

HEALTH TRACKS

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



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



**Age-
14-15 YEARS**

GREETINGS!

Welcome to middle adolescence, puberty is well underway. Conflicts with parents over the issue of independence are maximal at this time. There is intense involvement with peers. It is a time of sexual exploration and experimentation. Adolescents need increased independence, but continual family support and adult supervision.

YOUR TEEN'S HEALTH CARE



Well-Child Check-Ups:

Sports physicals are required, but if your teen does not participate in sports, a complete physical exam is important. Yearly dental exams and follow-up dental work are necessary.

Immunizations (shots):

- Please check to make sure your teen is up to date with his or her Tdap, meningitis, varicella, and HPV vaccines. For more information about your vaccines please contact your local Public Health Clinic, Physician or School Nurse.
- It is helpful to keep personal records of your immunizations.
- It is also recommended you receive a yearly flu vaccine!

Treat your teen in a way you would want to be treated. Kids are worth it.

Compliments are ego boosters

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.
- ❁ like staying up late at night and sleeping in the morning.
- ❁ 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.

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.

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

- Encourage resistance to peer pressure of drinking, smoking, drugs and other risk-taking behaviors.
- Again it's okay to say "no" and be an individual.
- No matter how great the problem, there is no problem that can't be solved by the parent/teen team.
- Discuss sexuality: emphasize the right to say "no".
- Discuss AIDS and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases.
- Acne may be a problem - encourage daily bathing and grooming.
- Encourage regular physical activity to keep weight & BMI in a healthy range.



FEEDING YOUR TEEN

- ◆ Encourage 3 balanced meals a day.
- ◆ Remember to eat breakfast.
- ◆ Encourage eating school lunch or brown bagging it.
- ◆ Try to have one family meal a day together.
- ◆ Discourage diet pills.
- ◆ Involve your teen with planning meals and food preparation.
- ◆ Brush twice a day and floss regularly.



POSITIVE PARENTING

- ★ Spend time with your teen.
- ★ Establish family rules.
- ★ Respect your teen's privacy (bedroom, bathroom, mail, calls).
- ★ Assign household chores. Thank them for helping.
- ★ Show affection appropriately. Your teen is never too old to hear "I love you".
- ★ Encourage a wide variety of interests: sports, hobbies, computers, music.
- ★ Attend events in which teen participates.
- ★ Be an askable parent. Share your thoughts and feelings.
- ★ Set clear limits, allow them to experience natural consequences.
- ★ Start bringing up the idea of future goals after high school.

Safety Check

- ✓ You and your teen should use a seatbelt every time you ride in a car.
- ✓ Limit loud, continuous noise/music.
- ✓ Be aware of drugs, alcohol, tobacco usage.
- ✓ Teach him how to swim.
- ✓ Teach water safety and always wear life jackets in boats & other watercraft.
- ✓ Use sunscreen (SPF 15 at least).
- ✓ Remember helmets with all ATV's, bikes, skates.
- ✓ Keep ammunition and guns locked up in separate places. Encourage no weapon possession.
- ✓ Keep household, all chemical products, and medicines safely capped in original containers.
 - Minnesota Poison Control information number 1-800-222-1222
- ✓ Protect personal safety from physical safety/sexual assault (i.e., don't accept rides from strangers).
- ✓ Wear helmets and seatbelts when applicable.
- ✓ Protective gear during sports.
- ✓ Practice fire drills in your home.
- ✓ Check smoke detectors annually.
- ✓ Discuss never ride in a car with a driver who's been drinking or using drugs.

Feel free to call me if you wish to discuss any concerns you may have about your teen's growth and development. Let us know if you have any change of name, address or phone number.

We will send you another newsletter before your teen is 16 years old. If you have a friend/relatives who are pregnant or have young infants, please tell them to join our program by calling me.

Bye!



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