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Chicago, Illinois 60610

Dear Colleague:

The Parent Package is designed to help physicians share important information about adolescence with parents. The Parent Package addresses 15 adolescent topics. Each topic contains up-to-date facts, parenting tips, and other resources to help parents guide their teenagers to become healthy, responsible, young adults. Used individually or as a package, the handouts can reinforce—but should not replace—a personal discussion between a physician and an adolescent's parent(s) or guardian.

The enclosed sheets are master copies that may be reproduced for distribution to parents/guardians in your practice. We suggest reproducing each on a different shade of colored paper. No alteration, modification, or revision of these forms can be made without the expressed written consent of the American Medical Association's Program on Child and Adolescent Health.

The Parent Package includes "Points for Parents About..."

- Teens and Injuries
- Teens and Violence Prevention
- Teens and Cigarettes
- Teens and Alcohol
- Teens and Illicit Drugs
- Teens and Depression
- Teens and Sex
- Teens and HIV/AIDS
- Teens and Nutrition
- Teens and Physical Activity
- Being the Parent or Guardian of a Teen
- Helping Your Teen Make Responsible Choices
- Teenage Growth and Development: 11-14 Years
- Teenage Growth and Development: 15-17 Years
- Teens and Vaccinations, Immunizations, and Shots

The Parent Package is supported in part by a cooperative agreement (MCU 17A304) from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau.

*Injuries can be prevented. As a parent you may already be familiar with some safety measures, such as seat belts, and bicycle helmets, so you know there are ways to increase safety. Every family must identify its own dividing line between acceptable and unacceptable, safe and dangerous behaviors.*

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## Quick Facts

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Injuries kill more teens than all diseases combined.

Car crashes are one of the leading causes of death and disability among teens today.

At least one teen dies of an injury every hour every day in the United States.

Other causes of injury or death among teens include drowning, sports injuries, and rape.

More teens are being killed by guns than ever before.

Most teens do not like and do not wear bike helmets.

Adolescents are less likely to use seat belts than any other age group.

Understanding and obeying the rules of the road are important components of safe cycling.

Alcohol is involved in about 35% of teen driver fatalities.

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## Tips for Parents

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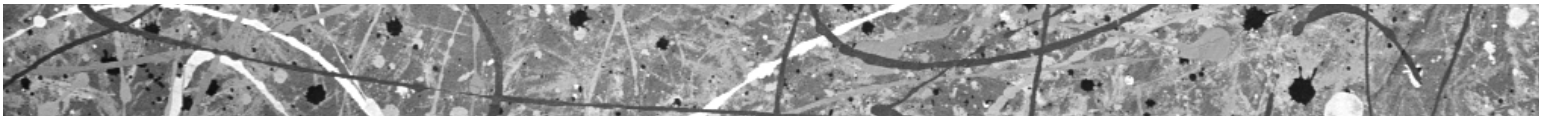
### 1. Set clear rules for driving or riding in a car.

- Make seat belt use mandatory for the driver and passengers.
- Don't allow teens to drive when they are upset or angry.
- Limit your teen's driving to daylight hours and restrict it to your local community if he or she is an inexperienced driver.
- Continue to supervise your teen's driving after he or she has a license.
- Discuss safe driving rules and the consequences of not following rules. Talk about getting a ticket; being involved in an accident; driving while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs; and getting home from an unsafe situation.
- Ask your teen where he or she is going and with whom.
- Make sure your teen understands that alcohol and other drugs are not allowed in the car.
- Tell your teen to never get into a car with a driver who has been drinking.
- Encourage your teen to call home and be picked up—with no questions asked—if he or she or the driver has been drinking.
- Talk about taking rides from older teens your teen doesn't know and from brothers and sisters of friends.
- Get the names and phone numbers of drivers, especially on Friday and Saturday nights.
- Tell your teen never to ride in the "bed" of a truck.

### 2. Set clear rules for safe biking.

- If your teen wants to ride a bicycle, a bicycle helmet is a must.
- Review the rules of the road for bikers.
- Encourage your teen to avoid riding a bicycle when it is dark.
- If your teen rides a bicycle at night, a reflective vest or other gear and reflectors on the bicycle are mandatory.

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### **3. Increase water sports safety.**

- Make sure your teen can swim. If your teen does not know how to swim, enroll him or her in lessons.
- Do not allow your teen to swim or boat alone.
- Remind your teen to jump—never dive—into water the first time to check its depth. It may be too shallow for diving.
- Tell your teen to never combine the use alcohol or other drugs with water sports.

### **4. Encourage your teen to wear protective sport gear.**

- Depending on the activity, this may include face protectors, helmets, knee, elbow, and wrist pads, and mouth guards.

### **5. Reduce the risk of firearm injury to your teen.**

- Do not keep a gun in your home.
- If you have a gun, keep it unloaded and locked up.
- Lock and store bullets separately.

### **6. Be a role model.**

- Obey traffic regulations and speed limits.
- Wear your seat belt; don't speed; don't drink and drive.
- Stay in control of your emotions when driving.
- Wear a helmet when driving a motorcycle or riding a bicycle.
- Wear reflective clothing when riding a bicycle at night.

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## **Resources**

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Your teen's health care provider.

Adolescent Health On-Line

<http://www.ama-assn.org/go/adolescenthealth>

American Academy of Pediatrics

<http://www.aap.org>

Centers of Disease Control and Prevention

National Center for Injury Prevention and Control

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc>

Children's Safety Network

617 969-7101

<http://www.childrensafetynetwork.org>

National Safe Kids Campaign

<http://www.safekids.org>

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*Parents and others who care for young people can help them learn to deal with emotions without using violence. Because violence results from conflicts between people, it can be prevented by learning nonviolent ways to control anger and solve problems. Teaching your teen, through words and actions, that violence is never an acceptable form of behavior is very important. The tips provided here can help you.*

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## Quick Facts

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Almost 16 million teens have witnessed some form of violent assault.

About one in eight people murdered in the United States each year are younger than 18 years of age.

Research shows a link between violent television programs and aggressive behavior in teens who watch those programs.

Most injuries and violent deaths occur between people who know each other.

If there is violence in your family, it increases the risk of your teen becoming involved in future violence.

A gun in the home is more likely to be used to kill a family member or friend than to kill an intruder.

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## Tips for Parents

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### 1. Start talking about ways to reduce or eliminate violence.

- Team up with other parents and get involved in your community; join your neighbors in activities to reduce violence.
- Talk to your teen about ways to solve arguments and fights without weapons or violence.
- Advise your teen to talk to you or a trusted adult to avoid potentially violent situations.
- If you suspect a problem with your teen, start talking about it.

### 2. Monitor the media.

- Limit the amount of television your teen watches to 1 to 2 hours a day (including music videos and video games).
- Do not allow your teen to watch violent movies or TV programs.
- If something violent comes on the TV, talk about what is wrong with the program and how the situation could have been handled in a nonviolent way.

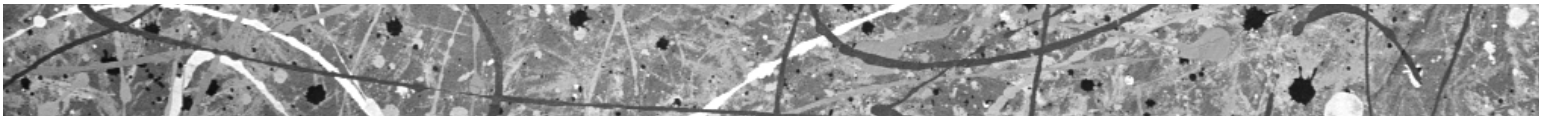
### 3. Be a role model by handling problems in nonviolent ways.

- Don't hit your teen. Model non-physical solutions to problem solving.
- Count to 10. Cool off. If you can't control your anger, tell your teen you need some time to get your thoughts and feelings under control.
- Problem solve with your teen. Think together about options and consequences for behaviors.
- Set limits, make sure your teen knows the rules and consequences, and follow through.
- Don't carry a gun. This sends a message to your teen that using guns solves problems.

### 4. Reduce the threat of gun-related violence to your teen.

- Make certain your teen does not have access to guns. If you have a gun, remove it from your home or store it unloaded and locked up. Lock and store bullets separately.

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- Tell your teen to stay away from potentially dangerous situations and from guns in homes of friends or places where he or she may visit or play.
- Keep in mind that teens don't always follow the rules. Also, teens are attracted to guns and see guns as symbols of power. Since you can't always count on teens to stay away from guns, you have to keep guns away from them.

