

HEALTH TRACKS

A Newsletter From Local Public Health to Improve the Health of Families in NW Minnesota



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Age-
16-17 YEARS



GREETINGS!

Mid-adolescence is a time of great change physically and psychologically for your son or daughter. Social and school activities will increase, and family harmony and communications maybe disrupted. Being the parent of an adolescent is very challenging!

YOUR GROWING TEEN

YOUR TEEN MAY:

- ❖ choose unhealthy habits as a way to express their independence or rebellion, such as cigarette smoking or alcohol or drugs.

TO PREVENT THIS...

- ◆ Be a good role model
- ◆ Teach your child how to be assertive to peer pressure
- ◆ Set firm rules. Let your child know that the use of all drugs is off limits.

- ❖ staying up late at night and sleeping in in the morning.
- ❖ make poor choices, like dropping out of high school to work. Even if teens finish high school, career choices and earnings are limited without a college education.
- ❖ dress in ways that parents find bizarre. This is one of the least harmful ways in which teenagers separate themselves from their parents and assert their identity. In most cases, it's not worth making it an issue. Insist . that your child not wear clothes that display offensive messages, are sexually provocative, or are associated with a gang or other undesirable groups.

YOUR HEALTH



Well-Child Check-Ups:

- Your son or daughter should have a physical exam every two years. This may include a sports physical which is required to participate in school sports.
- Regular dental check ups, a balanced diet, fluoride, injury prevention, brushing and flossing are all important for healthy teeth. Many 16 year olds may have braces.

Immunizations (shots):

- At age 16, you should check with your medical provider to see if any immunizations are missing. For more information about this contact your local Public Health Clinic, Physician or School Nurse. Remember he or she will need their Tdap booster every 10 years. The last one should have been at age 12. It is helpful to keep personal records of your immunizations.
- Check to make sure you have received your HPV vaccine.
- It is also recommended you receive a yearly flu vaccine!



Physical Changes

Your son will:

- grow to about 90-95% of adult height.
- gain between 15-55 pounds.
- develop an adult voice.

Your daughter will:

- have fairly regular menstrual cycles and pubic hair that is adult in texture and distribution.
- have completed her breast development.
- continue to mature sexually.

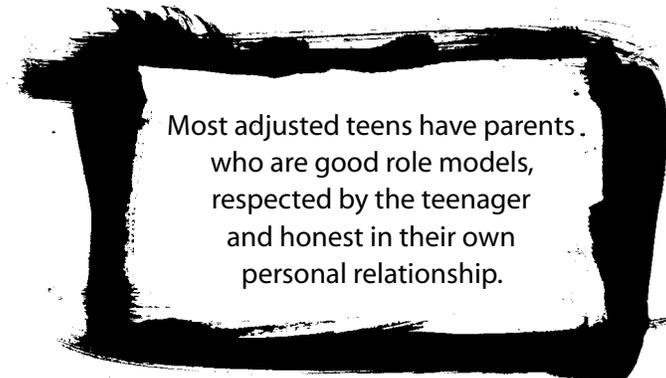
Common Health Concerns

The impact of acne on the life of a teenager may be enormous. They may feel that blemishes affect their popularity and social interactions as well as physical well-being. Be sure your teen keeps her face clean. Wash off make up at night before bed, and check with your pharmacist regarding creams for acne. More severe acne may require a visit to medical provider or Dermatologist.

Depression is the leading cause of suicide. Signs to be aware of include:

- General loss of interest in life.
- Depressed mood.
- Decreased energy, difficulty concentrating.
- Change in sleeping, eating and schoolwork habits.
- Reckless or violent behavior.
- Headaches, stomach aches physical symptoms that don't have a physical cause.
- Talking about or asking

As a parent it is important to be aware of the signs of suicide and take any talk about suicide seriously.



Most adjusted teens have parents who are good role models, respected by the teenager and honest in their own personal relationship.

Sexuality and Sex Related Concerns

Every year 4 Million cases of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD's) occur among teenagers in the US. STD's can vary in severity. Syphilis, Chlamydia, and Gonorrhea can be treated with medications. If you don't get treated chlamydia and gonorrhea can damage reproductive organs. This can impact your ability to have a baby in the future. However, some STD's cannot be treated. Herpes and HIV/AIDS are diseases without a cure. Only their symptoms can be treated.

- Parents often find it difficult to talk with their teen about sexuality. It is, however, the parents' responsibility to teach your teen how conception occurs and how to avoid sexually transmitted diseases. It is important for your teen to know your values on sexuality. Look for opportunities to initiate discussions about sexuality. Even if you feel uncomfortable talking about sex, it's better to talk about it than to ignore it. Be sure to tell your teen the positive reasons for delaying sexual activity, and that it is normal to feel sexually attracted to someone and to become sexually excited at times. Teens need to be taught that maturity means learning to accept one's feelings and to make responsible choices that often involve not acting on them.
- By age 16, most teens are dating. If dating doesn't begin too early, or become too excessive, it should be accepted as a normal part of growing up. Helpful guidelines to maintain control over your teen's dating:
 - ◆ know who your teen is dating.
 - ◆ be sure your teen and date are clear about when you expect them home.
 - ◆ ask your child where they plan to go and what they plan to do.
 - ◆ be sure your teen knows the activities and places that are off limits.
 - ◆ set guidelines on how often and when dating is permissible.
 - ◆ If you would like further information on AIDS, teen age pregnancy, STD's, please contact our office.
- **TELL YOUR TEEN:** Sex can't cure loneliness, make someone love you, put you in the "in" crowd, help you hold on to your partner, make you an instant adult, solve your problems.



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Address Service Requested

TO:

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