



WOODCREEK PEDIATRICS

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CONVENIENCE CARE by WOODCREEK

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NORMAL DEVELOPMENT: 15 to 17 YEARS OLD

Some attitudes, behaviors, and physical milestones tend to occur at certain ages. It is perfectly natural for a teen to reach some milestones earlier and others later than the general trend. The following are general guidelines for the stages of normal development.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Most girls complete the physical changes related to puberty by age 15.
- Boys continue to mature and gain strength, muscle mass, and height. Sexual traits also continue to develop.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- Seeks friends who share the same beliefs, values, and interests. Friends become more important.
- Explores romantic and sexual behaviors with others.
- May be influenced by peers to take risks with alcohol, tobacco, sex, or other things.

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- May stress over school and test scores.
- May have high expectations and low self-image.
- Seeks privacy and time alone.
- Worries that they are not physically or sexually attractive.
- May complain that parents try to keep them from doing things independently.
- Starts to want both physical and emotional closeness in relationships.

MENTAL DEVELOPMENT

- Is better able to set goals and think in terms of the future.
- Has a better understanding of complex problems and issues.
- Starts to develop moral ideals and to select role models.

If you have any concerns about your teen's own pattern of development, check with your healthcare provider.

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Well Care during the Teen Years

Development –The teen years are when your body begins to mature sexually. There are different ages at which people enter puberty, but it usually starts between 10 and 13 of age. Adolescence causes changes in thinking and the way you feel. Be open when your parents make an effort to talk with you about personal things such as sex, drugs, and friendships. It can be just as hard for parents to discuss these topics as it is for you.

School – Teens have a lot of school adjustments to make. From middle school to high school to college, teens vary widely in how they enjoy and adapt to school. You may get more involved in sports, art, and music. It may be hard to juggle everything that you want to do. A mentoring program, family member, school teacher or counselor can be a great resource.

Social Skills

- Peer pressure can be significant. Don't let your friends pressure you into doing something unsafe. You are the one who will face the consequences if something happens.
- When you get angry, self-statements can be helpful. For example "I don't need to prove myself here." If you feel very angry, leave the situation or go do something physical such as walking, jogging, or bicycling.
- You may stress over school and test scores, and worry that you are not physically or sexually attractive. Find ways to deal with stress. Talking with a friend, parent, healthcare provider, or counselor about life stresses can help you calm down.
- Explore new interests and activities, including those that help others. This is the time for you to think through problems and show responsible decision making.

Sexuality

Talk with your parents about sexuality, relationships, and values. Discuss things like modesty and commitment to another person. Remember:

- Healthy dating relationships are built on respect and concern. Saying NO is okay.
- Not having sex is the safest way to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

Nutrition

- Do something physically active every day. Be physically active 60 minutes a day.
- Drink more water and fewer energy drinks and sodas.
- Do not skip meals. Eat three meals a day, especially breakfast. Skipping meals can lead to increased hunger and uncontrolled overeating later. Snack on fresh fruits, vegetables, and lean yogurt.
- Reduce saturated fat and trans fats. Common food pitfalls for teens include: fast food hamburgers, cheeseburgers, pizza, crispy chicken patties, chicken fries and nuggets, French fries, breakfast sandwiches with cheese, bacon or sausage, and deep fried dessert pies.
- Eat together with family members once per day if possible, and don't eat in front of the television.
- Eat a variety of foods to make sure that your diet is healthy. It's important for girls to get enough iron and calcium during the teen years.

Safety Tips

Car Safety

- Everyone in a car should always wear seat belts
- Don't drink or use drugs. Don't ride in car with driver who has used alcohol or drugs.
- Night driving is very difficult for new drivers. Most accidents occur between 9 PM and 2 AM. Don't drive if you're sleepy. This can be as dangerous as driving drunk.
- Follow the posted speed limit. The faster you go the less control you have over your car. More than a third of teen driving deaths involve speeding.
- Avoid distractions like texting or talking on your cell phone. You are 4 times more likely to have an accident if you are talking on the phone. Keep both hands on the wheel. Eating, changing a playlist or CD, or putting on makeup are other things that you shouldn't do while driving. Taking a minute to pull over and do these things could save your life.
- Keep control of your emotions when you're driving. Road rage is increasing. If you get upset or angry when driving, pull over to the side of the road until you get control of yourself.

Physical Safety

- Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before exposure to the sun. Choose a sunscreen that screens out both UVA and UVB rays, with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or greater. Avoid tanning salons.
- Always wear a helmet when biking, rollerblading, or skateboarding. It is the best way to prevent injuries. Never bike, rollerblade, or skateboard out of control. Stay within your comfort level. Don't take unnecessary risks.
- Wear eye protection if you are around dust, flying objects, intense light, or chemicals that could get into your eye. Wear safety gear if you play paintball, racquetball, lacrosse, hockey, and fast-pitch softball.
- Use ear protectors when you are in a loud environment. Noise levels at concerts, where music is often louder than 120 decibels, can damage your ears in 10 minutes. Arena and stadium sporting events and car racing can be just as loud.

Substance Abuse

- Most smokers started smoking as teens. You may be trying to find a way to fit in with a group of friends, or think it is a fun activity at parties. You may think it will help you relax. You may do it as a way to rebel against parents. None of those outweigh the dangers. If you smoke, set a quit date and stop.
- Don't drink alcohol or abuse drugs, including prescription medicines or diet pills. Don't use steroids to try to improve sports performance. Athletes who test positive for steroids can be suspended or disqualified. Steroids have many serious side effects.
- Support friends who don't use drugs or alcohol.

Bullying – No one should bully and no one deserves to be bullied. The goal of bullying is to humiliate the victim. Physical bullies may hit, pinch, kick, shove, bite, or pull a victim's hair. Verbal bullies may insult, start or spread rumors, tease, and make threats. Sexual bullies may make sexual comments, threaten, or touch in unwanted ways, such as snapping a bra strap. Cyberbullies use the Internet, cell phones, or other devices to send or post text or pictures meant to hurt or embarrass another person.

If you are being bullied, or are depressed and feel that you could hurt yourself or someone else, talk to a parent, healthcare provider, or other trusted adult.

Reading and Electronic Media – Limit nonacademic screen time (TV, electronic games, computers, cellphones) to 2 hours a day. Spending a lot of time on the computer takes away from other activities such as homework, sleep, exercise, or spending face-time with others. Having a television in the bedroom is associated with increases in body weight.

When it comes to social media, post only information that you want everyone to see and know about you. Many people can see your page, including your parents, your teachers, the police, the college you might want to apply to next year, or the job you might want to apply for in five years.

Dental Care –Except for the third molars, known as wisdom teeth, you should have all of your permanent teeth. You should brush your teeth twice a day and floss once per day. Have a dental checkup every 6 months.

Immunizations

These immunizations are recommended at 11 or 12 years of age:

- Tdap vaccine (tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis, single dose)
- meningococcal conjugate vaccine (single dose)
- HPV (human papillomavirus) vaccine protects against sexually transmitted warts and cervical cancer. The vaccine is given in a three dose series.

If you have not received these immunizations, your provider may give you a catch-up vaccine. An annual flu shot is also recommended.

Next Visit

You should have a routine checkup every year through the teen years. Routine check ups may include:

- Checking blood pressure, cholesterol, height, and weight. Your healthcare provider can help you with plans to control weight, cholesterol, or blood pressure if needed.
- Checking hearing and vision.
- Checking for signs of infections, including sexually transmitted disease if you are sexually active.
- Talking with you about alcohol or drug use, and other concerns you may have.
- Females may have pelvic or breast exams, and males may have testicles examined.

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