### **5. Help your teen deal with anger.**

- Anger is a normal feeling. Anger does not have to be bad if it is expressed appropriately. Teach your teen that it is okay to be angry, but it's not okay to throw a punch.
- People must control their anger before they can control a situation.
- Sometimes counseling is necessary to help teens deal with their anger appropriately.

### **Steps your teen can take to avoid violence or injury**

1. Recognize situations or events that are likely to escalate into violence.
2. Stop whatever you are doing and count to 10 backward. This will help you think about your feelings before they get out of control.
3. If you can't control your anger, get away. Take a time out.
4. Think about the options and consequences of your actions. For example, hitting someone could result in suspension from school or injury.
5. If necessary, get help from a third party to solve differences.
6. Cool off. Make sure you are calm and then talk to the person.
7. Listen carefully to the other person's opinion.
8. Be assertive, not aggressive. Stand up for your ideals. Begin every sentence with "I." For example: "I feel this way..." or "I don't like it when..."
9. Be willing to admit and be responsible for something you may have done wrong.
10. Respond with your HEAD, not your fists, threats, or weapons.

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## **Resources**

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Your teen's health care provider.

Adolescent Health On-Line

<http://www.ama-assn.org/go/adolescenthealth>

American Medical Association

Violence Prevention Web site

<http://www.ama-assn.org/violence>

American Psychological Association

800 374-3120

<http://www.apa.org>

Children's Safety Network

<http://www.edc.org/HHD/csn>

Federal Safety Hotline

888 252-7751

Medem, Inc. An e-health network developed by the nation's leading medical societies

<http://www.medem.com>

National Citizen's Crime Prevention Campaign

For information on preventing community violence call 800 937-7383.

Surgeon General's Report on Youth Violence

Available by calling 800 789-2647 or visiting

<http://surgeongeneral.gov/library/youthviolence>

Your local or city police department.

Your local school.

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*Young people start smoking for many reasons—to act older, to be independent, to fit in, to relieve stress, to rebel against adults, and sometimes to be like their parents.*

*You should talk with your teen about the dangers of smoking.*

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## Quick Facts

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Smoking is the leading preventable cause of death in the United States.

Nicotine is an addictive drug found in cigarettes.

Approximately 80% of adult smokers started smoking before the age of 18.

Most teens can buy cigarettes even though it is illegal to sell them to minors in all 50 states.

Spit tobacco (chew) is not a safe alternative to smoking. Regular use of spit tobacco can cause cancer of the cheek, gums, tongue, and throat.

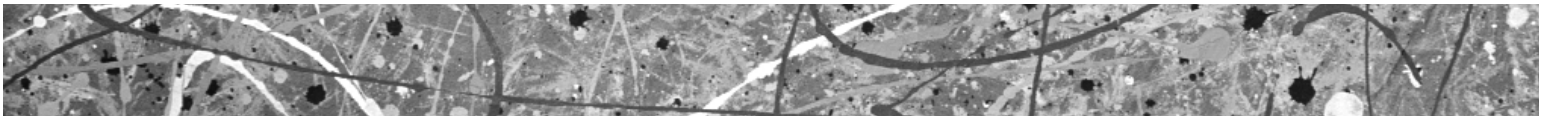
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## Tips for Parents

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1. Show concern. Don't wait for your teen to smoke before you talk about tobacco use. Many kids begin trying cigarettes at 11 or 12 years of age.
2. Establish rules. Talk about family expectations and rules about smoking. Clearly state and enforce the consequences for breaking the rules.
3. Know the facts. Talk with your teen about the dangers of smoking. Teens often don't relate to the future health problems caused by smoking, such as lung cancer and heart disease. Try talking about the dangers of smoking in a way that hits home with your teen. Use a relative or close friend who is sick with or died of a smoking-related illness as an example.
4. Let your teen know that smoking stains teeth and causes bad breath, yellow fingers, smelly hair and clothing, and premature wrinkles. Smokers also have less athletic endurance.
5. Challenge the ads. Talk about the ways that tobacco companies try to get young people to buy their products. Tobacco ads that create images of glamour, fitness, fun, and success mislead some teens to think that they can improve their self-image by smoking.
6. Get to know your teen's friends. Know where they hang out and what they are doing.
7. Be honest. Do you smoke or are you an ex-smoker? You can still express concern over your teen starting the habit. Talk about how hard it is to quit. Share your regrets about starting smoking. It's okay for parents to admit mistakes.
8. If you smoke, try to quit. If you smoke, your teen is more likely to become a smoker. Also, research shows that secondhand smoke (smoke that comes from the end of a cigarette or that is exhaled) is dangerous to nonsmokers because it increases their risk of lung cancer. Ask your doctor or other health care provider to help you quit smoking or call the national agencies listed below for information.
9. Support community efforts to work against tobacco ads that target young people and to enforce laws that prevent the sale of tobacco to minors. For information on antitobacco efforts in your community, contact the agencies listed below.

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## Resources

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Your teen's health care provider.

Adolescent Health On-Line

<http://www.ama-assn.org/go/adolescenthealth>

Your local hospital or public health department.

Women and Smoking:

A Report of the Surgeon General – 2001

<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov>

American Dental Association

312 440-2593

<http://www.ada.org>

American Heart Association

800 242-8721

<http://www.amhrt.org>

American Lung Association

800 586-4872

<http://www.lungusa.org>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Office on Smoking and Health

770 488-5705

<http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco>

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*Part of growing up involves trying new things. Most teens try using alcohol. Teens use alcohol for many reasons, including to reduce stress, to feel grown up, to fit in, because it feels good, out of curiosity, because their parents do, and because it is easy to get. It is hard to know which teens will only try alcohol, which will use alcohol casually, and which will develop serious problems with alcohol use. Follow the tips below to help lower the chance that your teen will use or abuse alcohol.*

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## Quick Facts

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Alcohol-related car crashes are a leading cause of death for teenagers and young adults.

Alcohol use is involved in many drownings, suicides, homicides, and injuries.

Alcohol is the drug of choice among teens.

Beer and wine are not safer than hard liquor.

It is illegal in most states to provide alcohol to minors who are not members of the family.

Using alcohol and tobacco at a young age—especially before high school—increases the risk for using other drugs later, such as marijuana and cocaine.

Many teens abuse alcohol. As early as the eighth grade, some students report heavy drinking.

Most states have “zero-tolerance” laws. This means that underage drivers (less than 21 years) with even a trace of alcohol on their breath will lose their drivers license.

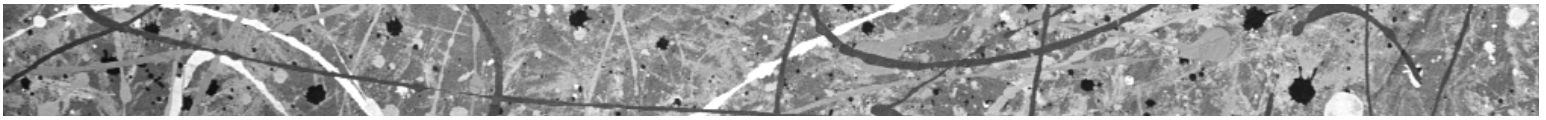
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## Tips for Parents

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1. Talk about family expectations and rules about alcohol use. Clearly state and enforce the consequences for breaking the rules.
2. Frequently express how you feel about underage drinking. However, do not lecture or threaten your teen about alcohol use.
3. Talk about personal, family, social, or religious values that give your teen reasons not to drink.
4. Talk about any religious or cultural traditions in your family that include the acceptable use of alcohol.
5. Make it clear that drinking and driving or riding with someone who has been drinking will not be tolerated. Ask your teen to call for a ride, take a cab, or call for permission to stay overnight if he or she or a friend who is driving has been drinking. This does not give teens permission to drink, it tells them that their safety is most important.
6. Talk with your teen about ways to handle pressure from friends to drink. Teach your teen how to say “no” and to suggest doing something different (safe). To feel comfortable talking openly with you, your teen needs to know that you will not punish him or her for being honest.
7. Help your teen to develop outside interests. Encourage him or her to join a team or club, become a volunteer, get a part-time job, or take music lessons.
8. When your teen wants to talk about alcohol, listen to his or her opinions, help him or her make good decisions, and treat him or her with respect.
9. Get to know your teen’s friends. Know where they hang out and what they are doing. Talk with the friends’ parents about alcohol.
10. Do not serve alcohol to your teen or his or her friends. Lock your liquor cabinet.

