

BRIGHT FUTURES HANDOUT ► PARENT

9 AND 10 YEAR VISITS

Here are some suggestions from Bright Futures experts that may be of value to your family.



✓ HOW YOUR FAMILY IS DOING

- Encourage your child to be independent and responsible. Hug and praise him.
- Spend time with your child. Get to know his friends and their families.
- Take pride in your child for good behavior and doing well in school.
- Help your child deal with conflict.
- If you are worried about your living or food situation, talk with us. Community agencies and programs such as SNAP can also provide information and assistance.
- Don't smoke or use e-cigarettes. Keep your home and car smoke-free. Tobacco-free spaces keep children healthy.
- Don't use alcohol or drugs. If you're worried about a family member's use, let us know, or reach out to local or online resources that can help.
- Put the family computer in a central place.
- Watch your child's computer use.
 - Know who he talks with online.
 - Install a safety filter.

✓ YOUR GROWING CHILD

- Be a model for your child by saying you are sorry when you make a mistake.
- Show your child how to use her words when she is angry.
- Teach your child to help others.
- Give your child chores to do and expect them to be done.
- Give your child her own personal space.
- Get to know your child's friends and their families.
- Understand that your child's friends are very important.
- Answer questions about puberty. Ask us for help if you don't feel comfortable answering questions.
- Teach your child the importance of delaying sexual behavior. Encourage your child to ask questions.
- Teach your child how to be safe with other adults.
 - No adult should ask a child to keep secrets from parents.
 - No adult should ask to see a child's private parts.
 - No adult should ask a child for help with the adult's own private parts.

✓ STAYING HEALTHY

- Take your child to the dentist twice a year.
- Give your child a fluoride supplement if the dentist recommends it.
- Remind your child to brush his teeth twice a day
 - After breakfast
 - Before bed
- Use a pea-sized amount of toothpaste with fluoride.
- Remind your child to floss his teeth once a day.
- Encourage your child to always wear a mouth guard to protect his teeth while playing sports.
- Encourage healthy eating by
 - Eating together often as a family
 - Serving vegetables, fruits, whole grains, lean protein, and low-fat or fat-free dairy
 - Limiting sugars, salt, and low-nutrient foods
- Limit screen time to 2 hours (not counting schoolwork).
- Don't put a TV or computer in your child's bedroom.
- Consider making a family media use plan. It helps you make rules for media use and balance screen time with other activities, including exercise.
- Encourage your child to play actively for at least 1 hour daily.

✓ SCHOOL

- Show interest in your child's school activities.
- If you have any concerns, ask your child's teacher for help.
- Praise your child for doing things well at school.
- Set a routine and make a quiet place for doing homework.
- Talk with your child and her teacher about bullying.

Helpful Resources: Family Media Use Plan: www.healthychildren.org/MediaUsePlan

Smoking Quit Line: 800-784-8669 | Information About Car Safety Seats: www.safercar.gov/parents | Toll-free Auto Safety Hotline: 888-327-4236

9 AND 10 YEAR VISITS—PARENT



SAFETY

- The back seat is the safest place to ride in a car until your child is 13 years old.
- Your child should use a belt-positioning booster seat until the vehicle's lap and shoulder belts fit.
- Provide a properly fitting helmet and safety gear for riding scooters, biking, skating, in-line skating, skiing, snowboarding, and horseback riding.
- Teach your child to swim and watch him in the water.
- Use a hat, sun protection clothing, and sunscreen with SPF of 15 or higher on his exposed skin. Limit time outside when the sun is strongest (11:00 am–3:00 pm).
- If it is necessary to keep a gun in your home, store it unloaded and locked with the ammunition locked separately from the gun.

Consistent with *Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents*, 4th Edition

For more information, go to <https://brightfutures.aap.org>.

