

Your Teenage Years

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Nutrition and Healthy Lifestyles

You are never too young to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Eating well and exercising regularly will help you maintain a healthy weight. Children who are obese at age 6 have a 25 percent chance of being obese as adults, while children who are obese at age 12 have a 75 percent chance of remaining obese. Obesity can lead to serious health problems such as diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, joint problems and liver disease. Unfortunately, all of these problems can begin in childhood.

If there is a history of cholesterol problems in your family, tell your provider

The best prevention against obesity is to live a healthy lifestyle. Here are simple ideas that everyone should follow to lead a healthier life.

- Eat regular meals and healthy snacks such as fruits, vegetables, nuts and cheeses. Stay away from snacks that are high in fat.
- Eliminate sodas from your diet. A non-diet soda drink contains about 300 calories and contains 10 teaspoons of sugar, which adds up quickly!
- Eliminate or minimize your consumption of juices, which have a lot of calories and little nutritional value.
- Limit sports drinks, as they have lots of sugar and calories.
- Avoid processed foods by preparing meals with fresh ingredients.
- Eat together as a family and not in front of the TV.
- Drink non- or low-fat milk and lots of water.
- Limit how often you eat at restaurants. Restaurant portions tend to be much larger than needed. Share a meal or save half for a future meal.
- Limit second helpings to fruits & veggies, not carbs and meats.
- Limit special treats and desserts to one or two per week.
- Limit screen time (TV, video games and computer) to no more than two hours per day. Get some exercise instead!

Body Mass Index (BMI) is an indicator of whether or not your weight is healthy. In medicine, we define overweight and obesity according to the BMI. In general:

A BMI < 5th percentile: Possibly

underweight A BMI between 5th – 85th percentile: Healthy

A BMI between 85th – 95th percentile:

Overweight* A BMI > 95th percentile: Obese*

*Exceptions can occasionally be seen in teenagers with significant muscle mass.



Calcium is needed to build strong, healthy bones. Weight-bearing exercise also helps to build strong bones. Aim for 1,300 mg of calcium in your diet each day, which is about four servings per day. Some calcium-rich foods are dairy products, fortified orange juice, most leafy green vegetables and some cereals. Supplements are an alternative.

Heading to College?

Schedule a check-up with your provider, and bring in all medical and consent forms for completion.

Becoming Independent

- Take on new challenges; you'll increase your confidence!
- Learn about yourself, what you believe in and what is important to you. Discuss these things with your parents.
- Participate in organized activities such as school clubs, sports or religious camps.
- Discuss limits and consequences for unacceptable behavior with your parents. Continue to discuss family rules such as curfews or driving.
- Get help with big choices like college, job training and career ideas.
- Discuss current events and social responsibility with family and friends.
- You have the right to confidentiality. Your provider will keep personal issues between the two of you unless you are planning to harm yourself or others.
- When you turn age 18, consider filling out an advance health care directive in case you cannot speak or make decisions for yourself.

Are You Depressed or Anxious?

Signs of depression may include:

- Prolonged or consistent sadness
- Lack of energy or constantly feeling tired
- No longer enjoying activities that you used to like
- Withdrawing from friends and family
- Being more irritable and/or angry
- Inability to concentrate
- Significant weight changes
- A notable change in sleeping patterns
- Feelings of guilt, helplessness and/or hopelessness

If you notice any of these signs, it is very important to tell your provider as soon as possible.

Sleep

As a teenager, you may often go to bed late. This may make getting up for school in the morning hard.

- Try to get eight to nine hours of sleep per night.
- Set regular bedtimes and wake times. This will help you get enough rest and be ready for your day.
- Let your provider know if you snore, as this may be a sign of a health problem.

Sex and Drugs

These may be sensitive topics, and they can be discussed with your provider confidentially in most instances. You can also learn more at www.parrf.org/teen.

Acne

If you have acne:

- Wash your face twice a day with a mild facial cleanser, and moisturize with a facial lotion. Scrubs can sometimes make acne worse by irritating the skin.
- Always wash your face after exercise.
- Try using an over-the-counter benzoyl peroxide wash (5 to 10 percent concentration) once a day. While this may irritate the skin at first, this sensitivity should subside with regular use.

Facts About Acne:

- Foods do not make acne worse.
- Acne does not go away overnight. With dedication to regular hygiene (and taking medications, if necessary), you should see improvements in a few months.

If you are concerned about your acne despite these measures, see your provider.

Immunizations

- A second varicella (chicken pox) vaccine will be given if needed.
- A Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis) booster is usually given at 10 to 11 years of age and again around 17 to 18 years.
- The new HPV (human papillomavirus) vaccine is given to girls and boys as early as age 9. It protects them against the virus that is the leading cause of cervical cancer.
- Meningococcal vaccine is recommended for ages 11 and older. It protects against a devastating form of bacterial meningitis (inflammation of the brain and its coverings). A second dose is recommended for 17 and over as you prepare for college life.

Often, a TB skin test or PPD is placed prior to college to rule out tuberculosis disease. Your college admission forms will specify whether or not this is necessary.