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11. Do not ask your teen to open a bottle of wine, bring you a beer, or pour drinks.
12. Be a role model. If you drink, do so responsibly. Never drink and drive! Do not use alcohol as a way to cope with stress, depression, or anger. Alcohol can only make problems worse in the long run.
13. If you have a drinking problem, or think you may have one, help is available. Talk to a health care professional and see the resources on this handout.

**Tips for teens to say “No!” to alcohol:**

- Say it like you mean it.
- You don’t have to give reasons or excuses. “No” by itself is enough.
- Suggest doing something different.
- If the person continues to pressure you, walk away.

**What should I do if my teen uses alcohol?**

Calmly talk about the extent of his or her use—how often, how much, with whom, where, and why. Explain why you are concerned. Remind your teen of your rules about alcohol use and enforce the consequences for breaking them. If you have reason to believe your teen is abusing alcohol or your efforts to enforce the rules have failed repeatedly, seek help from a counselor or health care professional.

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## Resources

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Your teen’s health care provider.

Adolescent Health On-Line

<http://www.ama-assn.org/go/adolescenthealth>

Alcoholics Anonymous

Check your phone book for local chapters.

Join Together Online

<http://www.jointogether.org>

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol  
and Drug Information

800 729-6686

<http://www.health.org>

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*Adolescence is a time of important physical, intellectual, emotional, and social development. Learning how to solve problems, build close friendships, make decisions, and handle responsibility are important during the teenage years. Drug use interferes with teens' ability to learn and improve those skills. Whether it's alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana, or other illicit (illegal) drugs, the bottom line holds true: teens who use drugs put their future in danger.*

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## Quick Facts

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Parents tend to underestimate their teen's exposure to illegal drugs.

Almost 1/3 of teens report that they have used illicit drugs at some point in their lives.

Using alcohol and tobacco at a young age—especially before high school—increases the risk for using other drugs later, such as marijuana and cocaine.

Young people who don't use drugs are more likely to stay in school than those who do use drugs.

Over one quarter of high school students report that they have been offered, given, or sold an illicit drug on school grounds.

Poor judgment while using drugs puts teens at risk for car crashes, falls, drownings, violence, unplanned and unsafe sex, and suicide.

Drug use can cause serious immediate and/or long-term damage to the brain, liver, kidney, heart, and lungs—just to name a few.

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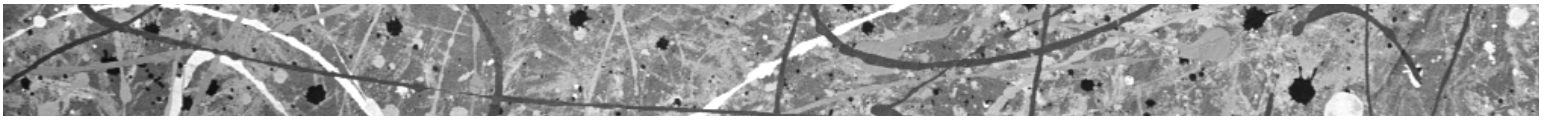
## Tips for Parents

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The reality is that at some point your teen will be offered drugs. Give him or her reasons and ways to refuse drugs.

1. Tell your teen often that drug use is unacceptable, illegal, harmful, and wrong! Frequently talk about family expectations and rules about drugs. Clearly state and enforce the consequences for breaking the rules.
2. Raise your teen's awareness about the health risks and consequences of drug use. (See the Resources section for more information.)
3. Positive feedback strengthens a teen's decision not to use drugs. For example, "It's great that you have decided to stay away from drugs. That takes a lot of courage!"
4. Busy, supervised teens have fewer opportunities to do drugs. Encourage your teen to take part in community activities or after-school programs, or to get a part-time job.
5. Get to know your teen's friends. Know where they hang out and what they are doing. Talk with your teen's friends' parents about your "no drug use" rules.
6. Talk with your teen about ways to handle pressure from friends to get "high." Teach your teen how to say "no" and to suggest doing something different (safe). To feel comfortable talking openly with you, your teen needs to know that you will not punish him or her for being honest.
7. Get involved in your teen's education. Set rules for doing homework, set goals with your teen for school grades, ask questions about his or her classes, and encourage him or her to read.
8. Boost your teen's self-confidence and self-worth. Praise his or her attempts as well as achievements. Encourage your teen to express his or her opinions and feelings in a positive way, for example, talking, writing, or drawing. Talk with and listen to your teen. Show that you are there for your teen when he or she needs you.
9. Help your teen (especially girls) develop a positive body image. Encourage your teen to respect his or her body by avoiding alcohol and other drugs, eating healthy foods, and exercising regularly.

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10. If you have an alcohol or other drug problem, help is available. Talk to a health care professional and see the resources on this handout.

**What should I do if my teen is using drugs?**

Calmly talk about the extent of his or her use—what kinds of drugs, how often, how much, with whom, where, and why. Explain why you are concerned. Remind your teen of your rules about drug use and enforce the consequences for breaking them. If you believe your teen is abusing drugs or your efforts to enforce the rules have failed repeatedly, seek help from a counselor or health care professional.

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## Resources

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Your teen's health care provider.

Adolescent Health On-Line  
<http://www.ama-assn.org/go/adolescenthealth>

Your teen's school counselor.

Your local health department.

Alcohol and Drug Helpline  
800 252-6465

Join Together Online  
<http://www.jointogether.org>

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information  
800 729-6686  
800 487-4889 (TDD)  
<http://www.health.org>

Partnership for a Drug-Free America  
Safe and Drug-Free Schools  
800 624-0100  
<http://www.drugfreeamerica.org>

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# About Teens and Depression

*Being a teen is not always easy. Adolescence is a time of physical, emotional, intellectual, and social changes that build the bridge between childhood and adulthood. With change comes stress and anxiety. Therefore, teens have some mood swings—one day they are up and the next day they are down. But when a teen feels down for more than 2 weeks, it may be a sign of a more serious problem. It can be hard to tell the difference between normal mood swings and clinical depression. The following information will alert you to the signs of teenage depression.*

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## Quick Facts

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Teenage girls are twice as likely as boys to suffer from depression.

Serious depression is not something that a person can just “snap out of.”

Use of alcohol or other drugs only makes depression worse.

For youth who are questioning their sexual identity (homosexuality, bisexuality), feelings of loneliness and rejection lead to a greater risk of depression and suicide.

Untreated depression can lead to suicide.

Suicide is the third leading cause of death for young people ages 15-24.

About 1 out of 4 US high school students have seriously thought about killing themselves in the past year.

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## Tips for Parents

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### 1. What causes depression?

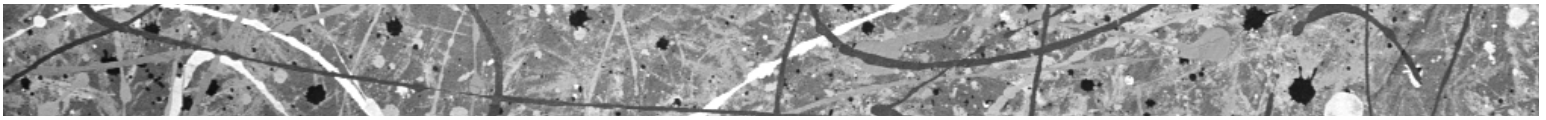
- Depression sometimes runs in families.
- Depression is often triggered by a loss such as the death of a friend or family member, parents' divorce, a move to a new community, a breakup with a boyfriend or girlfriend, failing a test, or being cut from a team.
- Circumstances such as social isolation, alcoholism in the family, poverty, family violence or ongoing conflict, or physical, sexual, or emotional abuse may contribute to or cause depression.

### 2. How can you tell if your teen is depressed?

The following signs and symptoms may suggest your teen is depressed, particularly if they are notable changes from his or her normal behavior and last for more than 2 weeks.

- major change in sleeping or eating patterns (sleeps or eats too much or too little)
- frequent absences from school or poor school performance
- unusual lack of interest in activities, friendships, hobbies
- trouble concentrating or making decisions
- running away from home
- abusing alcohol or other drugs
- neglecting personal appearance
- frequently complaining of stomachache or headache
- thinking or talking about death, suicide, or suicide attempts
- persistent lack of energy, fatigue
- feelings of guilt, pessimism, helplessness, or hopelessness
- persistent sadness or irritability

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- frequent crying
- persistent boredom or restlessness
- loss of self-esteem

### **3. What should you do if you suspect your teen is depressed?**

- Seek professional help right away. You are not expected to make a diagnosis. Only a thorough evaluation by a health professional can diagnose depression and rule out other problems. Your family doctor can often do this evaluation. Your family doctor or a school counselor may also recommend a mental health professional who works with teens.
- A diagnosis of depression does not mean your teen's life is headed in a downward spiral. Most people (80% to 90%) who suffer from clinical depression respond to treatment. Treatment for depression may include counseling, medicine, or both.
- **If your teen talks about wanting to die, get help immediately!**

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## **Resources**

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Your teen's primary health care provider.

