

Well Check: 11 to 14 years (for Parents)

As your child becomes an adolescent, try to offer more choice and independence. Let him be responsible for decisions, and make sure you still have rules for what's safe and appropriate. Then be sure you're there for support while your whole family is learning.

Stay focused on everyday health

- **Talk about puberty.** 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. The doctor can recommend some.
- **Keep up on the recommended immunizations.** There are a few more to get at this age.
- **Be consistent about healthy teeth.** Visit the dentist twice a year. Encourage your child to brush and floss every day.
- **Serve 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.
- **Encourage physical activity.** Your child should be active for at least an hour a day. Don't allow more than 2 hours a day in front of the TV or other screens (unless it's for homework).
- **If you're uncomfortable about your child's weight or eating habits,** ask your doctor for advice.
- **Praise your child for *doing something good*,** not only for *looking good*.



Your young teen may need help sometime you're not around. Write the names and numbers of a few adults that both of you trust:

Help build good school habits

- **School can become more challenging at this age.** Some students may have a harder time, some may start to resist school. Praise hard work.
- **Help your child take responsibility for his own schoolwork.** Coach him on being organized about time and due dates.
- **Keep in touch with teachers.** Go to parent-teacher conferences and back-to-school night. Try to be involved with the school.
- **Encourage everyday reading.** Help your child find books on topics of personal interest that aren't just for homework.
- **Help 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.

Keep the family close

- **Eat together as a family often.** Turn off the screens while you're eating. Use meal time as a way to talk and connect with your child.
- **Spend time doing things together as a family.** 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.
- **Discuss your values.** Peer values don't replace parents. Talk as a family about drugs, alcohol, and sex. Explain how you feel about them.
- **Use 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.
- **Set an example of healthy behaviors and choices.** You're an important role model.

Stay aware of friends and activities

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

Understand moodiness

- **You child may be moody,** and have mixed feelings about emotional independence.
- **Get in the habit of talking through stresses and problems.** Talk about healthy ways of handling disagreements or anger.
- **If your child seems overly sad,** anxious, or irritable, talk with the doctor for advice.

All families are a little different. Your doctor may tell you some things that are different from what this paper says. If so, follow what your doctor says.

NOTES:

Your next well check will be in one year.

HELPFUL RESOURCES



If you need help in other areas of your life (such as rent, violence, or a job), call 2-1-1, or visit 211ut.org for community resources.