

Your Teenage Years



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NEXT WELL VISIT: In one year

DENTAL CARE:

- Brush teeth with a grain of rice sized amount of fluoride toothpaste twice a day.
- Take your child to the dentist twice a year

NUTRITION AND HEALTHY LIFESTYLES:

Eating well and exercising regularly helps maintain a healthy weight. Children who are obese at age 6 have a 25 percent chance of being obese as adults, while children who are obese at age 12 have a 75 percent chance of remaining obese. Obesity can lead to serious health problems such as diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, joint problems and liver disease.

Unfortunately, all of these problems can begin in childhood. If there is a history for cholesterol problems in your family, tell your doctor.

The best prevention against obesity is to live a healthy lifestyle. Here are simple ideas that everyone should follow to lead a healthier life:

- Eat regular meals and healthy snacks such as fruits, vegetables, nuts and cheeses. Stay away from snacks that are high in fat.
- Eliminate juice, soda and sports drinks from your diet. Drink water for hydration. A soda contains about 300 calories and contains 10 teaspoons for sugar, which adds up quickly!
- Avoid processed foods by preparing meals with fresh ingredients.
- Eat together as a family and not in front of the TV or other electronics.
- Drink non-or low-fat milk and lots of water.
- Limit how often you eat at restaurants. Restaurant portions tend to be much larger than needed. Share a meal or save half for a future meal. Eliminate fast foods.
- Limit screen time to no more than two hours per day. Get some exercise instead!

Calcium is needed to build strong, healthy bones. Weight-bearing exercise also helps to build strong bones. Aim for 1,300 mg of calcium in your diet each day, which is about four servings per day. Some calcium-rich foods are dairy products, most leafy green vegetables and some cereals. Supplements are an alternative. Consider a multivitamin complete with Vitamin D, folic acid and iron, especially if you are vegetarian.

BECOMING INDEPENDENT

- Take new challenges; you'll increase your confidence.
- Learn about yourself, what you believe in and what is important to you. Discuss these things with your parents.
- Participate in organized activities such as school clubs, sports or religious camps.
- Discuss limits and consequences for unacceptable behavior with your parents. Continue to discuss as a family rules such as curfews or driving.
- Get help with big choices like college, job training and career ideas.
- Discuss current events and social responsibility with family and friends.
- You have the right to confidentiality. Your doctor will keep personal issues between the two of you unless you are planning to harm yourself or others.
- When you are 18, consider filling out an advance health
- decisions for yourself.

MOOD AND STRESS

- Signs of a mood problem may include:
- Prolonged and consistent sadness
- Lack of energy or constantly feeling tired
- No longer enjoying activities that you used to like
- Withdrawing from friends and family
- Being more irritable and/or angry
- Inability to concentrate
- Significant weight changes
- A notable change in sleeping patterns
- Feelings of guilt, helplessness and/or hopelessness

If you notice any of these signs, it is important to tell your doctor or another trusted adult as soon as possible. Help is available!

SLEEP

- As a teenager, you may often go to bed late. This may make getting up for school in the morning hard.
- Try to get eight hours of sleep per night.
- Set regular bedtimes and wake times. This will help you get enough rest and be ready for your day.
- Let your doctor know if you snore, as this may be a sign of a health problem.

SEX, DRUGS AND ROCK AND ROLL

- If you are sexually active, always use a condom. Other birth control methods are always available; please discuss this with your provider.
- Sexually active teens should always be tested for sexually transmitted infections regularly. Some infections have no symptoms and could lead to infertility and death.
- Confidential testing may be available through your doctor or Planned Parenthood.
- Your brain is still developing and drugs can cause lasting changes. If you have a problem with or questions about drugs or alcohol, please let your doctor or another trusted adult know. Help is available!
- Hearing loss in young adults is rising. Keep volume down when listening to your music.
- These may be sensitive topics, and they can be discussed with your provider confidentially in most instances.

ACNE

If you have acne:

- Wash your face twice a day with a mild facial cleanser, and moisturize with a facial lotion.
- Always wash your face after exercise.
- Try using an over-the-counter benzoyl peroxide wash (5 to 10 percent concentration) once a day. While this may irritate the skin at first, this sensitivity should subside with regular use.

Facts About Acne:

- Foods do not make acne worse.
- Acne does not go away overnight. With dedication to regular hygiene (and taking medications if necessary), you should see improvements in a few months.

If you are concerned about your acne despite these measures, see your doctor.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- AAP Healthy Children: Teens: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/Pages/default.aspx>
- Health Information for Teens: <https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/?WT.ac=p2t>