist will cure arthritis and prevent seizures.
34. Put mud into an open wound to stop bleeding.
35. To prevent toothaches, cut your fingernails only on Saturday.
36. Adults are never susceptible to "childhood diseases" such as mumps, measles, and German measles.
37. A shot of penicillin will cure any disease, even those caused by viruses such as colds and influenza.
38. Starve a fever and feed a cold.
39. A woman can get pregnant by kissing.
40. A woman cannot get pregnant if she has sexual intercourse standing up.
41. During menstruation, women should not bathe, shampoo their hair, or play sports.
42. The absence of a hymen proves a female is not a virgin.
43. The female determines the sex of a baby.

Review:

- Ask if any of the statements sounded as though they **COULD** be true?
- Ask if any of the statements sounded too bizarre or “off the wall” to be true?
- Ask them to make a list of sources of health information. Typically they will say:
 - Word of mouth: parents, other family members, or peers
 - Education: teachers of Health, voluntary and community agencies and programs
 - Health care providers: doctor, school nurse
 - Media: magazines and newspapers (articles and advertising), billboards, television and radio (health programs and talk shows, health in the news, public service announcements, Internet/websites, and advertising)

Statement of Objectives:

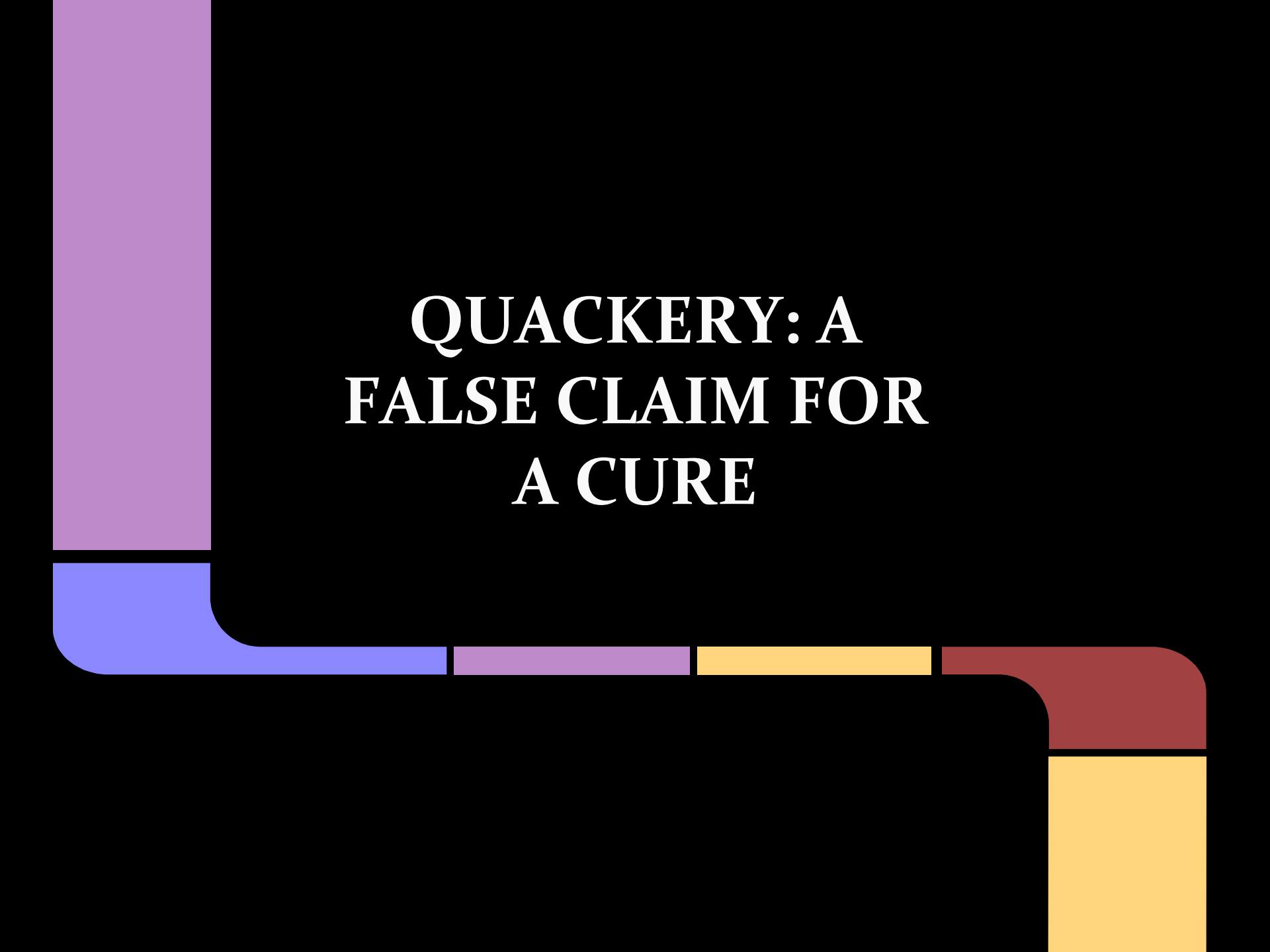
- *We know from 6th grade Healthful Living Education that sometimes claims for health products and services are misleading. Today we will look at examples of health quackery. By the end of the lesson, you will be able to define quackery and recognize false claims for curing health problems. You will also be able to make decisions about health products and services based on good medical information.*