American Academy of Pediatrics

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9 AND 10 YEAR VISITS

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✓ TAKING CARE OF YOU

- Enjoy spending time with your family.
- Help out at home and in your community.
- If you get angry with someone, try to walk away.
- Say “No!” to drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes or e-cigarettes. Walk away if someone offers you some.
- Talk with your parents, teachers, or another trusted adult if anyone bullies, threatens, or hurts you.
- Go online only when your parents say it’s OK. Don’t give your name, address, or phone number on a Web site unless your parents say it’s OK.
- If you want to chat online, tell your parents first.
- If you feel scared online, get off and tell your parents.

✓ EATING WELL AND BEING ACTIVE

- Brush your teeth at least twice each day, morning and night.
- Floss your teeth every day.
- Wear your mouth guard when playing sports.
- Eat breakfast every day. It helps you learn.
- Be a healthy eater. It helps you do well in school and sports.
 - Have vegetables, fruits, lean protein, and whole grains at meals and snacks.
 - Eat when you’re hungry. Stop when you feel satisfied.
 - Eat with your family often.
- Drink 3 cups of low-fat or fat-free milk or water instead of soda or juice drinks.
- Limit high-fat foods and drinks such as candies, snacks, fast food, and soft drinks.
- Talk with us if you’re thinking about losing weight or using dietary supplements.
- Plan and get at least 1 hour of active exercise every day.

✓ GROWING AND DEVELOPING

- Ask a parent or trusted adult questions about the changes in your body.
- Share your feelings with others. Talking is a good way to handle anger, disappointment, worry, and sadness.
- To handle your anger, try
 - Staying calm
 - Listening and talking through it
 - Trying to understand the other person’s point of view
- Know that it’s OK to feel up sometimes and down others, but if you feel sad most of the time, let us know.
- Don’t stay friends with kids who ask you to do scary or harmful things.
- Know that it’s never OK for an older child or an adult to
 - Show you his or her private parts.
 - Ask to see or touch your private parts.
 - Scare you or ask you not to tell your parents.
 - If that person does any of these things, get away as soon as you can and tell your parent or another adult you trust.

✓ DOING WELL AT SCHOOL

- Try your best at school. Doing well in school helps you feel good about yourself.
- Ask for help when you need it.
- Join clubs and teams, faith groups, and friends for activities after school.
- Tell kids who pick on you or try to hurt you to stop. Then walk away.
- Tell adults you trust about bullies.

9 AND 10 YEAR VISITS—PATIENT



PLAYING IT SAFE

- Wear your lap and shoulder seat belt at all times in the car. Use a booster seat if the lap and shoulder seat belt does not fit you yet.
- Sit in the back seat until you are 13 years old. It is the safest place.
- Wear your helmet and safety gear when riding scooters, biking, skating, in-line skating, skiing, snowboarding, and horseback riding.
- Always wear the right safety equipment for your activities.
- Never swim alone. Ask about learning how to swim if you don't already know how.
- Always wear sunscreen and a hat when you're outside. Try not to be outside for too long between 11:00 am and 3:00 pm, when it's easy to get a sunburn.
- Have friends over only when your parents say it's OK.
- Ask to go home if you are uncomfortable at someone else's house or a party.
- If you see a gun, don't touch it. Tell your parents right away.

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HPV (Human Papillomavirus) Vaccine: *What You Need to Know*

Many vaccine information statements are available in Spanish and other languages. See www.immunize.org/vis

Hojas de información sobre vacunas están disponibles en español y en muchos otros idiomas. Visite www.immunize.org/vis

1. Why get vaccinated?

HPV (human papillomavirus) vaccine can prevent infection with some types of human papillomavirus.

HPV infections can cause certain types of cancers, including:

- cervical, vaginal, and vulvar cancers in women
- penile cancer in men
- anal cancers in both men and women
- cancers of tonsils, base of tongue, and back of throat (oropharyngeal cancer) in both men and women

HPV infections can also cause anogenital warts.

HPV vaccine can prevent over 90% of cancers caused by HPV.

HPV is spread through intimate skin-to-skin or sexual contact. HPV infections are so common that nearly all people will get at least one type of HPV at some time in their lives. Most HPV infections go away on their own within 2 years. But sometimes HPV infections will last longer and can cause cancers later in life.

