

# Norman Pediatric Associates

## Parent Handout 14-15 Year Visit

**Profile:** Welcome to the teenage years. Puberty is well underway, and maybe complete in many teens. Your teen may have a decreased preoccupation with his/her body and an increased involvement with peers. This may be a time when your teen might face more peer pressure to use alcohol, tobacco products, drugs, and to have sex. Other challenges can be eating disorders, depression, and family problems. At this age, your teenager will make more of his/her own choices about friends, sports, studying, and school. Learn the normal characteristics of the teen years: the five "I"'s and six "M"'s: impulsive, intense, idealistic, immediate, and indestructible; moody, messy, monosyllabic, mouthy, money-oriented, and ME-centered. School is where your adolescent learns skills that are essential to his/her all-around development and future success. These include critical thinking, problem solving, respecting authority (and, when appropriate, challenging it), asking questions, defending positions, and learning to get along with one's peers.

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

**Activities:** Your teen may enjoy sports/team activities, as well as organized clubs. Encourage your adolescent to volunteer or be involved in a community based activity. Your teen should be getting 60 minutes of physical activity every day. Your teenager may enjoy reading; offer them the opportunity to check out books frequently. Your teen should have responsibilities or chores around the house that fit the child's age.

**Sleep:** You may feel like your teen is "sleeping" their life away. Teenagers need 9-10 hours of sleep per night. Many teens of this age group are actually sleep deprived. Lost sleep cannot be made up later.

**Safety:** Learn CPR.

Car: Your teen may sit in the front seat, but remember to always wear your seat belt.

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 teen about not playing with fire or matches.

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

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

Poisons: Keep poisons, medications, and toxic household products stored safely.

Guns: Guns should be kept unloaded and locked up. Ammunition should be locked up separately from the gun. Teach your adolescent 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 teen's bedroom. Install a safety filter. Know your teenager'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 adolescent 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 teen 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 teen to always think before they send something, because once it is sent, it is out there for the world to see. Have your teenager 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 teen about making smart choices, and not using drugs (illegal, prescription, steroids, or diet pills) of any kind, alcohol, or tobacco products. Encourage your teenager to have friends with these same values.

**Teeth/Oral Health:** Your teen 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 adolescent should see a dentist at least every 6 months or as the dentist decides. Wear a mouth guard to protect teeth while playing sports.

**Social Skills:** Peer relationships become extremely powerful and important, as well as the need to “belong” to a group. Your teenager needs to have a connection with his/her parents. Support and accept your adolescent 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 teenager. 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 teen’s limits. Teenagers need parents that will help him/her make good choices and guide him/her while growing older. Talk to your adolescent, 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 teenager while guiding him/her to better choices. Encourage your teen 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 teen’s friends and their families. Make sure your adolescent has a safe place to go after school. Make sure your teenager 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 teen’s age. Watch the programs with him/her and discuss what took place on the show. No TV’s or computers in the teenager’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 adolescent needs to be showering every day and wearing clean clothes. Your teenager 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 teen may want to start shaving soon. Discuss this with him/her.

**Sexuality Education:** Reinforce your teen that no one is to see/touch your teen’s private parts without permission. Talk to your teenager about puberty and the emotional and physical changes that occur. Encourage your adolescent not to have sex. Talk to him/her about sex, safe dating, relationships, and values. Make sure your teen has a person he/she can talk with about bodily changes, feelings, sexual pressures, etc. Healthy dating relationships are built on respect, concern, doing things both people enjoy doing, settling disagreements peacefully and with respect, and having outside friends and activities.

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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