Adolescent Health On-Line

<http://www.ama-assn.org/go/adolescenthealth>

Your teen's school counselor.

Your local family or social service agency.

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
202 966-7300

<http://www.aacap.org>

American Association of Suicidology provides referrals to local crisis centers, publications, and other resources.

<http://www.suicidology.org>

Medem, Inc. An e-health network developed by the nation's leading medical societies

<http://www.medem.com>

National Institute of Mental Health's Information Line  
800 421-4211

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov>

National Mental Health Association

800 969-6642

<http://www.nmha.org>

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*While many teens wish they could talk to their parents about sex, most feel uncomfortable asking questions. Instead, teens get most of their information about sex from friends, TV, and the movies. Unfortunately, much of what they learn is wrong! So don't wait for your teen to start the conversation—it's up to you. If you've already begun talking to your child about sex, great! Keep talking.*

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## Quick Facts

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Some parents believe that talking about sex will lead teens to have sex. In fact, research shows that teens who have talked with their parents about sex are more likely to postpone sex and to use birth control when they do begin.

Teens who have high self-esteem are more likely to make responsible decisions about sex.

Teens often believe that all their friends are having sex. This belief puts pressure on teens (especially boys) to have sex.

Every hour 350 teens contact a sexually transmitted disease (STD).

The United States has one of the highest birth rates among developed countries.

Teens often overestimate the percentage of their peers who are sexually experienced.

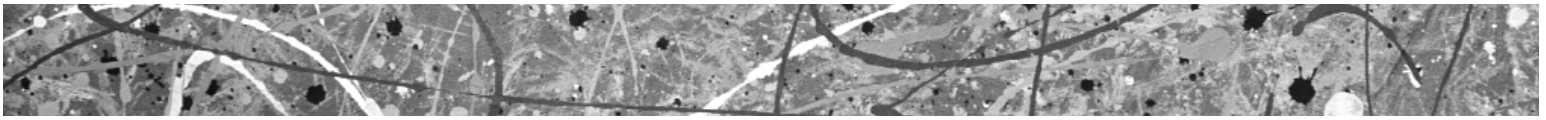
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## Tips for Parents

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1. Teens need accurate information and decision-making skills to help protect them from pressure to have sex, unintended pregnancy, and HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.
2. If talking with your teen about sex is difficult for you, admit it. Keep a sense of humor.
3. Use TV, movies, articles, and real-life situations such as a friend's pregnancy to begin talking about sex.
4. Share your values regarding sex. If you believe a person should save having sex until marriage, say so. Accept that your teen may choose to have sex despite your values.
5. Don't assume that if your teen asks questions about sex, he or she is necessarily thinking about having sex.
6. Ask your teen what he or she wants to know about sex. If you don't know an answer, admit it. Find answers with your teen in books or other resources.
7. Talk with your teen about reasons to wait to have sex. Remind your teen that he or she can choose to wait (abstain) even if he or she has had sex before.
8. Reassure your teen that not everyone is having sex and that it is okay to be a virgin. The decision to become sexually active is too important to be based on what other people think or do.
9. Talk with your teen about ways to handle pressure from others to have sex. To feel comfortable talking openly with you, your teen needs to know that you will not punish him or her for being honest.
10. Leave age-appropriate articles or books about teenage sexuality around your home (see Resources). Teens will pick them up on their own and read them.
11. Your first talk with your teen about sex should not be your last! Talk with your teen about sex on an ongoing basis. Let your teen know that you are always willing to talk about any question or concern he or she may have about sex.

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### Topics to talk about with your teen

(see the Resources list for more information on these topics):

- male and female reproductive systems
- sexual intercourse
- pregnancy
- abstinence/postponing sex
- ways to show affection without having sex
- birth control
- safer sex
- sexual orientation (heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual)
- HIV/AIDS and other STDs
- emotional consequences of having sex
- sexual assault, including date rape
- how alcohol and other drugs can affect decisions

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## Resources

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Your teen's health care provider.

Adolescent Health On-Line

<http://www.ama-assn.org/go/adolescenthealth>

Haffner, Debra W. *Beyond the Big Talk: Every Parent's Guide to Raising Sexually Health Teens – From Middle School to High School and Beyond*. New York, NY: New Market Press; 2001.

Harris, Robie H. *It's Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex & Sexual Health*. Cambridge, MASS: Candlewick Press; 1994.

Panzarine, Susan. *A Parent's Guide to the Teen Years: Raising Your 11- to 14-Year-Old in the Age of Chat Rooms and Navel Rings*. New York, NY: Checkmark Books; 2000.

The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Sexual Health and Responsible Sexual Behavior.  
<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov>

McCoy, Kathy; Wibbelsman, Charles. *The New Teenage Body Book*. Newark, NJ: Berkley Publishing; 1992.  
(Available by calling 800 788-6262.)

National AIDS Hotline  
800 342-AIDS  
800 344-SIDA (Spanish)  
800 243-STTY (Hearing Impaired)

National Parent Information Center  
<http://www.npin.org>

Sexuality Information and Education Council of the US (SIECUS)  
212 819-9770  
<http://www.siecus.org>

Planned Parenthood  
<http://www.ppfa.org>

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*It can be hard to reach teens with health and safety information, because many of them believe “it can’t happen to me.” Even so, it’s very important that you talk with your teen about HIV/AIDS to help protect him or her from the disease.*

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## Quick Facts

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Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is the virus that causes AIDS.

AIDS stands for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome.

HIV weakens the body’s ability to fight germs and disease.

While treatment options are helping people with AIDS to live longer, there is still no cure for AIDS.

Most people develop AIDS about 10 to 15 years after becoming infected with HIV.

Between 1990 and 1995 the incidence of AIDS among people ages 13-25 years old rose by almost 20%.

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## Tips for Parents

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**Tell your teen about ways people can and cannot be infected with HIV.**

**Ways a person can get infected with HIV:**

HIV is transmitted through the exchange of blood, semen, vaginal fluids, and breast milk. HIV may be transmitted in the following ways:

- Having unprotected vaginal, anal, or oral sex with a person who has HIV.
- Injecting drugs with a syringe that has already been used by a person who has HIV.
- Sharing infected needles for body piercing or tattooing.
- An infected mother can pass HIV on to her baby during pregnancy or childbirth, or by breastfeeding.

**Ways a person cannot get infected with HIV:**

HIV is not spread by casual contact. This means a person cannot get HIV from:

- going to school with someone who has HIV
- holding hands
- casual kissing
- hugging
- playing ball
- sharing eating utensils
- using public toilets
- mosquito bites
- donating blood

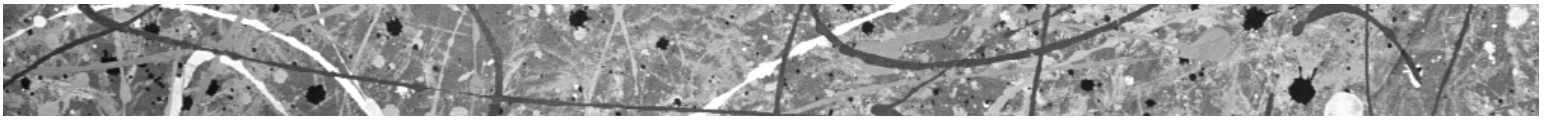
**Help protect your teen from HIV/AIDS.**

As a parent of a teen, you have the opportunity to influence your child’s health behaviors. You can do this by sharing this information and helping him or her develop skills to avoid behaviors that may lead to infection with HIV.

**Remind your teen that...**

- Not having sex (abstinence) and not sharing needles of any kind (for example, for drug use, body piercing, tattoos) are the surest ways to avoid HIV infection.

*Continues on back...*



- Anyone can become infected with HIV by having unprotected sex even just once with an infected person.
- If a person chooses to have sex, using a latex condom (rubber) correctly every time will greatly reduce the risk of transmitting HIV.
- You can't tell if people are infected with HIV by looking at them. Many people who have HIV do not even know they are infected. A blood test is the only way to know for sure whether a person is infected with HIV.
- Alcohol and other drugs affect decision-making skills and may make a person more likely to take risks that can lead to HIV infection.
- You are willing to listen and talk if he or she is thinking about becoming sexually active.