2. HPV vaccine

HPV vaccine is routinely recommended for adolescents at 11 or 12 years of age to ensure they are protected before they are exposed to the virus. HPV vaccine may be given beginning at age 9 years and vaccination is recommended for everyone through 26 years of age.

HPV vaccine may be given to adults 27 through 45 years of age, based on discussions between the patient and health care provider.

Most children who get the first dose before 15 years of age need 2 doses of HPV vaccine. People who get the first dose at or after 15 years of age and younger people with certain immunocompromising conditions need 3 doses. Your health care provider can give you more information.

HPV vaccine may be given at the same time as other vaccines.

3. Talk with your health care provider

Tell your vaccination provider if the person getting the vaccine:

- Has had an **allergic reaction after a previous dose of HPV vaccine**, or has any **severe, life-threatening allergies**
- Is **pregnant**—HPV vaccine is not recommended until after pregnancy

In some cases, your health care provider may decide to postpone HPV vaccination until a future visit.

People with minor illnesses, such as a cold, may be vaccinated. People who are moderately or severely ill should usually wait until they recover before getting HPV vaccine.

Your health care provider can give you more information.



**U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services**
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention

4. Risks of a vaccine reaction

- Soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot is given can happen after HPV vaccination.
- Fever or headache can happen after HPV vaccination.

People sometimes faint after medical procedures, including vaccination. Tell your provider if you feel dizzy or have vision changes or ringing in the ears.

As with any medicine, there is a very remote chance of a vaccine causing a severe allergic reaction, other serious injury, or death.

5. What if there is a serious problem?

An allergic reaction could occur after the vaccinated person leaves the clinic. If you see signs of a severe allergic reaction (hives, swelling of the face and throat, difficulty breathing, a fast heartbeat, dizziness, or weakness), call **9-1-1** and get the person to the nearest hospital.

For other signs that concern you, call your health care provider.

Adverse reactions should be reported to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). Your health care provider will usually file this report, or you can do it yourself. Visit the VAERS website at www.vaers.hhs.gov or call **1-800-822-7967**. *VAERS is only for reporting reactions, and VAERS staff members do not give medical advice.*

6. The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program

The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (VICP) is a federal program that was created to compensate people who may have been injured by certain vaccines. Claims regarding alleged injury or death due to vaccination have a time limit for filing, which may be as short as two years. Visit the VICP website at www.hrsa.gov/vaccinecompensation or call **1-800-338-2382** to learn about the program and about filing a claim.

7. How can I learn more?

- Ask your health care provider.
- Call your local or state health department.
- Visit the website of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for vaccine package inserts and additional information at www.fda.gov/vaccines-blood-biologics/vaccines.
- Contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
 - Call **1-800-232-4636** (1-800-CDC-INFO) or
 - Visit CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/vaccines.





Puberty: Ready or Not, Expect Some Big Changes

Puberty is the time in your life when your body starts changing from that of a child to that of an adult. At times, you may feel like your body is totally out of control! At first, your arms, legs, hands, and feet may grow faster than the rest of your body. But it will even out quickly.

Compared with your friends, you may feel too tall, too short, too fat, or too skinny. You may feel self-conscious about these changes, but many of your friends probably do too.

Everyone goes through puberty, but not always at the same time or in exactly the same way. In general, here's what you can expect.

When?

There's no "right" time for puberty to begin. But girls start a little earlier than boys, usually between 8 and 13 years of age. Puberty for boys usually starts at about 10 to 14 years of age.

What's happening?

Chemicals called hormones will cause many changes in your body.

Hair, everywhere!

Soft hair starts to grow in the pubic area (the area between your legs and around your genitals [around your vagina or penis]). This hair will become thick and very curly. It is not necessary to shave your pubic hair. It is a normal change as you become an adult. You may also notice hair under your arms and on your legs. Girls usually shave the hair under their arms. Boys start to get hair on their face or chest. Most boys choose to shave their facial hair.

Acne

You may start to get acne (also called pimples or zits) because your oil glands are changing. It's important to wash your face with soap, not bodywash, every day to keep your skin clean.

