

## **Adolescent Visit**

Adolescence is a challenging time for the teen and their family. It is a time when teenagers like to begin to separate from their parents and exert some independence. Teenagers are exposed to intense peer pressure and need to be equipped to take personal responsibility as they make very important personal choices.

It is important to keep the lines of communication open between you and your parents; tell your family about your day, share your feelings with them, and ask questions.

### **Nutrition**

Many Americans consume too many calories and too much fat. This contributes to higher rates of obesity in children and adults and to an increase in the prevalence of heart disease in adults. It is important to establish healthy eating habits as early as possible. It is not too late. Parents are the most important role models for developing healthful eating and lifestyle habits and they are usually the ones who buy and prepare food in the home.

Here are several ideas to help you and your family eat healthier:

Have family meals; this is an excellent opportunity to talk about your day

Eat low fat and low cholesterol foods

Eat 3 meals a day and 2 snacks, if you skip meals you are more likely to eat less healthy foods in larger quantities.

Eat 6 servings of grains, rice, pasta, cereals, and starchy foods like potatoes per day

3 servings of vegetables a day

2 servings of fruit per day

2 servings of lean meats, chicken, and fish a day

Keep plenty of fruits and vegetables easily accessible for snacks

Keep a minimal amount of cookies and candy in the house- if it's not there you can't eat it...

Avoid eating while watching TV or working on the computer. People tend to eat more when they are not paying attention to their food. Have organized snacks at the kitchen table.

Limit all juice and soda intake to 1 cup a day. These beverages are high in non-nutritious sugar calories.

Encourage moderation and no deprivation

Make eating healthy a family affair

A few words about calcium:

Now is the time to deposit calcium in your bones. Make sure you get enough Calcium to build strong teeth and bones and prevent osteoporosis in the future. Adolescents need 1,300 mg of calcium per day, which is equivalent to 4 serving of low-fat milk, yogurt, cheese, and green leafy vegetables.

A cup of milk has 300 mg of Ca

A cup of yogurt has 300 mg of Ca

One cup of Calcium fortified OJ has 300 mg of Ca

½ cup of Ice Cream has 100 mg of Ca  
½ cup of cottage cheese has 75 mg of Ca  
1 1/2 ounces of cheese has about 300 mg of Ca  
½ cup of broccoli has 35 mg of Ca

If you do not consume enough calcium in your diet then take a calcium supplement daily.

Make sure you get enough iron in your diet. Green vegetables, beans, legumes and meat are good sources of Iron.

### ***Physical Fitness***

Physical activity has many proven benefits. When you are fit, you feel and look better, and you stay healthier.

The first step toward fitness is to make a commitment to become physically active and to make exercise a routine part of your day. You should exercise at least 30-60 minutes per day. Regular exercise should include aerobic activity (an activity that increases your heart rate).

Choose any physical activity you enjoy. Anything that involves movement qualifies as exercise so you do not have to be good at sports to participate in a physical activity. In addition to regular exercise you could change your small daily activities- for example, walk rather than drive, walk up stairs instead of taking the elevator.

Have fun and be safe.

### ***Driving***

Do not get into the car with a driver who drank any amount of alcohol, even if they don't look drunk. Do not let anyone who took any drug (including pot) drive you. When you start to drive, do not drink, smoke pot or use other drugs and drive. Many teens are killed every year because of driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs.

Plan an exit strategy in advance: assign a designated driver, or arrange with your parent to be picked up when needed. You should not drive or be a passenger in a car with more than one other teenager. Wear your seat belt at all times. Stay focused on driving – turn off the radio, and do not talk on the phone or dial while driving, and obey all traffic laws.

Remember that driving is a privilege and not a right and that driving is a tremendous responsibility.

### ***Smoking***

Most teens do not smoke. However, most adult smokers started to smoke when they were teenagers. Nicotine in tobacco is extremely poisonous. With each puff of a cigarette you inhale nicotine and 4,000 other chemicals of which 400 are also poisonous. In the long run cigarettes (and smokeless tobacco) cause cancer, double your chances of dying from heart disease, and cause many deadly lung diseases. Smoking is ugly- it causes bad breath and stained teeth, stains your fingers and nails, and makes you smell bad. Smoking is very expensive. It takes only a short time for smokers to become addicted, remember there is no such thing as a social smoker. Quitting is extremely hard and can take a long time. If you don't start to smoke- you won't have to worry about quitting....

If you already smoke and want to quit here are web sites that may help:  
[www.tobaccofreekids.org](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org), [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org), [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org),  
[www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org).

### **Alcohol, Marijuana, Ecstasy, Meth, and other drugs**

There are many drugs that you will be exposed to throughout middle school and high school. You may face strong peer pressure to try drugs and alcohol. Drugs and alcohol are dangerous and addictive. You can die from a side effect or overdose with small amounts of drugs and even on your first try. Alcohol binge drinking can be deadly. Any time you take a drug you are taking a huge risk. Remember that alcohol is also very addictive (ask any alcoholic) and kills more people each year than all other drugs combined. Marijuana (pot) affects your short-term memory and ability to learn, slows your reaction time, and impairs your judgement. It also increases your appetite and can make you gain weight. Alcohol and drugs affect your judgement and put you at risk of death in a car accident, accident in the home, can contribute to sexual risk taking and risk of sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancy, and put young women at higher risk of date rape. It is okay to say “no” to drugs. Hang out with friends who share your interests and like having healthy fun.

### **Computer safety**

The safest place to put the computer is in the family room. Never give out personal information on the Internet. Never share your password and do not respond to messages that make you feel uncomfortable. Avoid chat rooms, bad language, and screen names that are sexually suggestive or compromise your identity. NEVER arrange a face to face meeting with people you meet on-line.

### **General safety**

Do not answer the door when you are home alone unless you are expecting company. Do not let strangers on the phone know that you are home alone. Wear appropriate safety equipment when playing sports. Wear a bicycle helmet when riding a bike, scooter, razor, skateboard, in-line skates, or other “roofless” vehicle even if you are riding close to home.

### **Sexuality**

There are constant pressures on adolescents to become sexually active. Do not allow anyone to pressure you into sexual activity. Abstinence is the ONLY method that is 100% effective in the prevention of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Sex can lead to unwanted pregnancy and puts you at risk for acquiring HIV/AIDS (which still is incurable), Herpes, syphilis, Gonorrhea, Chlamydia, Hepatitis C, and genital warts (that can cause cancer). Not all people infected show signs of these diseases, and not all of them even know that they are infected. Most people lie about their sexual histories, so the best way to prevent contracting these diseases is abstinence. If you will become sexually active use a condom EVERY time. Oral sex is real sex and you can get several of these diseases in your mouth.