**Talk with your teen about ways to handle peer pressure.**

Talk with your teen about how to avoid risky situations and to refuse sex and drugs in ways that allow him or her to fit in with peers. To feel comfortable talking openly with you, your teen needs to know that you will not punish him or her for being honest.

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## Resources

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Your teen's health care provider.

Adolescent Health On-Line

<http://www.ama-assn.org/go/adolescenthealth>

Your local health department.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

HIV/AIDS Treatment Information Service

800 448-0440

<http://www.hivatis.org>

Journal of the American Medical Association

HIV/AIDS Resource Center

<http://www.ama-assn.org/special/hiv/hivhome.htm>

National AIDS Hotline

800 342-AIDS

800 344-SIDA (Spanish)

800 243-STTY (Hearing Impaired)

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*Most parents make sure that young children eat a healthy, well-balanced diet. But teens often eat out, making many food choices on their own.*

*You may be concerned about the types of food your teen eats. By following the tips provided here, you can help your teen make healthy food choices while respecting his or her growing independence.*

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## Quick Facts

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One in 5 teens is overweight.

Overweight teens are more likely to be overweight adults.

Many teens, especially girls, do not eat enough foods with calcium.

Many teens do not eat enough fruits and vegetables.

Teen athletes need to eat more foods high in iron and calcium.

Many teens eat too many foods high in fat and sugar.

Foods with iron include lean meats, chicken, apricots, iron-fortified breads and cereals, and leafy green vegetables.

Foods with calcium include milk, yogurt, cheese, broccoli, spinach, kale, rhubarb, and salmon with bones.

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## Tips for Parents

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1. Ask teens to help plan meals, shop for groceries, cook, and bake. These activities get teens thinking about a balanced diet.
2. Eat at least 3 or 4 meals together as a family each week. A family breakfast or weekend lunch may be most practical for some busy families.
3. Encourage teens to eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day. Fruit and vegetable juices count!
4. For stronger teeth and bones, encourage teens to eat foods rich in calcium at every meal and in between meals.
5. Bring healthy foods home. Buy fewer foods high in fat and sugar and more fruits and vegetables.
6. Keep a variety of fruits and vegetables (fresh, frozen, dried, and canned) in plain view. Keep a bowl of fresh fruit on the table. Cut up favorite vegetables and store them in clear containers. Hungry teens will eat what's available!
7. Be a good role model by eating right. Children adopt the eating habits of their parents.
8. Encourage teens to eat breakfast. Bagels, cereal, fresh fruit, low-fat yogurt, and low-fat granola bars are quick and healthy breakfast foods for teens who are in a hurry.
9. Help teens build a positive body image. Make positive comments about your teen's weight and shape and avoid criticizing your own body.
10. Use the "Food Guide Pyramid" on the back of this sheet to help you and your teen make healthy food choices.

### Healthy snacking is good!

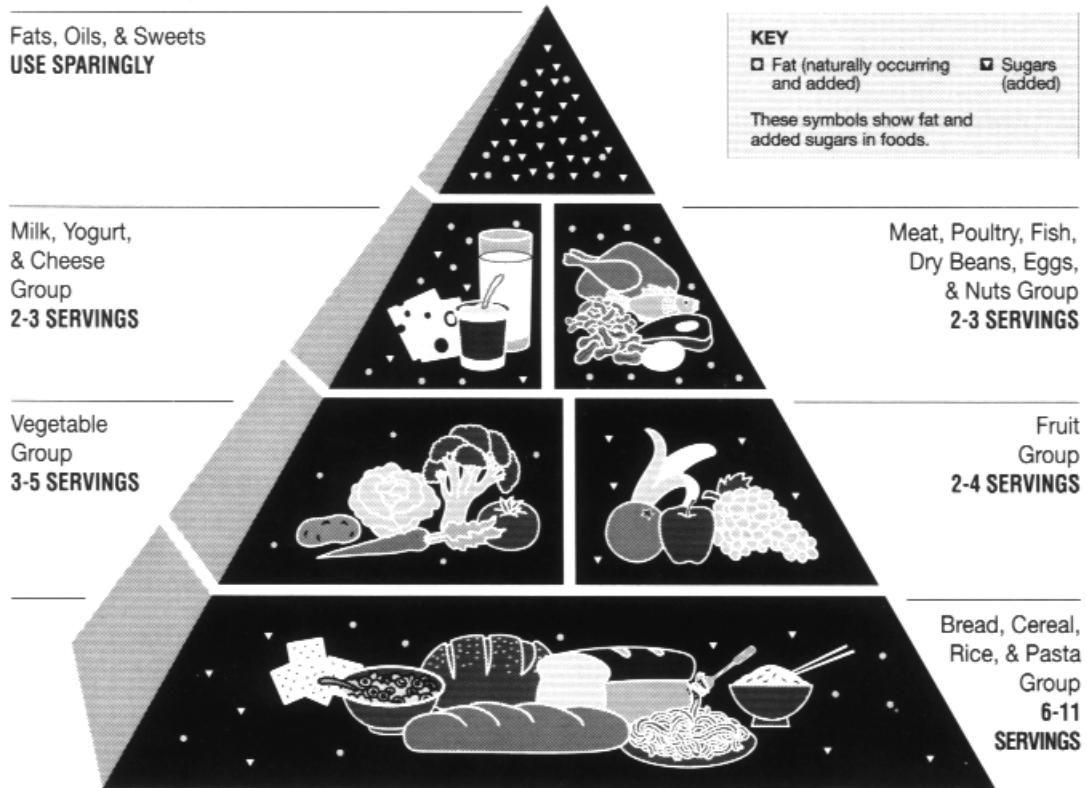
Snacking on nutritious foods between meals is good for teens because their growing bodies need more energy (calories) and nutrients.

Some healthy, low-fat snacks are pretzels, bagels, graham crackers, rice or popcorn cakes, fruit, fruit or vegetable juice, low-fat tortilla chips with salsa, low-fat granola bars, raw vegetables with low-fat dip, low-fat yogurt, and sherbet.

*Continues on back...*

# Food Guide Pyramid

## A Guide to Daily Food Choices



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture/U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

## Resources

Your teen's health care provider.

Adolescent Health On-Line  
<http://www.ama-assn.org/go/adolescenthealth>

American Dietetic Association  
 Consumer Nutrition Hotline  
 800 366-1655  
<http://www.eatright.org>

Eat Right Hotline  
 800 231-3438

Food and Nutrition Information Center  
<http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/>

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*Physical activity is good for the body and the mind. Regular exercise helps maintain weight, builds muscle, strengthens bones, and boosts “good” cholesterol levels. Team or individual sports help a person to set goals, improve self-discipline, build self-esteem, reduce stress, and develop social skills.*

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## Quick Facts

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Nearly half of teens ages 12-21 years are not vigorously active on a regular basis.

The number of overweight teens in America is increasing because they don't get enough exercise.

Overweight teens are more likely to be overweight adults, which makes them more likely to develop heart disease and high blood pressure.

Teens who are physically active have higher self-esteem and experience less anxiety and depression than inactive youth.

Even during physical education classes, students often spend more time standing around than exercising.

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## Tips for Parents

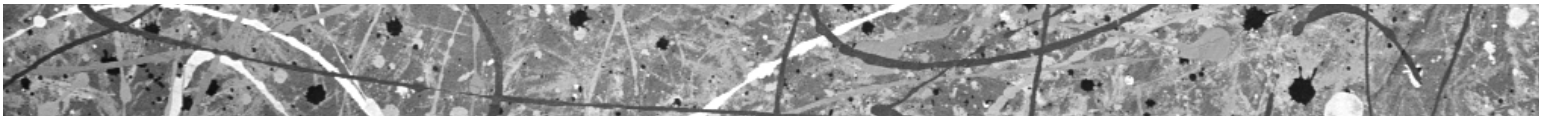
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1. Health experts<sup>1</sup> recommend that all teens be active every day as part of play, sports, work, transportation, gym class, or planned exercise. Three or more times each week, teens should do something that requires moderate to high levels of exertion for 20 minutes or more. This may include jogging, brisk walking, swimming, skating, aerobic dance, tennis, and full-court basketball.
2. Play it safe. Is there a safe place for your teen to be active near home? If not, find a youth organization or recreation league that offers activities your teen enjoys. Also, encourage your teen to use protective sports gear such as a bike helmet or eyewear.
3. Be an active role model. Don't be a “do as I say, not as I do” parent. Show your commitment to better health by being active and exercising regularly (walking, swimming, doing yard work, dancing, etc.).
4. Create family time. The former surgeon general, Dr. C. Everett Koop, advises families to turn off the television and make physical activity a family affair. Ride bikes, hike, walk, play basketball, or do yard work together as a family.
5. Show support. Help your teen practice and attend his or her games. Praise his or her achievements. Get involved with school or community programs—coach a team, referee an event, or chaperone a sports-related trip.
6. Explore the options. Competitive sports may not be for everyone. Intramural and community recreation programs put more emphasis on having fun than on winning and help young people develop athletic and social skills.
7. Encourage your teen to do activities he or she truly enjoys—like dancing, biking, tennis, swimming, golf, or jogging—and can continue throughout his or her lifetime. Because many activities are seasonal, encourage your teen to take part in a variety of activities year-round.
8. Check your attitude. Don't put pressure on your teen to win. Much of the fun is taken out of sports when teens are taught that “winning is everything.”