Don't be surprised, even if you wash your face every day, that you still get acne. It's normal to get acne when your hormone levels are high. Almost all teens develop acne at one time or another. Whether your case is mild or severe, you can do things to keep it under control. Talk with your doctor about how to treat and control acne.

Body odor

You may begin to sweat more. Most people use a deodorant or an antiperspirant to keep underarm odor and wetness under control.

Weight gain

Sometimes the weight gain of puberty causes girls and boys to feel so uncomfortable with how they look that they try to lose weight by throwing up, by not eating, or by taking medicines. These are not healthy ways to lose weight and may make you very sick. If you feel this way, or have tried any of these ways to lose weight, please talk with your parents or doctor.

Girls only

Breasts. The first sign of puberty in most girls is breast development (small, tender lumps under one or both nipples). The soreness is temporary and goes away as your breasts grow. Don't worry if one breast grows a little faster than the other. By the time your breasts are fully developed, they usually end up being the same size.

When your breasts get larger, you may want to start wearing a bra. Some girls are excited about this. Other girls may feel embarrassed, especially if they are the first of their friends to need a bra. Talk with your mom or another trusted adult about buying your first bra.

Curves. As you go through puberty, you'll get taller, your hips will get wider, and your waist will get smaller. Your body also begins to build up fat in your belly, bottom, and legs. This is normal and gives your body the curvier shape of a woman.

Periods. Your menstrual cycle, or "period," starts during puberty. Most girls get their periods 2 to 2½ years after their breasts start to grow (between 10 and 16 years of age).

During puberty, your ovaries begin to release eggs. If an egg connects with sperm from a man's penis (fertilization), it will grow inside your uterus and develop into a baby. To help your body prepare for this, a thick layer of tissue and blood cells builds up in your uterus. If the egg doesn't connect with a sperm, the body does not need these tissues and cells. They turn into a blood-like fluid and flow out of your vagina. Your period is the monthly discharge of this fluid out of the body.

A girl who has started having periods is able to get pregnant, even if she doesn't have a period every month.

You will need to wear some kind of sanitary pad or tampon, or both, to absorb this fluid and keep it from getting on your clothes. Most periods last from 3 to 7 days. Having your period does not mean you have to avoid any of your normal activities, like swimming, horseback riding, or gym class. Exercise can even help get rid of cramps and other discomforts you may feel during your period.

Boys only

Muscles. As you go through puberty, you'll get taller, your shoulders will get broader, and, as your muscles get bigger, your weight will increase.

Does size matter? During puberty, the penis and testes get larger. There's also an increase in sex hormones. You may notice you get erections (when the penis gets stiff and hard) more often than before. This is normal. Even though you may feel embarrassed, try to remember that unless you draw attention to it, most people won't notice your erection. Also, remember that the size of your penis has nothing to do with manliness or sexual functioning.

Wet dreams. During puberty, your testes begin to produce sperm. This means that during an erection, you may also ejaculate. This is when

semen (made up of sperm and other fluids) is released through the penis. This could happen while you are sleeping. You might wake up to find your sheets or pajamas are wet. This is called a nocturnal emission, or wet dream. This is normal and will stop as you get older.

Voice cracking. Your voice will get deeper, but it doesn't happen all at once. It usually starts with your voice cracking. As you keep growing, the cracking will stop and your voice will stay at the lower range.

Breasts? You may have swelling under your nipples. If this happens to you, you may worry that you're growing breasts. Don't worry, you're not. This swelling is very common and only temporary. But if you're worried, talk with your doctor.

New feelings

In addition to all the physical changes you will go through during puberty, there are many emotional changes. For example, you may start to care more about what other people think about you because you want to be accepted and liked. Your relationships with others may begin to change. Some become more important and some less so. You'll start to separate more from your parents and identify with others your age. You may begin to make decisions that could affect the rest of your life.

At times, you may not like the attention of your parents and other adults, but they, too, are trying to adjust to the changes you're going through. Many teens feel their parents don't understand them; this is a normal feeling. It's usually best to let them know (politely) how you feel and then talk things out together.

