

Well Check: 11 to 14 years (for parents)

Staying focused on everyday health

You can help stay focused on your child's health by:

- **Keeping up on the recommended immunizations** for a certain type of bacterial meningitis, the flu, and HPV infections.
- **Helping your child learn good sleep habits.** Children ages 11 to 12 years need 9 to 11 hours of sleep each night. Teenagers ages 13 to 14 years need 8 to 10 hours of sleep.
- **Being consistent about healthy teeth.** Visit the dentist twice a year. Encourage your child to brush and floss every day.
- **Serving healthy food.** Don't have junk food in the house. Make sure your child knows how to make a few simple, healthy snacks such as celery and peanut butter or apples and cheese.
- **Encouraging physical activity.** Your child should be active for at least 1 hour a day.
- **Asking your doctor for advice** if you're concerned about your child's weight or eating habits.
- **Creating a media plan.** Establish rules to limit media use and create a media plan for your family at [healthychildren.org/MediaUse Plan](http://healthychildren.org/MediaUsePlan). Too much screen time has shown to increase a child's risk of being obese or having mood problems. Limit all of these activities to no more than 2 hours per day (unless it's for homework).
- **Praising your child for doing something good,** not only for looking good.
- **Talking about puberty and talking to your teen about healthy sexuality.** It's important to give correct information. Do what you can to make it easier to ask the uncomfortable questions. Bring helpful books home and find reliable websites.

What do I need to do next?

- 1 Review this handout.
- 2 Write the names and numbers of a few adults that both you and your child trust. Your young teen may need help sometime you're not around.

Helping build good school habits

You can help build good school habits by:

- **Praising hard work.** School can become more challenging at this age. Some students may have a harder time and some may start to resist school.
- **Helping your child take responsibility for their own schoolwork.** Coach them on being organized about time and due dates.
- **Keeping in touch with teachers.** Go to parent-teacher conferences and back-to-school night. Try to be involved with the school.
- **Encouraging everyday reading.** Help your child find books on topics of personal interest that aren't just for homework.
- **Helping your young teen find enjoyable activities to do outside of schoolwork.** This is a good way to make friends and to help build a sense of self. Find activities that will help others as well.

Keeping the family close

You can help keep your family close by:

- **Eating together often.** Turn off screens while you're eating. Use mealtime as a way to connect with your child. Eating meals together and talking daily to your child is the best way to prevent drug abuse.
- **Spending time doing things together.** Even though your child may want to spend more time with friends, it's still important to have fun with the family. Be active together.
- **Discussing your values.** Peer values don't replace parents. Talk as a family about drugs, alcohol, and sex. Explain how you feel about them.
- **Using clear and consistent rules and discipline.** It's normal for your child to want to challenge the family rules and values at this age. Continue to set limits and enforce them calmly and consistently. Involve your child in setting rules and limits and in determining consequences.
- **Setting an example of healthy behaviors and choices.** You're an important role model.

Staying aware of friends and activities

You can stay aware of friends and activities by:

- **Getting to know your child's friends** and their parents. Always be aware of where your child is and what they are doing.
- **Helping your child build lasting relationships.** Talk about honesty, kindness, and open communication with others.
- **Making sure your child knows how to get help when they feel unsafe.** Agree on other trusted adults your child can turn to if you're not available or if your child has something they're uneasy sharing with you.
- **Helping your child understand other people's point of view.** Talk about how life might be different for other people in your community.

Understanding moodiness

Your child may be moody due to hormonal and physical changes that happen during this period of life. Your child may also have mixed feelings about emotional independence. You can understand your child's moodiness by:

- **Getting in the habit of talking through stresses and problems.** Talk about healthy ways of handling disagreements or anger.
- **Talking with the doctor for advice** if your child seems overly sad, anxious, or irritable.

This is general information that applies to most families. If your doctor tells you something different, follow what your doctor says.

My follow-up appointment

Your next well-child visit will be in 1 year.

Date/Time: _____

Here are helpful resources in the meantime:

- **IntermountainMoms** Facebook page
- For more age-appropriate safety information, visit [safekids.org](https://www.safekids.org) and sign up for the monthly newsletter.
- If you need help with housing, food, or if you feel unsafe at home, call 2-1-1, or visit [211ut.org](https://www.211ut.org) for community services.

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