*Continues on back...*

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<sup>1</sup> Sallis JF, Patrick K. Physical activity guidelines for adolescents: Consensus statement from the International Consensus Conference on Adolescent Physical Activity. *Pediatr Exerc Sci.* 1994;6:302-314.



9. Be informed. Talk with your teen's school principal and physical education teachers to learn more about how the school promotes physical activity.
10. Be aware. A teen's concern about his or her athletic ability may sometimes lead to problems. For example, teens who are involved in activities that require weight management (such as ballet, wrestling, and gymnastics) may be at a greater risk for the eating disorders anorexia nervosa (self-starvation) or bulimia (binge and purge). Some teens use steroids to build muscle or improve their athletic ability. These are potentially life-threatening behaviors.

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## Resources

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Your teen's health care provider.

Adolescent Health On-Line

<http://www.ama-assn.org/go/adolescenthealth>

Physical Activity and Health:

A Report of the Surgeon General

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/sgr/adoles.htm>

Ready, Set, It's Everywhere You Go: CDC's Guide to Promoting Moderate Physical Activity

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/readysset>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Nutrition and Physical Activity Information Line

888 232-4674 (toll free)

National Association for Sport and Physical Education

800 213-7193 ext. 410

800 321-0789 for a free resource catalog

President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports

Box SG, Suite 250, 701 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW,  
Washington DC 20004

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# About **Being the Parent or Guardian of a Teen**

*Being the parent or guardian of a teen is not as scary as it sounds! Teens often get a bad rap for being lazy, careless, sloppy, and more. Most of the time they are struggling to be independent and to fit in at school, at home, and with friends. Keep in mind that helping your teen to become an adult takes time, patience, and a commitment. There is no such thing as an instant adult! There are two things to remember: teens need lots of love and they need a caring adult to show them right from wrong.*

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## **Tips for Parents and Guardians**

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1. Let your teen know that you love him or her no matter what. Teens need a trusting and loving relationship with a parent or other adult to feel safe and secure.
2. Talk to your teen, listen to his or her ideas and opinions, and do things together.
3. Get to know your teen's friends and learn what they do in school; it helps you understand your teen even better.
4. Show you care by chaperoning a trip.
5. Join a parent group or support group where you and other parents can discuss parenting issues.
6. Attend all parent-teacher conferences at school.
7. Go to your teen's athletic events and school musicals.
8. Answer your teen's questions about health risks.
9. Teach your teen to respect himself or herself and others.
10. Challenge your teen to discover his or her own incredible potential.
11. Show your teen that you are proud of his or her accomplishments, both large and small.

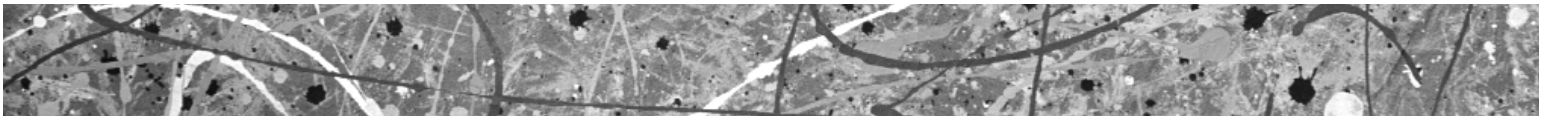
### **Setting limits and boundaries**

1. Establish limits and boundaries, such as curfews, study hours, behavior at parties, and expectations for special occasions, for example, prom and use of the family car.
2. Define the consequences of unacceptable behavior, make sure your teen understands the consequences, and then stick to them.
3. Recognize that some limits are negotiable and others are not.
4. Guide your teen toward choices that will keep him or her safe. While teens may fight with parents about some decisions, they usually realize that the limits placed on them are a sign of love, rather than control.
5. Monitor your teen's behavior—what he or she says and does, where he or she goes and with whom, and when to expect him or her home.
6. Redefine your limits of control over your teen's life as he or she starts to think and act more mature. Otherwise you risk some major problems in your relationship.
7. Monitor your own behavior—what you say, what you do, and what you believe. Your behavior will make a huge difference in the choices your teen makes.

### **Communicating with your teen**

1. Be honest and open with your teen when talking about your values, beliefs, and ideas. It may be wise to just say "Here is what I think about..." briefly explain your views, and then drop the subject.

*Continues on back...*



2. Help your teen to make responsible choices by talking about their options.
3. Tell your teen if you are disappointed or upset with his or her behavior.
4. Praise, hug, encourage, and say "I love you."
5. Express your expectations for his or her goals and accomplishments.
6. Recognize that your teen's life may be very different from your own adolescence.
7. Your teen deserves guidance, high but realistic expectations for achievement, and a fair balance between rules and freedom.

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## Resources

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Your teen's health care provider.

Adolescent Health On-Line  
<http://www.ama-assn.org/go/adolescenthealth>

Slap, Gail; Jablow, Martha. *Teenage Health Care*. New York, NY: Pocket Books; 1994.

Pipher, Mary. *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls*. New York, NY: Ballantine Books; 1994.

American Academy of Pediatrics. *Caring for Your Adolescent*. New York, NY: Bantam Books; 1991.

Elkind, David. *Parenting Your Teenager*. New York NY: Ballantine Books; 1994.

Haffner, Debra W. *Beyond the Big Talk: Every Parent's Guide to Raising Sexually Healthy Teens – From Middle School to High School and Beyond*. New York, NY: New Market Press; 2001.

Steinberg, L.; Levine, A. *You and Your Adolescent: A Parent's Guide for Ages 10-20*. Dunmore, PA: HarperCollins Publishers Inc; 1997.

Ford, Judy. *Wonderful Ways to Love a Teen*. Berkeley, California: Conari Press; 1996.

Panzarine, Susan. *A Parent's Guide to the Teen Years: Raising Your 11- to 14-Year-Old in the Age of Chat Rooms and Navel Rings*. New York, NY: Checkmark Books; 2000.

Simpson, A. Rae. *Raising Teens: A Synthesis of Research and a Foundation for Action*. Boston, MASS: Center for Health Communications, Harvard School of Public Health; 2001.

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# About **Helping Your Teen Make Responsible Choices**

*Being at a party where alcohol and other drugs are available...being pressured to have sex...being pressured to join a gang... These are serious situations that teens face. As a parent, you wish you could always be there to protect your teen from situations that could hurt him or her, but it doesn't always work out that way. As your child grows older, parenting is less about control and more about offering direction. By sharing your time, experience, values, and love, you can help your teen make healthy choices.*

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## **Quick Facts**

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It is normal for teens to challenge their parents' values, beliefs, and practices as a way to test parents and assert their independence.

Teens need support and guidance from their parents to make important decisions about their future.

The more controlling parents are, the more rebellious teens are likely to become.

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## **Tips for Parents**

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When your teen is faced with making a decision and wants to talk to you about it, make the most out of this opportunity! If you follow the tips below, your teen will know that you want to help but you won't take control and make the decision yourself. Your approach to any discussion has a real impact on whether or not your teen will feel comfortable coming to talk to you in the future.

### **1. Allow your teen to describe the problem or situation.**

- Ask how he or she feels about the problem.
- Ask questions that avoid "yes" or "no" responses. These usually begin with "how," "why," or "what."
- Really listen to what your teen is saying, instead of thinking about your response.
- Try to put yourself in your teen's shoes to understand his or her thoughts.