1950's video on Medical Quackery

[Video](#)

Watch video on Quackery

- [Quackery Video](#)



**QUACKERY: A
FALSE CLAIM FOR
A CURE**

Four Reasons Quackery Seems To Work

I. Ignorance

- A. Many consumers simply do not know the difference between health products that have been shown to be effective and those which have not. The same is true of health services. For example: is it legal for someone to post a sign calling oneself a “doctor”? Yes – it is legal, as long as the person does not claim to be a “Medical Doctor” or M. D. – yet many in the general public would assume that person is a medical doctor.

II. Placebo effect

- A. The mind is a powerful influence on how we feel. The placebo effect means that we feel better because we think we SHOULD feel better. For example, if a person takes a vitamin pill because he believes he will have more energy, he may think he has more energy just because he is “supposed to” (even though the pill provided no additional energy – we get energy from foods, not from pills. Feeling energetic is easily controlled by the mind unless a person has a health problem that compromises energy levels.

III. Self-limiting conditions

- A. Some health problems are self-limiting. That means that the disease or condition runs its course even if the person does nothing at all. Problems caused by viruses are like that: they go through an active stage and then a latent stage. If a person practices quackery and the virus-produced problem goes away, they may give credit to quackery when the problem would have gone away anyway. An example of this comes from the previous activity: if a person rubs his wart with a raw potato and it goes away, it did so because the virus that caused that wart had run its course.
- B. Seventy percent of all health problems will go away if the consumer does nothing at all. Therefore consumers need to know the difference.

III. Sleight of hand

- A. The use of a magic trick: psychic surgery as we discussed at the beginning of the lesson, is an example of the kind of fakery that some quacks use to promote a false product.

Most Common Types of Quackery

I. Drug

- A. Many of the old potions or elixirs are really quackery. Be especially skeptical if a product is promoted to cure multiple problems.

II. Nutrition

- A. Americans are bombarded with advertising for nutritional supplements that they do not need. Most people can get all their nutrients from the food they eat and do not need mega-doses of vitamins and minerals that are promoted in the media.

III. Device

- A. Some of the exercise and weight loss equipment that is advertised is blatant quackery, especially if the equipment is supposed to do all the work for you. We have to contract our own muscles to get the benefit of increased muscle tone or calories burned.

Four Most Vulnerable Consumers

I. The Uninformed

- A. Consumers are vulnerable to quackery if they do not know the facts. A good source of reliable information on quackery is the website www.quackwatch.com.

II. The Restless

- A. Consumers are at risk for exploitation if they expect quick results and are unwilling to take responsibility for their own health.

III. The Miracle Seeker

- A. If someone believes that a wonder is possible, he or she may be taken in by someone promoting something sensational. A good rule of thumb is, “if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.”

IV. The Straw Grasper

- A. These are desperate individuals. They may have a life threatening condition and want to believe there is hope when there is no hope. The quack is all too willing to provide the victim with FALSE HOPE.

Three Characteristics of Quackery

I. It's progressive

- A. Quacks follow legitimate science and say that whatever they are promoting is the latest and greatest in science. Quackery sounds too good to be true.

