

Pediatric Health Care

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+Your Adolescent

Well visits are annual.

Immunizations: Your child will need the meningitis and TDaP (Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis) vaccinations. At this age you may decide to have your child receive the HPV (human papillomavirus) vaccination. This vaccination is a 3 shot series that can be completed within a 6 month time frame.

Screenings: Vision and hearing will be checked every other year or if you have any concerns. Other screening done at this age may include a tuberculin test (if indicated due to exposure to Tuberculosis) and blood pressure. If there is a family history of elevated cholesterol, some physicians will also obtain a screening blood test. Please let us know if you have any concerns about these issues.

Development:

Physiologically your child will be starting puberty. You will start to see physical changes with your child. The females will start breast development and axillary and pubic hair. They will also start their periods during this time. It is normal to have irregular periods for the first 24 months but should be monthly after that time. Periods should not last more than 10 days and should not cause severe pain, if it does please discuss with your doctor. Females will usually stop growing 18-24 months after the start of their first period. The males will start to have their voices deepen and development of axillary and pubic hair. They will continue to grow until they are 21 years of age. On average, males start puberty a few years after females.

At these ages you will need to provide a supportive environment with steps toward autonomy. This will support emotional and social well-being. Self-esteem is a large part of this age groups emotional well-being. High self esteem is generally associated with feelings of life satisfaction and a sense of control over his/her life. Another developmental milestone is their grown sense of "self". Long hours are spent talking, grooming, being alone and being part of a group are all components of finding their "self".

Nutrition: It is important that your child eat a well balanced diet. They should be eating at least 5 servings of fruits/vegetables a day and having at least 2 cups of low fat milk or dairy source. Your child may develop strong food preferences and may refuse to eat some foods. Balance good nutrition with what your child wants

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to eat. Make mealtimes pleasant and encourage conversation. It is recommended to try to limit total screen time to 2 hours or less daily and get at least 1 hour of physical exercise each day. Children should not drink any sugary drinks. Children should continue a daily vitamin D supplement of 400 IU (international units).

New Calcium and Vitamin D Recommendations

- Recommended daily calcium allowance: Depending on your child's age, please see if your child gets enough calcium from their diet and whether they need supplementation.

For all children over the age of 12 months, you will need to supplement only if they are not getting enough through their diet. From 12 months until 4 years you give 700 mg, from 4 years until 8 years you give 1000 mg and 9 years to 18 years 1300 mg, 19 years to 22 years- 1000 mg.

Dietary sources of calcium examples:

Yogurt, lowfat 8 ounces- 300-400 mg
Mozzarella, part skim, 1.5 ounces- 300 mg
Milk, lowfat, 8 ounces - 300 mg

- Vitamin D is now 600 IU daily for children over 12 months.

Safety:

Should your child need antibiotics for an illness it is medically compatible to administer Tylenol or Motrin while taking antibiotics.

Internet safety: Talk to your child about approved websites and caution them not to give information about themselves. Setting a time limit is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics of two hours or less daily.

Fires: Make sure your family has a home fire escape plan. Make sure to keep a fire extinguisher in or near the kitchen. Teach your child emergency phone numbers and to leave the house if fire breaks out. Turn your water heater to 120°F (50°C).

Car Safety: Accidental trauma is the #1 cause of death in Adolescents. Car accidents account for most of the deaths. Your child will be starting to drive and you should discuss about wearing seatbelts and not texting while driving. Texting while driving is not only dangerous it's also illegal in Massachusetts.

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Bicycle Safety: Your child should always wear a helmet when riding a bike. Make sure the helmet is properly fastened. Make sure the size of the bicycle your child rides is appropriate. The top tube of the bicycle should be at least 2 inches below your child's pelvis. All family members should ride with a bicycle helmet as well.

Strangers: Your child will be going out with friends to different places. Remind your child never to go anywhere with strangers. Make sure you know their friends and where they are going when they leave.

Dental Care: Your child should brush his teeth at least twice a day. Flossing the teeth before bedtime is also recommended. Your child should visit the dentist twice a year. The permanent teeth will continue to come in throughout adolescents. The last sets of teeth are their third molars, also known as the wisdom teeth. The grooves on the permanent teeth are prone to cavities. Parents and dentists need to watch the teeth carefully and consider whether sealants (plastic coatings that adhere to the chewing surface of the molar teeth) may help prevent tooth decay.

Sleep: Adolescents need 8.5-9.25 hours of sleep per night. This need will increase when participating in sports. Good sleep hygiene is important. Having a routine, no large meals right before bedtime and keeping room quite and dark are ways to help in sleeping soundly.

Behavior: Fluctuations of mood are normal for this age group. With increasing autonomy you will notice your child may become unwilling to share his/her feelings. They will likely turn to their peers. Their friends play an important role in their development.

This age group has hard time foreseeing in the future and the consequences of their actions. You will start to notice that they will start partaking in high risk behaviors. You should encourage discussion with your child about acceptable behavior and rules of the house. This will include consequences if the rules are broken.

Academic Achievement: Success in school contributes substantially to the adolescent's self-esteem and progress toward becoming an adult. Parental involvement in extracurricular activities enhances adolescent academic achievement and educational attainment.

Suggested Reading for Parents:

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Caring for your Teenager: The Complete and Authoritative Guide. American
Academy of Pediatrics: 2003