### **2. Talk with your teen about choices.**

- Teens sometimes believe they don't have choices. Help your teen to see alternatives.

### **3. Help your teen to identify and compare the possible consequences of all the choices.**

- How will the results affect your teen's goals? For example, how would smoking affect playing on the soccer team?
- Explain (without lecturing) the consequences of different choices.

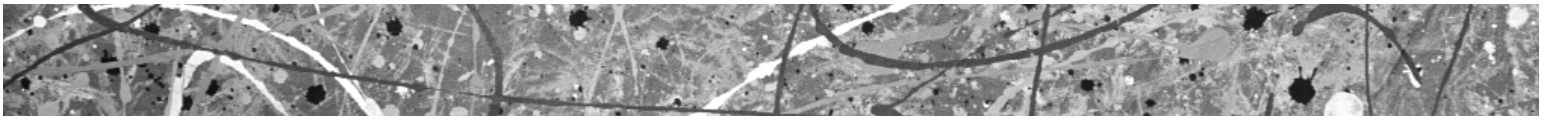
### **4. Allow your teen to make a decision and carry it out.**

- Ask if your teen has a plan.
- Remember, your teen may make different choices than you would prefer.

### **5. Later, ask your teen how things worked out.**

- What did he or she learn from the decision?
- Allow your teen to live and learn from mistakes.
- Praise your teen when he or she makes a good choice.

*Continues on back...*



## Respect!

Teenagers with high self-esteem and self-respect make more responsible health choices. Help your teen to build these characteristics by:

- allowing him or her to voice opinions
- allowing him or her to be involved in family decisions
- listening to his or her opinions and feelings
- helping him or her set realistic goals
- showing faith in his or her ability to reach those goals
- giving unconditional love

## Facing peer pressure

How will your teen handle peer pressure to drink, smoke, have sex, or get in a fight? Talk with your teen about ways to handle risky situations to prepare him or her to make safer choices. To feel comfortable talking openly with you, your teen needs to know that you will not punish him or her for being honest.

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## Resources

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Your teenager's health care provider.

Adolescent Health On-Line  
<http://www.ama-assn.org/go/adolescenthealth>

Familyeducation.com  
Learning Network Parent Channel  
<http://ww.familyeducation.com>

National Parent Information Network  
<http://www.ericps.ed.uiuc.edu/npin>

American Academy of Pediatrics.  
*Caring for Your Adolescent Ages 12 to 21.*  
New York, NY: Bantam Books; 1991.

Faber, Adele; Mazlish, Elaine. *How to Talk So Your Kids Will Listen and Listen So Your Kids Will Talk.*  
New York, NY: Avon Books; 1980.

Haffner, Debra W. *Beyond the Big Talk: Every Parent's Guide to Raising Sexually Healthy Teens – From Middle School to High School and Beyond.* New York, NY: New Market Press; 2001.

McMahon, Tom. *Teen Tips: A Practical Survival Guide for Parents With Kids 11 to 19.* New York, NY: Pocket Books; 1996.

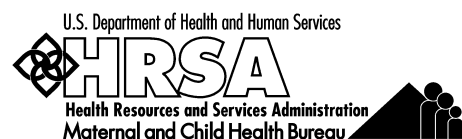
Panzarine, Susan. *A Parent's Guide to the Teen Years: Raising Your 11- to 14-Year-Old in the Age of Chat Rooms and Navel Rings.* New York, NY: Checkmark Books; 2000.

Simpson, A. Rae. *Raising Teens: A Synthesis of Research and a Foundation for Action.* Boston, MASS: Center for Health Communications, Harvard School of Public Health; 2001.

Steinberg, L.; Levine, A. *You and Your Adolescent: A Parent's Guide for Ages 10-20.* Dunmore, PA: HarperCollins Publishers Inc; 1997.

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# About Teenage Growth and Development: 11-14 Years

*Adolescence is a time of rapid physical, intellectual, social, and emotional growth. Knowing what kinds of changes to expect can help to decrease the “growing pains” for both parents and youth.*

---

## Quick Facts

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The physical changes that take place during puberty are caused by hormones.

A girl will usually get her first period around the same age that her mother did.

Because teens want to fit in, most choose friends whose interests, activities, and values are similar to their own.

Talking on the phone is one way teens develop their social skills.

### Physical changes (Puberty)

For girls, puberty begins around 10 or 11 years of age and ends around age 16. Boys enter puberty later than girls—usually around 12 years of age—and it lasts until around age 16 or 17. Girls and boys usually begin puberty around the same time their mothers and fathers did. Talk with your child about the following physical changes that will happen during puberty. The changes are listed in the order in which they generally occur.

#### Girls

- body fat increases
- breasts begin to enlarge
- pubic hair grows
- height and weight increase
- first menstrual period occurs
- hips widen
- underarm hair grows
- skin and hair become more oily
- pimples may appear

#### Boys

- scrotum becomes darker
- testicles grow larger
- penis grows longer and fuller
- pubic hair grows
- breasts can get “lumps” and become tender
- height and weight increase
- muscles develop
- wet dreams occur
- voice cracks and gets deeper
- skin and hair become more oily
- pimples may appear
- underarm and facial hair grow

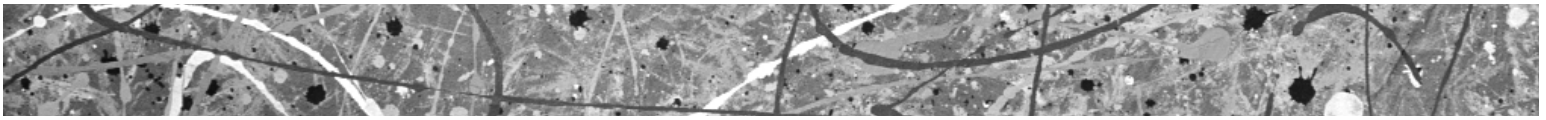
### Intellectual development

- Most 11- to 14-year-olds are still concrete thinkers—they perceive things as good or bad, right or wrong. This is normal. They are just beginning to imagine possibilities, recognize consequences of their actions, and anticipate what others are thinking.
- Youth begin to question family and school rules and challenge their parents.
- Preteens and teens tend to believe that bad things won't happen to them. This helps explain why they are risk-takers. For example, a young girl may believe she can smoke cigarettes without becoming addicted.
- Preteens and teens believe they are the center of attention. This explains why they are painfully self-conscious—a tiny pimple may seem like the end of the world.

### Social and emotional development

- Preteens and teens begin to spend more time with peers and less time with family.
- Preteens and teens begin to form their identity by exploring different clothes, hairstyles, friends, music, and hobbies.
- Moodiness is common as youth struggle to search for an identity.
- Preteens and teens push limits that adults put on them to assert their independence.

*Continues on back...*



- Preteens and teens have mixed feelings about “breaking away” from parents. One day your daughter may want nothing to do with you, the next she is constantly at your side.
- Troubled youth may act out (for example, get into physical fights, use alcohol or other drugs, skip school) to express emotional pain.

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## Tips for Parents

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1. Preteens and teens are sometimes embarrassed by their changing bodies and concerned that they are not developing at the same rate as their friends. Reassure your child that young people grow and develop at their own pace and that the changes are normal.
2. Do not tease your child about pubertal changes.
3. Explain the importance of good personal hygiene. Active sweat glands call for regular bathing and deodorant. For healthy teeth, everyone should brush twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste and floss daily.
4. Set reasonable and appropriate limits. Preteens and teens want guidance.
5. When differences arise, listen to your child and try to understand his or her point of view.
6. Choose your battles! Hold your ground on important issues such as grades and drugs, and let go of smaller issues such as hairstyles and clothes. If it won't matter a year from now, is it worth arguing over?
7. Allow your preteen or teen to make more decisions as he or she proves the ability to use good judgment.
8. If your child is acting out, talk with him or her to get to the heart of the problem.
9. Get counseling for your child or the whole family if you believe it could help.
10. Talk with other parents about your concerns, their parenting experiences, setting limits, etc.

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## Resources

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Your teen's health care provider.

Adolescent Health On Line  
<http://www.ama-assn.org/go/adolescenthealth>

Familyeducation.com:  
Learning Network Parent Channel  
<http://www.familyeducation.com>

National Parent Information Network  
<http://www.ericps.ed.uiuc.edu/npin>

American Academy of Pediatrics. *Caring for Your Adolescent Ages 12 to 21*. New York, NY: Bantam Books; 1991.

