

Norman Pediatric Associates Parent Handout 12-13 Year Visit

Profile: Your child is becoming a teenager. These years are full of rapid physical (boys generally are later than girls), social, and emotional changes in your child. As puberty begins, your child may start to worry about changes to his/her body. Your child will be making more of his/her choices about friends, sports, studying, and school. He/she is becoming more independent, with his/her own personality and interests. Your teen may also experience more moodiness. He/she should have more complex writing skills, reading with fluency and with more focus on comprehension, completing research projects, understanding algebra principles and basic geometry concepts.

Eating/Nutrition: Your child continues to need three healthy meals a day, including fruits and vegetables. Eating breakfast is important. Your child may enjoy helping to choose and prepare the family meals. Mealtimes should be enjoyable and are a good time for families to talk. Turn off the TV or radio and let your child decide how much to eat. Children watch what their parents eat, so set a good example. No candy, soda, juices, fried/junk foods, energy drinks, or chips except for special occasions. He/she should drink 24 ounces of skim/fat free milk a day. Make sure your child gets plenty of water when he/she is exercising or playing sports. Your teen still needs to be taking a multivitamin every day.

Activities: Good activities for this age include: models, scrapbook kits, science projects, sports activities, construction, sewing or knitting, and camping. Your child may want to start a hobby or a collection. He/she may enjoy sports/team activities, as well as organized clubs. Encourage your child to volunteer or be involved in a community based activity. Your child should be getting 60 minutes of physical activity every day. Your child may enjoy reading; offer them the opportunity to check out books frequently. Some 12-13 year olds are interested in playing a musical instrument. Your child should have responsibilities or chores around the house that fit the child's age.

Safety: Learn CPR.

Car: Your child should sit in the backseat of all vehicles, never in the front seat. Always wear your seat belt.

Water: Your child needs to be watched continuously when around water. He/she needs to wear a life vest if boating. Always use a broad spectrum sunscreen of SPF 30 or higher.

Smoking/Burns: If a member of the family smokes: STOP SMOKING - Ask us for help if you cannot stop smoking. A smoke free environment is important for your child's health. Make your home and car "no smoking zones." Your water heater should be set at less than 120° F. Test your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors frequently and change the batteries. Have a fire escape plan. Talk to your child about not playing with fire or matches.

Stranger: Continue to remind your child not to talk to strangers, in person or online.

Pedestrian and Bike Safety: Your child should wear a helmet when riding a bike, scooter or skating. Know where your child is at all times. Make sure your child has the proper safety gear needed for sports and other activities. Do not ride on ATVs.

Poisons: Keep poisons, medications, and toxic household products out of reach and locked up.

Guns: Guns should be kept unloaded and locked up. Ammunition should be locked up separately from the gun. Teach your child the **NEW** rules of gun safety. **N**ever touch a gun; **E**very gun is loaded; **W**hen in doubt, get out.

Computer/Internet/Texting Safety: When he/she is on the computer, monitor their online use. Keep the computer in a common area, not in the child's bedroom. Install a safety filter. Know your child's password for his/her online accounts. Check his/her accounts regularly. Make sure your teen knows to never give out any personal information, like address, phone number or email address. Never let your child send photos to anyone that he/she doesn't know. Set a time limit. Encourage your teen to talk to you about anything he/she encounters that doesn't seem right while on the internet. Remind your child that not everything on the internet is credible or true.

Do not allow texting when he/she should be concentrating on something else, like walking or doing homework. Remind your child to always think before they send something, because once it is sent, it is out there for the world to see. Have your child say "goodnight" to his/her electronics (i.e. turn them off at night).

Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco: This is the time when your teen might be faced with peer pressure to try drugs, alcohol, and tobacco products. Educate your child about making smart choices, and not using drugs (illegal, prescription,

steroids, or diet pills) of any kind, alcohol or tobacco products. Encourage your child to have friends with these same values.

Teeth/Oral Health: Your child needs to brush his/her teeth with fluoridated toothpaste at least twice a day (after breakfast and before bed) and floss at least once a day. Your child should see a dentist at least every 6 months or as the dentist decides. Your child's permanent molars should start coming in. Wear a mouth guard to protect teeth while playing sports.

Social Skills: Your early adolescent is bouncing back between childhood and adulthood. He/she may be responsible one minute, and irresponsible the next, testing his/her parents, then depending on them. Peer relationships become extremely powerful and important, as well as the need to "belong" to a group. Your child needs to have a connection with his/her parents. Support and accept your child as he/she gets older and more mature. Teens need parents to know what is going on in their lives. Be aware of things like: how they are doing in school and what after school activities they do. Find out what is going on by talking, and not by constantly watching your child. Teens need parents to have clear boundaries that can be subject to change. These limits should protect family rules and help him/her grow and mature. Remember to be both firm and flexible about your child's limits. Teens need parents that will help him/her make good choices and guide him/her while growing older. Talk to your child, support him/her and teach by example. Teens need parents to give them a caring home and have loving adults in their lives. Trust your child while guiding him/her to better choices. Encourage your child to talk about his/her friends, school, and activities. Ask your child about his/her accomplishments and challenges, any worries he/she may have, and if anyone is being mean or being a bully. Get to know your child's friends and their families. Make sure your child has a safe place to go after school. Make sure your child has a quiet place to do homework. Establish a family routine. Limit screen time (TV, computer, video games, iPad, texting) to no more than one hour a day of programs suited for your child's age. Watch the programs with him/her and discuss what took place on the show. No TV or computer in the child's bedroom.

Teen Hygiene: As soon as puberty hits and the hormones start flowing, a teen's hygiene requirements change dramatically in many ways. Your child needs to be showering every day and wearing clean clothes. Your child may want to only wash his/her hair every other day to keep his/her hair from getting too oily. He/She may need to start wearing deodorant/antiperspirant. Get your teen in a good habit of washing his/her face to help prevent acne. Your child may want to start shaving soon. Discuss this with him/her.

Sexuality Education: Reinforce your child that no one is to see/touch your child's private parts without permission and in the absence of mom and dad. Also reinforce that no adult is to ask for help with his/her private parts or ask the child to keep secrets from his/her parents. Talk to your child about puberty and the emotional and physical changes that occur. Encourage your child not to have sex. Talk to him/her about sex, safe dating, relationships, and values. Make sure your child has a person he/she can talk with about bodily changes, feelings, sexual pressures, etc. Healthy dating relationships are built on respect, concern, and doing things both people enjoy doing.

We recommend the following books to help guide you and your child through the teen years. For boys: *American Medical Association Boy's Guide to Becoming a Teen* and for girls: *American Girl the Care and Keeping of You*. We have these books at our front desk for you to look at and/or purchase.

Oklahoma Poison Control Center:
(405) 271-5454 (OKC area)
1-800-222-1222 (state wide toll free)

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