

HEALTH TRACKS

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



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



**Age-
12-13 YEARS**

GREETINGS!

Welcome to the wonderful world of raising a teenager! Remember the terrible two's? Or was that the terrific two's?? These years may bring back some of those same feelings of frustration and pride.

Raising a teenager will have some difficult times, but there will be many rewarding times, too. Many factors will influence your teenager's future. Many factors we cannot change, but we can be there for them. Support them and love them through all their positive and negative experiences. Parenting a teenager can be an enriching, rewarding experience. Your child is becoming an adult!!

YOUR CHILD'S HEALTH CARE



Well-Child Check-Ups:

Sports physicals are required, but if your child does not participate in sports, a complete physical exam is equally important. Yearly dental exams and follow up dental work are necessary. Vision screenings are done by the school nurse in seventh grade but if you have concerns or your child has vision complaints, contact your health care provider.

Immunizations (shots):

- Please check to make sure your teen is up to date with his or her immunizations. Your child will be required to have the Tdap and meningococcal vaccines before beginning in grade. The HPV vaccine is also recommended in this age group. If your child has not had chickenpox, then he or she will need 2 doses of the varicella vaccine. 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.
- Parents have you had your Tdap vaccine in the last 10 years?
- It is also recommended you receive a yearly flu vaccine!

YOUR GROWING CHILD

Significant growth spurts usually occur early to mid adolescence. Be aware of the following:

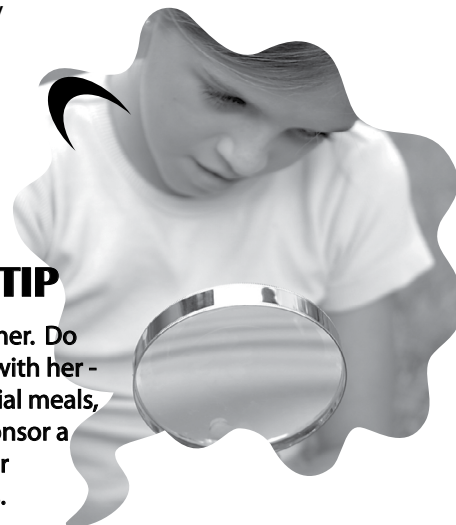
- ✿ At this age, your child may develop scoliosis (a curvature of the spine). Some schools routinely check for scoliosis and will contact you if it is suspected in your child. If you have concerns, contact your health care provider.
- ✿ Overtraining or exercise may cause pain and subtle injuries. If exercise causes pain - REST. If pain persists, see your health care provider.

SOCIAL ISSUES

- ✿ Friends are important - teens need to fit in and feel like they belong.
- ✿ Mood swings are common.
- ✿ Group showers at school or camp may be threatening and uncomfortable.
- ✿ A strong sense of fairness is evident.
- ✿ Be aware that your child's friendship may change at this time. This can be positive or negative. Discuss this.

ACTIVITY TIP

Tell him you love her. Do something special with her - sports events, special meals, video games, sponsor a party for her and friends.



Common Health Concerns



CHICKENPOX INFORMATION

Chickenpox is one of the most common childhood viral diseases. It is usually mild and not life-threatening to children who are otherwise healthy.

The most common complication from chickenpox is bacterial infection of the skin. Other problems are viral or bacterial pneumonia and encephalitis.

Until recently, chickenpox could not be easily prevented with a vaccine, only treated. Now parents can have their children immunized against chickenpox and prevent the discomfort and possible serious complications the disease may cause.

Please talk to your health care provider if you have questions about the Varicella vaccine.

WHAT CHICKENPOX LOOKS LIKE:

- A skin rash that develops on your child's scalp and body, then spreads to the face, arms, and legs over a period of 3-4 days.
- This rash progresses to blisters, then become open sores with brown crusts. Call your health care provider if the sores get large red areas around them as some children may develop a skin infection.
- School-age children often get a mild fever for 1-2 days before the rash appears.
- Other symptoms, such as chills, fussiness, loss of appetite, headache.
- It is highly contagious (easily spread to others) from 2 days before the sores break out until the sores are dry and crusted over. Children with chickenpox are required to stay home from school (daycare) until no longer contagious.

FOR SKIN DISCOMFORT AND ITCHING:

- Give child a cool bath with baking soda or Aveeno in it, every 3-4 hours and apply calamine lotion.
- Trim child's fingernails and keep hands clean to prevent infection of the sores.
- DO NOT give any medications with Aspirin in it. Be sure to read the labels.
- You may give Acetaminophen.
- Call your health care provider if you have any questions. Sometimes, other medicine can be given to relieve itching.

SKIN PROBLEMS:

Most boys and girls are beginning to mature and their bodies are changing. Skin problems are common and affect up to 85 percent of teens.

- Tips for Good Skin Care
 - Wash daily with a mild soap.
 - Avoid oil base cosmetics.
 - Check with your pharmacist regarding creams for acne.
 - If the skin condition is severe, contact your health care provider.
- Fungal infections, such as jock itch and athlete's foot can also be common.
 - Reduce moisture in these areas by keeping them clean and dry.
 - Avoid tight clothing.
 - Wear cotton socks and underwear.
 - If the condition persists, contact your health care provider.



A DAILY SHOWER IS A MUST!

POSITIVE PARENTING

- ★ The real theme for parenting during adolescence is teaching responsibility.
- ★ Maintain your sense of humor.
- ★ Limits are necessary but maintain mutual respect.
- ★ Allow your teen to vent their frustrations.
- ★ Explain your rules and reasons for the rules.

YOUR DECISIONS ARE FINAL.

Safety Check



- ✓ You and your child should use a seatbelt every time you ride in a car.
- ✓ Limit loud and continuous noise. Earbuds used with Ipads can cause hearing loss.
- ✓ Teach him how to swim.
- ✓ Teach water safety and always wear life jackets.
- ✓ Use sun screen (SPF 15 at least).
- ✓ Have working smoke detectors and a fire exit plan. Practice fire drills in your home.
- ✓ Check your smoke detectors annually. Pick a day, like Thanksgiving Day.
- ✓ Discuss and discourage smoking, drug and alcohol use.
- ✓ Wear a bike helmet when riding bike, roller blading or skateboarding as well as elbow and knee protectors.
- ✓ Discuss limits of touch and sexual behaviors.
- ✓ Keep all household products, chemical products, and medicines safely capped in original containers.
 - Minnesota Poison Control information number 1-800-222-1222
- ✓ Sign your child up for firearm safety training.

NUTRITION

- ★ A healthy diet consists of choosing foods from the food pyramid.
- ★ Teenagers that follow the pyramid groups have very little problem with obesity.
- ★ Athletes need a high carbohydrate diet. They need to drink lots of water or juices during an event.
- ★ Watch for eating disorders in your child. *Signs of eating disorders include:*
 - Intense fear of being fat.
 - Very strict dieting.
 - Claiming to be fat when not.
 - Extreme exercise.
 - Hair loss, brittle nails.
- ★ An eating disorder can be a sign of an underlying emotional struggle. Please contact your physician.



I hope you have enjoyed this newsletter. Please feel free to call me if you have any questions. Please call me if you have a change of address or phone number so you can continue to receive these newsletters. Meanwhile, enjoy this special time in your life.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

218-281-3385
DPPMLNVT

Codi Jo Lehmann, RN, PHN
Email: codi.lehmann@co.polk.mn.us



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Polk County Public Health
PO Box 403
Crookston, MN 56716

Address Service Requested

TO:

12-13 YR.