Also, it's normal to lose your temper more easily and to feel that nobody cares about you. Talk about your feelings with your parents, another trusted adult, or your doctor. You may be surprised at how much better you will feel.

Sex and sexuality

During this time, many teens also become more aware of their sexual feelings. A look, a touch, or just thinking about someone may make your heart beat faster and may produce a warm, tingling feeling all over. You may not be sure if you are attracted to boys, girls, or both. That's OK and you shouldn't feel worried about it.

You may ask yourself...

- When should I start dating?
- When is it OK to kiss?
- How far should I go sexually?
- When will I be ready to have sexual intercourse?
- Will having sex help my relationship?
- Do I have to have sex?
- If I am attracted to a same-sex friend, does that mean I am gay or lesbian?
- What is oral sex? Is oral sex really sex?
- Is it OK to masturbate (stimulate your genitals for sexual pleasure)? (Masturbation is normal and won't harm you. Some boys and girls masturbate; some don't.)

Remember, talking with your parents or doctor is a good way to get information and to help you think about how these changes affect you.

Decisions about sex

Deciding to become sexually active can be very confusing. On the one hand, you hear many warnings and dangers about having sex. On the other hand, movies, TV, magazines, and even the lyrics in songs all seem to be telling you that having sex is OK.

It's normal for teens to be curious about sex, but deciding to have sex is a big step.

There's nothing wrong if you decide to wait to have sex. Not everyone is having sex. Half of all teens in the United States have never had sex. Many teens believe waiting until they are ready to have sex is important. The right time is different for each teen.

If you decide to wait, stick with your decision. Plan ahead how you are going to say no so you are clearly understood. Stay away from situations that can lead to sex. If your boyfriend or girlfriend doesn't support your decision to wait, he or she may not be the right person for you.

No one should be forced to have sex! If you are ever forced to have sex, it's important to never blame yourself and to tell an adult you trust as soon as possible. Medical and counseling supports are available to help someone who has been forced to have sex.

If you decide to have sex, it's important you know the facts about birth control, infections, and emotions. Sex increases your chances of becoming pregnant, becoming a teen parent, and getting a sexually transmitted infection (commonly known as an STI), and it may affect the way you feel about yourself or how others feel about you.

These are important decisions and are worth talking about with adults who care about you, including your doctor.

Taking care of yourself

As you get older, you will need to make many decisions to ensure you stay healthy.

- Eating right, exercising, and getting enough rest are important during puberty because your body is going through many changes.
- It's also important to feel good about yourself and the decisions you make.
- Whenever you have questions about your health or your feelings, don't be afraid to share them with your parents and doctor.

From Your Doctor



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Tips for Parents of Adolescents

Adolescence is the time between childhood and adulthood when your daughter or son will go through many physical and emotional changes. It begins with puberty which, for girls, usually starts between 8 and 13 years of age, and for boys, between 10 to 14 years of age.

Though these years can be difficult, it can also be a rewarding time watching your teen make the transition into an independent, caring, and responsible adult.

The American Academy of Pediatrics offers the following tips to help you and your teen navigate adolescence. *Teen* will be the term used in this publication when referring to adolescent, teenager, preteen, and tween.

1. **Spend family time with your teen.** Although many teens may seem more interested in friends, this does not mean they are not interested in family.
2. **Spend time alone with your teen.** Even if your teen does not want time alone with you, remind him or her often that you are always available to listen or talk. One way to make yourself available is to offer rides; a great opportunity to talk (if the radio isn't too loud).
3. **When your teen talks**
 - Pay attention.
 - Watch, as well as listen.
 - Try not to interrupt.
 - Ask for further details if you don't understand.
 - If you don't have time to listen, set a time that will be good for both of you.
4. **Respect your teen.** It's OK to disagree with your teen, but disagree respectfully, not insultingly. Don't dismiss his or her feelings or opinions as silly or senseless. You may not always be able to help when your teen is upset about something, but it is important to say, "I want to understand," or "Help me understand."
5. **When rules are needed, set and enforce them.** Don't be afraid to be unpopular for a day or two. Believe it or not, teens see setting limits as a form of caring.
6. **Try not to get upset if your teen makes mistakes.** This will help your teen take responsibility for his or her actions. Remember to offer guidance when necessary. Direct the discussion toward solutions. For example, saying, "I get upset when I find clothes all over the floor," is much better than, "You're a slob."

