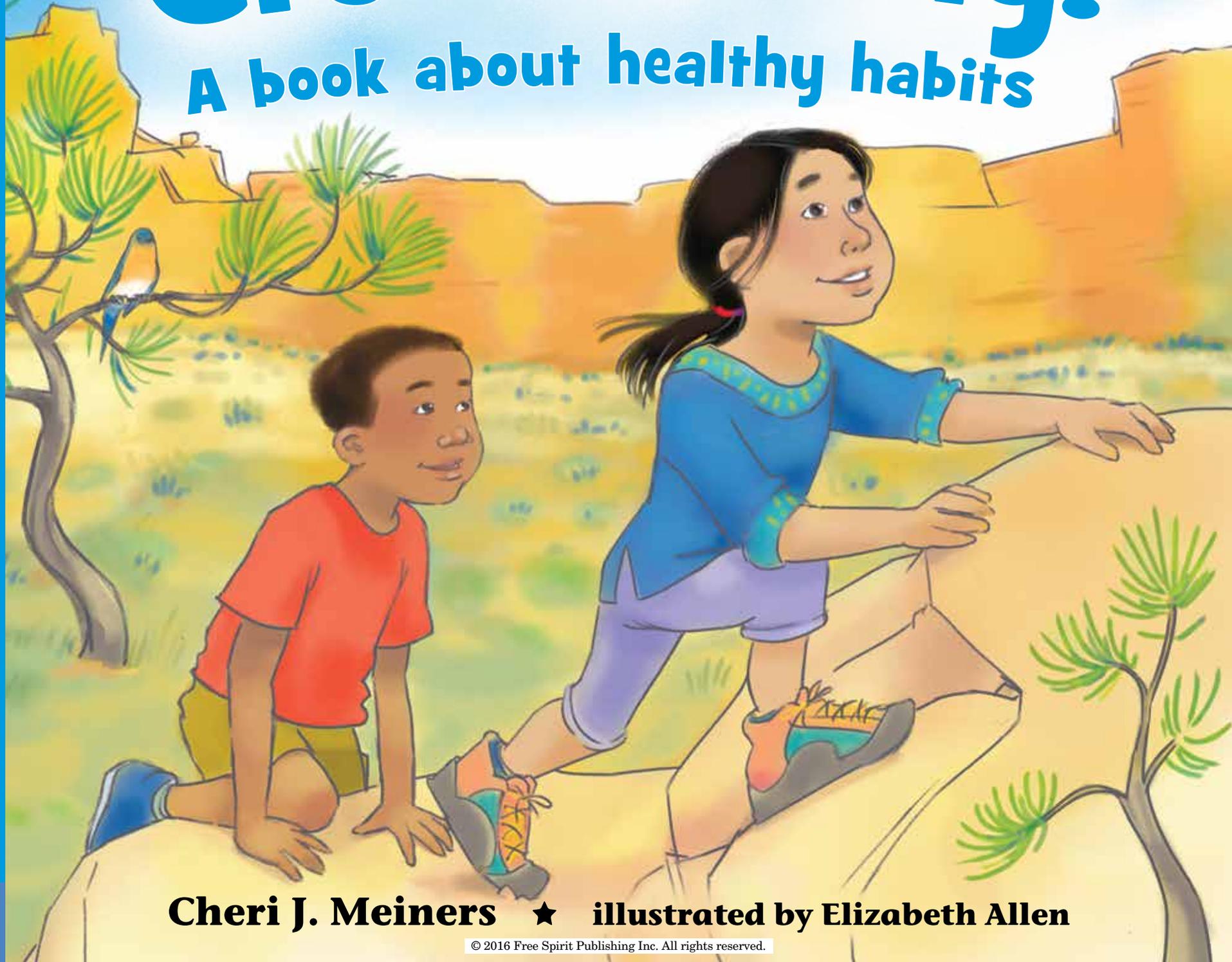




Includes
activity
guide for
adults

Grow Strong!

A book about healthy habits



free spirit
PUBLISHING®

Cheri J. Meiners ★ **illustrated by Elizabeth Allen**

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To Alek, Ava, Claire,
and all my grandchildren:
May you find happiness as you
grow strong in body, mind, and heart.



My body is amazing!

I breathe even when I'm asleep.
My heart beats all by itself.

I want to grow strong.

My body is important to me.
It's up to me to take good care of it.

Ways to Reinforce the Ideas in *Grow Strong!*

Grow Strong! teaches positive self-care and habits for maintaining health, wellness, and balance in one's life. Establishing patterns of good eating, exercise, and sleep requires self-discipline, which will help children stay physically active, make friends, learn well, and feel a greater sense of control over their lives—all of which lead to greater happiness. Children's health and confidence can increase as they become more aware of their own unique bodies and abilities, and as they incorporate principles learned in the book. In addition, the activities on pages 33–35 can encourage children's appreciation of their bodies and help them develop healthy habits for building or maintaining wellness. Some of these key habits are: Eating healthy foods, especially foods from plants; drinking clean water; moving and exercising in the fresh air and sunshine; and getting plenty of sleep.