II. It's big business

- A. Quacks are often very successful. Because there is “a sucker born every minute,” they make millions of dollars off those who fall for their schemes.

III. It's for an incurable condition

- A. Quacks exploit the health problems that modern medicine cannot cure. Persons living with AIDS, arthritis, some cancers, and Alzheimer's often fall prey to quacks because they want to believe that something will help their condition. Baldness and being flat-chested are also exploited by quackery. There are dozens of ineffective "cures" for these two conditions in magazines.



Video Clip

[Health Claims \(NBC Learn\)](#)

BizKids 4.07

Scam-a-rama

(Protect Yourself From Being Scammed)

[Video \(28:00\)](#)

Guided Practice:

- Divide students into six groups and give each group a description of an example of alternative healing.
- The students are to read the description and answer the following questions:
 - *Is this an example of quackery or legitimate healing?*
 - *For what reasons should a wise health consumer be skeptical of this product or service?*
 - *Why might someone who is gullible or desperate fall for this product?*
 - *If this product were used, what might be the risks?*
 - *Should the marketing of this product be reported to health or law enforcement officials?*

You decide: Is it quackery or is it legitimate?

Iridology promotes the belief that each section of the iris of the eye represents a body organ or area. Iridologists make a diagnosis about a person's health based on the color, texture and various pigment flecks in the iris.

Magnetic Therapy: A shoe company claimed that wearing its magnetic insoles would "generate a deep-penetrating magnetic field which increases circulation; reduces foot, leg, and back fatigue; provide natural pain relief and improved energy levels."

Aromatherapy: The belief that inhaling odors from various plants help heal hundreds of diseases.

Therapeutic Touch practitioners claim to be able to use one's hands to diagnose illness. They believe that they can detect pain, reduce anxiety, and stimulate a person's power to heal self through the transfer of energy.

Reflexology: Those who promote reflexology believe that the body has zones that are connected to the soles of the feet. By pressing on the balls of the feet, they claim to be able to cure health problems such as anemia, deafness, hemorrhoids, and emphysema.

Astrology involves the use of a horoscope to decide whether one is "predisposed" to an illness because of the position of the stars when one was born or, as they are currently aligned.

Independent Practice:

- Divide students into groups.
- Explain that each group is to create a poster advertising an example of health quackery.
- The quack product or service should promote something not possible or proven.
- The advertisement should clearly show the “product or service” and should be illustrated with graphics.
- The poster should be clear, legible and attractive while using correct grammar.
- The “product or service” should be supported by unsupported or fictitious “facts.”
- Use the rubric to evaluate the poster; students may present posters to the class.

Category	4	3	2	1
Attractiveness	The poster is exceptionally attractive in terms of design, layout, and neatness.	The poster is attractive in terms of design, layout and neatness.	The poster is acceptably attractive though it may be a bit messy.	The poster is distractingly messy or very poorly designed. It is not attractive.
Content (medical “facts” supporting the quack product or service)	At least 5-6 “facts” are displayed on the poster.	3-4 “facts” are displayed on the poster.	1-2 “facts” are displayed on the poster.	No “facts” are displayed on the poster.
Graphics - Originality	Several of the graphics used on the poster reflect an exceptional degree of student creativity in their creation and/or display.	The graphics show some creativity in terms of design and layout.	The graphics are fairly ordinary in design, but attractively displayed.	The poster lacks creativity and shows little effort.
Graphics - Clarity	Graphics are exceptionally clear, easy to see, are attractive and support content.	Most graphics are in focus and the content easily viewed; graphics support content and are attractively displayed.	Most graphics are in focus and the content is easily viewed; graphics support content.	Many graphics are not clear or are too small.
Mechanics	Capitalization and punctuation are correct throughout the poster.	There is 1 error in capitalization or punctuation.	There are 2 errors in capitalization or punctuation.	There are more than 2 errors in capitalization or punctuation.
Grammar	There are no grammatical mistakes on the poster.	There is 1 grammatical mistake on the poster.	There are 2 grammatical mistakes on the poster.	There are more than 2 grammatical mistakes on the poster.

Closure:

- *Today we looked at examples of medical and health quackery. We learned that there are ways to recognize when someone is promoting a product that is not effective and may do us harm. This will be an important skill for you to use as a health consumer.*