

Well Check: Teen *(for parents)*

Staying focused on everyday health

You can stay focused on everyday health by:

- **Keeping healthy foods at home.** Don't have junk food in the house. Make sure your teen knows how to make a few simple, healthy snacks and meals. If you're uncomfortable about your teen's weight or eating habits, ask your doctor for advice.
- **Encouraging lots of 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 screens (unless it's for homework).
- **Helping your child learn good sleep habits.** Sleep is crucial for physical and mental health. Your teen still needs 8 to 10 hours of sleep per night.
- **Visiting the dentist** twice a year. Make sure the brushing and flossing happens every day.
- **Talking about healthy sexuality.** Teenagers need correct information about both physical and emotional issues related to sex. Help your teen resist pressure to have sex at this age.
- **Praising your teen for doing something good,** not only for looking good.

Staying aware of friends and activities

You can stay aware of friends and activities by:

- **Getting to know your teen's friends.** Always be aware of where your teen is and what they're doing.
- **Making sure your teen knows how to get help when feeling unsafe.** Agree on other trusted adults they can turn to if needed.
- **Encouraging relationships built on respect,** whether they're with boys or girls. Talk about honesty, kindness, and open communication.
- **Using parental control settings** for all devices.



What do I need to do next?

- 1 Review this handout.
- 2 Your family may need other resources to help keep your teenager healthy, safe, and happy. Write the numbers of other places you can get help.

Supporting independence—and safety

You can support your teen's independence and safety by:

- **Being clear about rules and expectations.** Agree together on limits, curfews, responsibilities, and consequences. Stick to what you agreed on.
- **Talking about safety** in cars, during sports, with people, and in various situations. Help your teen learn to take responsibility for safety gear, safe situations, and safe behavior. If your teen is driving, set up a driving agreement (available at healthychildren.org).
- **Considering locking your liquor and prescription medicines in a cabinet.** Even if your teen is not tempted, their friends may be.
- **Encouraging your teen to think through difficult decisions.** Don't try to provide all the answers.
- **Involving your teen in decisions that affect the family,** as appropriate.
- **Respecting your teen's privacy.** It strengthens their independence and builds self-confidence.

Keeping the family close

You can help keep your family close by:

- **Spending time doing things together.** Even though your teen may want to spend more time with friends, it's still important to have fun and be active with the family.
- **Eating together often.** Turn off the screens while you're eating. Use meal time as a way to talk and connect with each other.
- **Showing affection.** Your teenager still needs lots of love and praise from you.
- **Being a role model.** Be an example of the healthy behaviors you want to see in your teenager.
- **Talking about your values.** Peer values don't replace parents. Talk about drugs, alcohol, and sex. Explain how you feel about them.

Staying aware of what's happening at school

You can stay aware of what's happening in school by:

- **Talking with your teen about challenges there.** School can be challenging at this age. Some students may have a harder time, and some may resist school.
- **Encouraging your teen to take responsibility for their learning, due dates, and time management.** School is a good place to show their independence.
- **Keeping in touch with teachers and counselors.** Go to parent conferences and back-to-school night. Be involved with the school.
- **Help your teen find activities they like to do outside of schoolwork,** such as sports, the arts, volunteer work, or causes in the community. This is a good way to make friends and build a sense of self.

Understanding moodiness

You can understand your teen's moodiness by:

- **Helping talk through stresses and problems.** It's normal to be moody at this age. Talk about good ways to handle sadness, disagreements, or anger.
- **Talking with your doctor** if your teen seems overly sad, anxious, or irritable.

Everybody's a little different. Your doctor may tell you some things that are different from what this fact sheet says. If so, 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, 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 for community services.

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