Be willing to negotiate and compromise. This will teach problem solving in a healthy way. Remember to choose your battles. Let go of the little things that may not be worth a big fight.
7. **Criticize a behavior, not an attitude.** For example, instead of saying, "You're late. That's so irresponsible. And I don't like your attitude," try saying, "I worry about your safety when you're late. I trust you, but when I don't hear from you and don't know where you are, I wonder whether something bad has happened to you. What can we do together to help you get home on time and make sure I know where you are or when you're going to be late?"
8. **Mix criticism with praise.** Your teen needs to know how you feel when he or she is not doing what you want him or her to do.

Be sure to mix in positive feedback with this criticism. For example, "I'm proud that you are able to hold a job and get your homework done. I would like to see you use some of that energy to help do the dishes after meals."

9. **Let your teen be a teen.** Give your teen some leeway with regard to clothes, hairstyle, etc. Many teens go through a rebellious period in which they want to express themselves in ways that are different from their parents. However, be aware of the messages and ratings of the music, movies, and video games to which your teen is exposed.
10. **Be a parent first, not a friend.** Your teen's separation from you as a parent is a normal part of development. Don't take it personally.
11. **Don't be afraid to share mistakes you've made as a parent or as a teen.**
12. **Talk with your teen's pediatrician** if you need advice on how to talk with or get along with your teen.

Common questions

The following are answers to questions from parents of teens.

Dieting and body image

"My daughter is always trying new diets. How can I help her lose weight safely?"

Many teens resort to extreme diet or exercise programs because they want their bodies to look like the models, singers, actors, or athletes they see in the media.

Tips for a healthy diet

- Limit fast-food meals. Discuss the options available at fast-food restaurants and help your teen find a healthy, balanced diet. Fat should not come from junk food but from healthier foods such as low-fat cheese or low-fat yogurt.
- Keep the household supply of junk food such as candy, cookies, and potato chips to a minimum.
- Stock up on low-fat healthy items for snacking such as fruit, raw vegetables, whole-grain crackers, and low-fat yogurt. Encourage eating fruits and vegetables as snacks.
- Check with your teen's doctor about the proper amounts of calories, fat, protein, and carbohydrates for your teen.
- As a parent, model good eating habits. Make mealtime family time (5 times per week or more)—eating meals together helps with communication and reduces teen risk-taking.

Be aware of any diet or exercise program your daughter is following. Be watchful of how much weight she loses and make sure the diet program is healthy. Eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa can be very dangerous. If you suspect your daughter has an eating disorder, talk with her doctor right away. Also, if you have a son, it's important to be aware of his diet or exercise habits too.

Many diets are unhealthy for teens because they do not have the nutritional value that bodies need during puberty. If your daughter wants to lose weight, urge her to increase physical activity and to take weight off slowly. Let her eat according to her own appetite, but make sure she gets enough fats, carbohydrates, protein, and calcium.

If your daughter decides to become a vegetarian, make certain she follows a healthy vegetarian diet. She may need to see her doctor or a nutritionist to ensure that she is getting enough fat, calories, protein, and calcium.

If your teen (like many teens) is unhappy with the way she looks, encourage healthy exercise. Physical activity will help stop hunger pangs, create a positive self-image, and take away the "blahs." If she wants to train with weights, she should check with her doctor, as well as a trainer, coach, or physical education teacher.

Help create a positive self-image by praising her wonderful qualities and focusing less on her appearance. Set a good example by making exercise and eating right a part of your daily routine also.

Dating and sex education

"With all the sex on TV, how can I teach my son to wait until he is ready?"