Haffner, Debra W. *Beyond the Big Talk: Every Parent's Guide to Raising Sexually Healthy Teens – From Middle School to High School and Beyond*. New York, NY: New Market Press; 2001.

Harris, Robie H. *It's Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex & Sexual Health*. Cambridge, Mass: Candlewick Press; 1994.

McMahon, Tom. *Teen Tips: A Practical Survival Guide for Parents With Kids 11 to 19*. New York, NY: Pocket Books; 1996.

McCoy, Kathy; Wibbelsman, Charles. *The New Teenage Body Book*. Newark, NJ: Berkley Publishing; 1992. (Available by calling 800 788-6262.)

Panzarine, Susan. *A Parent's Guide to the Teen Years: Raising Your 11- to 14-Year-Old in the Age of Chat Rooms and Navel Rings*. New York, NY: Checkmark Books; 2000.

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Steinberg, L.; Levine, A. *You and Your Adolescent: A Parent's Guide for Ages 10-20*. Dunmore, PA: HarperCollins Publishers Inc; 1997.

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# About Teenage Growth and Development: 15-17 Years

*Congratulations! You and your teen have made it through what is usually the most difficult period of adolescence—11 to 14 years. Midadolescence (15-17 years) is usually an easier time for teens and parents. But don't get too comfortable. New challenges will test your patience, understanding, and parenting skills.*

---

## Quick Facts

---

Most teens navigate the developmental tasks of adolescence successfully.

Teens ages 15-19 have much higher mortality rates than younger children.

The leading causes of death for teens are motor vehicle crashes, homicide, and suicide.

### Physical growth

Girls have usually reached full physical development. Many teenage girls are concerned with the way they look and are dissatisfied with their bodies and their weight. Nearly half of all high school girls diet to lose weight. Boys are close to completing their physical growth. Around 15 or 16 years of age, boys' voices will lower and facial hair will appear. Boys may continue to gain height and muscle.

### Intellectual characteristics

Teens are better able to solve problems, think about their future, appreciate opinions of others, and understand the long-term effects of their decisions. However, teens tend to use these skills inconsistently; as a result, they sometimes do things without thinking first.

Teens' organizational skills improve. Many successfully juggle school, outside activities, and work.

In an attempt to answer the questions "Who am I?" and "What should I be?" teens listen to new music, try out clothing fashions, and begin to explore jobs, religion, political issues, and social causes.

Teens frequently question and challenge school and parental rules.

### Social and emotional characteristics

Older teens are more self-assured and better able to resist peer pressure than younger teens.

Teens spend less time than they used to with their families. They prefer to spend more time with friends or alone.

Teens try to make close friends and may become part of a group based on interests or attributes (sports, arts, etc.).

Teens want control over more aspects of their lives.

Teens are excited and at the same time overwhelmed by the possibilities for their future (college, work, or military).

Like adults, teens get depressed—sadness lasting more than 2 weeks, however, is not normal. Call your teen's health care provider if this happens.

Use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs is more common now than before.

Teens begin to have strong sexual urges, and many become sexually active.

Teens become more aware of their sexual orientation (homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual).

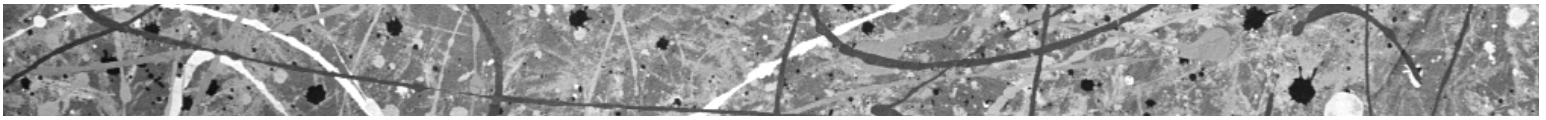
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## Tips for Parents

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1. Breaking away from parents or guardians and wanting more privacy are normal parts of growing up—don't take it personally.

*Continues on back...*



2. Although they won't admit it, teens still need parents to set limits. Rules and privileges (curfew, driving, dating, etc.) should be based on your teen's level of maturity, not age.
3. Negotiate rules with your teen. The more controlling you try to be, the more rebellious your teen is likely to become.
4. Discuss the consequences of breaking the rules and follow through with them if your teen misbehaves.
5. Teens will make mistakes and may lose your trust. It's important to give them another chance.
6. Express your values about school, work, alcohol and other drugs, and sex.
7. Encourage your teen to take aptitude and interest tests at school to identify future directions. Help your teen plan for his or her future after high school.
8. If your teen tells you that he or she is homosexual, he or she will need your love and support. You, in turn, may benefit from a support group for parents of gays and lesbians.
9. Know how to recognize the signs and symptoms of eating disorders and other mental health problems. Deal with any problem right away.
10. Talk with your teen about ways to handle pressure to drink, smoke, have sex, etc. Teach your teen how to say no and to suggest doing something different (safe). To feel comfortable talking openly with you, your teen needs to know that you will not punish him or her for being honest.

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## Resources

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Your teen's health care provider.

Adolescent Health On-Line  
<http://www.ama-assn.org/go/adolescenthealth>

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
<http://www.aacap.org>

Familyeducation.com:  
Learning Network Parent Channel  
<http://www.familyeducation.com>

National Parent Information Network  
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Harris, Robie H. *It's Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex & Sexual Health*. Cambridge, Mass: Candlewick Press; 1994.

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# About Immunization, Vaccinations and Shots

*Vaccination is the best way to protect your adolescent against measles, mumps, rubella (MMR), diphtheria, tetanus (also known as lockjaw), hepatitis B, and varicella (chickenpox). Because of vaccination, there are many fewer cases of these diseases, but they still exist.*

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## Quick Facts

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Hepatitis B is a serious infection and can lead to diseases of the liver.

All 11- through 19-year-olds should be vaccinated against hepatitis B if they haven't been already.

Getting a diphtheria-tetanus booster at 11 or 12 years of age can reduce the chance of getting these diseases.

Two MMR vaccinations are necessary. The first is usually given to infants at about 15 months of age. If your adolescent has not had the second vaccination, then he or she should get it now.

Varicella (chickenpox) vaccine is recommended for teens not vaccinated previously and who have not had chickenpox.

All immunizations for adolescents can and should be given at the same time.

## The catch-up visit

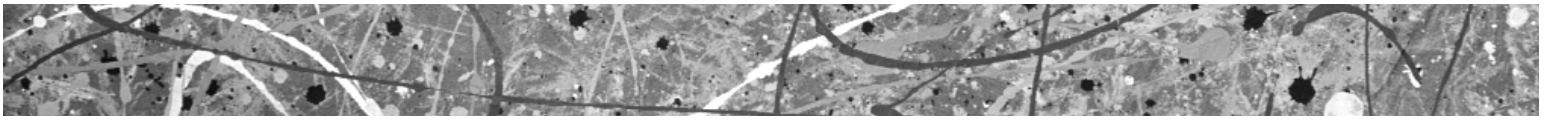
A visit to "catch up" on vaccinations is recommended for all children 11 or 12 years old. At this visit your adolescent should receive:

1. the first booster dose of Td (tetanus and diphtheria) if at least 5 years have passed since the last dose of DTP (baby shots);
2. the varicella (chickenpox) vaccine if not previously infected or vaccinated;
3. the second dose of MMR, if it has not already been given;
4. the first dose of the hepatitis B series if it has not already been given. Adolescents should receive 3 doses of hepatitis B vaccine. The second dose is given 1 or 2 months after the first dose. The third dose is given 4 to 6 months after the first dose.

## Other vaccines

Vaccines to prevent the "flu" and pneumonia-type infections are recommended for children with health problems such as kidney disease, sickle cell anemia, diseases of the lung and heart, and other chronic conditions. Ask your teen's doctor for more information.

The hepatitis A vaccine should be given to teens who plan to travel to or work in a country that has high rates of hepatitis A, those who live in a community with high rates of hepatitis A, and those with other special circumstances. Hepatitis A causes diarrhea, dehydration, and other health problems.



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## Resources

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Your teen's health care provider.

Adolescent Health On-Line

<http://www.ama-assn.org/go/adolescenthealth>

American Academy of Family Physicians

<http://www.familydoctors.org>

American Academy of Pediatrics

<http://www.aap.org>

Your health department.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

National Immunization Program

<http://www.cdc.gov/nip>

The CDC Immunization Hot Line number is

800 232-2522 or 800 232-0233 (Spanish)

Medem, Inc. An e-health network developed by the

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<http://www.medem.com>

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