

# Annual Physical: 14-17 years (patient)

Healthy behaviors and lifestyle habits that are formed in adolescence often continue into adulthood. This handout will give you more information to help you on this journey.

## General Advice

- Find activities that you are really interested in besides schoolwork. Discovering a hobby is a great way to build confidence and self-esteem. Ideas include trying out a sport, theatre, volunteering or learning a new language!
- If you are having trouble organizing your time or struggling in school, talk to your family or another trusted adult, such as a guidance counselor, to come up with some solutions.
- **Who is a trusted adult?** Trusted adults are people whose words and actions make you feel safe. A trusted adult can be your doctor, a parent or other family member you trust, a coach, a guidance counselor or a teacher. You might have a different trusted adult for different situations.

## Social Media

**Think twice before hitting “enter”.** Remember that anything you post online (videos, photos, comments) is no longer private and often can't be taken down or deleted from the Internet. Posting something that is not appropriate can even become a problem years later when you are applying for a job or college.

Your online identity and reputation are shaped in much the same way as your real-life identity. Treat others with respect and never post hurtful or embarrassing messages. If you receive harassing or bullying messages, tell a trusted adult.

## Your Changing Body

- Everyone goes through puberty, but not always at the same time or in the same way - and that is okay. Talk to your doctor if you have concerns about how your body is changing.
- You may have questions about gender identity, sexual attraction and relationships. These questions are part of growing up. Talk to a trusted adult, such as your doctor, if you have any questions.
- Eating healthy, moving your body and getting enough sleep are important during puberty because your body is going through many changes.

## Nutrition

- Have fun learning how to prepare foods and dishes with your family. It helps to learn more about what you like and to try new foods.
- Limit fatty, sugary and salty foods that are low in nutrients, such as candy, chips and ice cream.
- Choose water instead of soda or sports drinks.
- Instead of drinking juice, eat the fruit. This contains less sugar, and you get many more nutrients this way.

## Healthy Behaviors

- Find fun, safe things to do with friends. Choose friends who support your decision not to use tobacco, alcohol or drugs. Support friends who choose not to use.
- Always talk through problems and never use violence.
- Healthy dating relationships are built on respect, concern and doing things both of you like to do. If you're worried that you might be in an unhealthy relationship, it's important to tell an adult you trust, like a parent or your doctor.
- Not having sex is the only way to 100% avoid sexually transmitted infections (STIs). However, if you do have sex, use a barrier method (such as condoms) to protect yourself.
- If you are having penile/vaginal sex and do not desire a pregnancy, make sure you consider pregnancy prevention. If you are having sex, please talk to your doctor about ways to stay healthy and be safe.
- When dating, or in any situations related to sexual behavior, remember that “No” means NO. Saying, “No” is OK.

## Emotional Wellbeing

- It is normal to have up-and-down moods, but if you feel sad, angry, nervous or frustrated a lot of the time, it is important to speak with someone, like a counselor, a family member or your doctor.
- Every teen deals with some level of stress. Stress is your body's way of responding to different demands. When there are too many demands or difficult demands, your body starts to feel stressed out.
- Ways to reduce stress
  - ✓ Talk about your stress
  - ✓ Get enough sleep
  - ✓ Schedule “me time” to take care of yourself
  - ✓ Take time away from social media
  - ✓ Get moving. Aim for at least 1 hour of physical activity every day
  - ✓ Use a free mindfulness app

## Sleep

- There are many benefits of good sleep. Getting enough sleep improves mood and energy as well as increases focus that can contribute to better school performance.
- Teenagers need 8 ½ to 9 ½ hours of sleep each night.
- Stop using screens 1-2 hours before bed. Electronics have **blue light**, which makes it harder for your brain to release **melatonin** (sleep hormone) naturally. Electronics also distract you from going to bed on time.
- Talk to your doctor if you have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep.

## Safety Tips

### Dos

- Know your family's emergency plan and practice what to do in case of an emergency.
- Call your parents or another trusted adult if you feel unsafe.
- Use safety equipment during sports.
- Wear a helmet when riding a bike, skiing or skateboarding.
- Use sunscreen and wear hats when outside.
- Wear your lap and shoulder seat belt.

### Don'ts

- Ride ATVs.
- Ride in a car with someone who you think may have used alcohol or drugs.
- Turn the volume on your device too high when you use earbuds or headphones.
- Fight or carry weapons.
- Share prescription medicines or use other people's medicines.
- Give out personal information or share passwords online.

## Health Care Transition

Throughout your life, family members or caregivers have helped you with your health and healthcare needs, such as calling for appointments, filling out forms or keeping track of medications. As you get older, taking care of your health becomes your responsibility. For example, as you become more independent, learn to take your medicine without your family reminding you.

Your doctor will begin to meet with you privately for part of the clinic visit. Not only is this a good time to talk about some things privately, but you may get more comfortable asking questions about your own health. This will not happen overnight, and your doctor is here to help. To learn more, visit [www.gottransition.org](http://www.gottransition.org).

## Confidentiality

The doctor-patient relationship is built on trust. Confidentiality is a big component of maintaining trust. This does not mean keeping secrets. The information that you share with your doctor is kept private unless the doctor is worried about your safety or that of someone else. It is important for you to share information with your doctor so they can give you the best care. Your doctor cares about you and wants to keep you safe and healthy. If you have any questions about confidentiality, you can ask your doctor.

## Vaccines (\*vaccine schedule may vary slightly by practice)

- The influenza vaccine is recommended during flu season.
- At 16 years of age, the meningitis vaccine is given.

A vaccine is used to make your body stronger to fight against an infection.

Do shots make you nervous? You are not alone. Some ways to make shots easier include taking slow, deep breaths and even coughing as the needle goes in.

## Oral Health

- ✓ Create a routine for brushing your teeth twice a day and for flossing once a day.
- ✓ Visit the dentist every 6 months.

## Important Numbers

- MA Behavioral Health Help Line: 833-773-2445 (call or text)
- Smoking Quit Line (free): 800-TRY-TO-STOP
- Poison Control: 800-222-1222
- My doctor's office: \_\_\_\_\_

## Safety On the Road

- Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for teens and young adults.
- Never text or talk on the phone while you drive.
- Set mobile electronic devices to "Do Not Disturb" mode, which prevents texts, calls and notifications from coming through while you drive.

## Websites

- **American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Family Media Plan**  
[www.healthychildren.org/English/media/pages/default.aspx](http://www.healthychildren.org/English/media/pages/default.aspx)
- **AAP Healthy Children**  
[www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org)  
Health topics and news updates from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)
- **MGH Clay Center for Young Healthy Minds**  
[www.mghclaycenter.org](http://www.mghclaycenter.org)  
A free, practical online educational resource dedicated to supporting the mental health of young people.
- **Got Transition**  
[www.gottransition.org](http://www.gottransition.org)  
Resource that aims to help youth and young adults move from pediatric to adult care
- **SmokefreeTXT Program**  
[www.teen.smokefree.gov](http://www.teen.smokefree.gov)  
A free text messaging program with advice on how to quit. Text QUIT to IQUIT.