Teens (females and males) are naturally curious about sex. This is completely normal and healthy. However, teens may be pressured

into having sex too soon by their peers or the media. Talk with your son to understand his feelings and views about sex. Start early and provide him with access to information that is accurate and appropriate. Delaying sexual involvement could be the most important decision he makes.

Drugs

"I am afraid some of my daughter's friends have offered her drugs. How can I help her make the right decision?"

Teens may try or use tobacco and alcohol or other drugs to fit in or as a way to deal with peer pressure. Try to help build self-confidence or self-esteem in your teen. Ask your daughter about any concerns and problems she is facing and help her learn how to deal with strong emotions and cope with stress in ways that are healthy. For instance, encourage her to participate in leisure and outside activities with teens who don't drink and use drugs.

Smoking and tobacco

"My daughter smokes behind my back. How do I convince her to quit?"

Smoking can turn into a lifelong addiction that can be extremely hard to break. Discuss with your teen some of the more undesirable effects of smoking, including bad breath, stained teeth, wrinkles, a long-term cough, and decreased athletic performance. Long-term use can also lead to serious health problems like emphysema and cancer.

Chew or **snuff** can also lead to nicotine addiction and causes the same health problems as smoking cigarettes. In addition, mouth wounds or sores can form and may not heal easily. Smokeless tobacco can also lead to cancer.

If you suspect your daughter is smoking or using smokeless tobacco and you need advice, talk with her doctor. Schedule a visit with her doctor when you and your daughter can discuss the risks associated with smoking and the best ways to quit before it becomes a lifelong habit.

Talking with your teen about sex

Before your teen becomes sexually active, make sure you discuss the following topics:

- **Medical and physical risks.** Risks include unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as gonorrhea, chlamydia, hepatitis B, syphilis, herpes, HIV (the virus that causes AIDS), and HPV (human papillomavirus—the virus that can cause cancers of the mouth and throat, cervix, and genitals in teens and adults).
- **Emotional risks.** Teens who have sex before they are emotionally ready may regret the decision when they are older or feel guilty, frightened, or ashamed from the experience. Your teen should ask himself or herself, "Am I ready to have sex?" or "What will happen after I have sex?"
- **Promoting safer sex.** Anyone who is sexually active needs to be aware of how to prevent unintended pregnancies, as well as how to protect against STIs. Condoms should always be used along with a second method of contraception to prevent pregnancy and reduce the risk of STIs.
- **Setting limits.** Make sure your teen has thought about what his or her sexual limits are before dating begins.

Most importantly, let your teen know that he or she can talk with you and his or her doctor about dating and relationships. Offer your guidance throughout this important stage in your teen's life.

If you smoke . . . quit

If you or someone else in the household smokes, now is a good time to quit. Watching a parent struggle through the process of quitting can be a powerful message for a teen who is thinking about starting. It also shows that you care about your health, as well as your teen's.

Alcohol

"I know my son drinks once in a while, but it's just beer. Why should I worry?"

Alcohol is the most socially accepted drug in our society, and also one of the most abused and destructive. Even small amounts of alcohol can impair judgment, provoke risky and violent behavior, and slow down reaction time. An intoxicated teen (or anyone else) behind the wheel of a car makes it a lethal weapon. Alcohol-related car crashes are the leading cause of death for young adults aged 15 to 24 years.

Though it's illegal for people younger than 21 years to drink, we all know that most teens are not strangers to alcohol. Many of them are introduced to alcohol during childhood. If you choose to use alcohol

in your home, be aware of the example you set for your teen. The following suggestions may help:

- Having a drink should never be shown as a way to cope with problems.
- Don't drink in unsafe conditions—for example, driving the car, mowing the lawn, and using the stove.
- Don't encourage your teen to drink or to join you in having a drink.
- Do not allow your children to drink alcohol before they reach the legal age and teach them never, ever to drink and drive.
- Never make jokes about getting drunk; make sure that your children understand that it is neither funny nor acceptable.
- Show your children that there are many ways to have fun without alcohol. Happy occasions and special events don't have to include drinking.

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