
Medical Interventions Course Description

In the Medical Interventions course, students will investigate the variety of interventions involved in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of disease as they follow the lives of a fictitious family. A “How-To” manual for maintaining overall health and homeostasis in the body, the course will explore how to prevent and fight infection, how to screen and evaluate the code in our DNA, how to prevent, diagnose and treat cancer, and how to prevail when the organs of the body begin to fail. Through these scenarios, students will be exposed to the wide range of interventions related to Immunology, Surgery, Genetics, Pharmacology, Medical Devices, and Diagnostics. Each family case scenario will introduce multiple types of interventions and will reinforce concepts learned in the previous two courses, as well as present new content. Interventions may range from simple diagnostic tests to treatment of complex diseases and disorders. These interventions will be showcased across the generations of the family and will provide a look at the past, present and future of biomedical science. Lifestyle choices and preventive measures are emphasized throughout the course as well as the important role scientific thinking and engineering design play in the development of interventions of the future.

Medical Interventions Unit Summaries

UNIT ONE:

Students are introduced to Sue Smith, the eighteen-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Smith. Sue is a college freshman who is presenting symptoms of an unknown infectious disease which students eventually identify as bacterial meningitis. Sue survives the infection but is left with hearing impairment. Through this case, students will explore the diagnostic process used to identify an unknown infection, the use of antibiotics as a treatment, how bacteria develop antibiotic resistance, how hearing impairment is assessed and treated, and how vaccinations are developed and used to prevent infection.

UNIT TWO:

Students are introduced to Mr. and Mrs. Smith, the head of the Smith family. Mr. and Mrs. Smith are very excited because they just found out they are expecting a new baby. Because the couple is in their early 40s, the doctor has suggested genetic screening and testing. Through this case, students will explore how to screen and evaluate the code in our DNA, the value of good prenatal care, and the future of genetic technology.

UNIT THREE:

Students are introduced to Mike Smith, the sixteen-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Smith. Mike is diagnosed with osteosarcoma, a type of bone cancer that often affects teenagers. Mike's treatments put him into remission; in order to remove all of the cancerous tissue, he had to have most of his arm amputated and he needs a prosthesis. Through this case, students will explore the diagnostic process used to determine the presence of cancerous cells, the risk factors and prevention of cancer, rehabilitation after disease or injury, and the design process for new medications, prosthetics, and nanotechnology.

UNIT FOUR:

Students are introduced to Mrs. Jones, the forty-four-year-old sister of Mrs. Smith. Mrs. Jones has been struggling with Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus for twenty years. Over the years, Mrs. Jones did not take good care of herself or properly control her diabetes. She eventually began using an insulin pump and changed her lifestyle to regulate her blood sugar levels, but the damage had already been done. Mrs. Jones is now dealing with end stage renal failure and needs a kidney transplant. Through this case, students will explore protein production, blood sugar regulation, dialysis, organ donation and transplantation, non-invasive surgery techniques, as well as creation of a bionic human.