Words to know:

Here are terms you may want to discuss.

amazing: wonderful or surprising

appreciate: to enjoy, to be grateful; to understand that something or someone is important or good

germs: tiny living things that can sometimes cause sickness, or can be helpful, depending on the type of germ

habits: things that a person does over and over until they become natural or ordinary

positive: hopeful; choosing to think happy thoughts and focus on good things

refresh: to give new energy or strength

relax: to feel calmer and more peaceful

respect: to feel and act as if something or someone is worthwhile or important

vitamins: things in foods that our bodies need to be healthy

As you read each spread, ask children:

- What is happening in this picture?
- What is the main idea?
- How would you feel if you were this person?

Here are additional questions you might discuss:

Pages 1–9

- What is something amazing about your body? (*Note: Be sensitive to children with physical disabilities, and help them appreciate the amazing aspects of their own bodies.*)
- What is something your body does all by itself? (*Examples: My heart pumps blood; my lungs help me breathe; my brain cells grow; I heal from a scrape; my eyes blink; my hair grows.*)
- What are some things you do to take care of your body?
- What are some examples of foods that are healthy? What are some healthy foods that you enjoy? How do those foods help you feel, think, and grow?
- How do you feel about trying new foods? If you don't like something the first time you try it, what can you do? (*Note: Studies show that it can take fifteen tries or more for children to acquire a taste for a new or unfamiliar food.*)
- How does eating well show respect to your body?
- What are some good things in your life that you appreciate? Who are some of the good people you know? Why do you think that appreciating people and things (in your life) is a healthy habit? (*Note: Studies show that people who feel grateful do more to take care of themselves, such as exercising and eating well. They are also more alert and happy.*)

Pages 10–19

- Some sunshine is healthy for you, but too much can be harmful. What can you do to protect yourself from too much sun? (*Examples: Wear long sleeves and pants; wear a hat; put on sunscreen.*)

- Why do you think it's important for your heart to be strong? Your lungs? Your muscles?
- What is something you like to do when you play and move outside? What about inside? How do you feel when you are moving and exercising? How do you feel after you have exercised?
- What are some of the ways water helps your body? (*Examples: Water helps us think more clearly, feel happier, feel less achy, have healthy skin; water moves vitamins and other healthy things through our bodies. Note: It is recommended that children ages 4 to 8 drink about 5 to 6 glasses of water each day.*)
- When are good times to wash your hands? Brush your teeth? Take a bath or shower?

Pages 20–31

- What can you do to help yourself feel better if you get hurt or sick?
- How do you stay positive when you aren't feeling well?
- Who are some people who can take care of you and help you if you don't feel well?
- Tell about a time you helped someone. How did you feel?
- What do you do at night before you go to bed? How does it help you feel relaxed, happy, and ready to sleep well?
- How do you feel in the morning when you've had lots of sleep? How do you feel when you *didn't* get enough sleep? (*Note: About 10 to 12 hours are recommended for children 4 to 8 years old.*)
- What are you doing to help your mind grow?
- What is something that you like about your body and what it can do?
- How do you plan to keep taking care of yourself and your body?

Games and Activities for *Growing Strong*

Read this book often with your child or group of children. Once children are familiar with the book, refer to it when teachable moments arise involving the development of healthy habits. Use the following activities to reinforce children's understanding of wellness and how to enjoy a healthy lifestyle.

Scavenger Hunt

Materials: Items related to health and wellness, such as: exercise equipment like a ball, jump rope, or skateboard; grooming and washing products like soap, shampoo, or a comb; a reusable water bottle; toy fruits or vegetables

Preparation: Make a list of the health-related items you've gathered. Then place the objects around the room where children can find them. This can be used as a warm-up activity to get children moving and thinking about health.

Level 1

Call out the name of an item you've placed in the room. Let children find and touch each item before returning to a central spot. When everyone has returned, call out the next item. (*Note: Affirm all children for finding items, without emphasis on speed.*)

Level 2

Ask children why each item is important for wellness. There may be several appropriate responses.

Picture of Health

Materials: Magazines; scissors; large index cards; construction paper; pencils, crayons and markers; glue sticks

Preparation: Tear out pages from magazines with pictures that depict healthy foods, exercise, and sleep. Using construction paper, prepare a collage template for each child in the form of a circle divided into three wedges (see pages 26–29).

Directions: Help children write the words *eat*, *move*, and *sleep* in the wedges. Help children cut out pictures they like and glue them into the appropriate wedges of their three-part collages to remind them of healthy habits.