

# Norman Pediatric Associates

## Parent Handout 16-18 Year Visit

**Profile:** By this age, most girls are physically mature by now, and have completed puberty. Most boys are well on their way to finishing pubertal development, having gained muscle mass and strength, as well as secondary sexual characteristics. Your teen might have concerns about his/her body size, shape or weight. Eating disorders can occur, especially in females. Your teen may experiment with new music, clothing styles, hair styles, and language, as he/she tries to answer “Who am I?” Your teen’s friends will gain greater importance, leading your child to spend less time with his/her family. Your teen’s group of friends may be small, but they will have similar values, beliefs, and behaviors. Your adolescent is dealing with issues of independence, which may lead to rules and authority being tested and a potential for your teen to try risky behaviors. Your teen may become extremely opinionated and challenging, which may result in family conflicts and the desire by your teen to seek privacy in his/her own room. When your teenager starts driving and dating, new family rules may need to be negotiated.

**Eating/Nutrition:** Your adolescent continues to need three healthy meals a day, including fruits and vegetables. Eating breakfast is important. Eating together as a family will help your teen make better choices about the foods he/she eats, promote a healthy weight and give family members time to talk with each other. Be sure to turn off the TV or radio and put away the phones, iPads, etc. No candy, soda, juices, fried/junk foods, energy/sports drinks, or chips except for special occasions. Your teenager should drink 24 ounces of skim/fat free milk a day. Include foods rich in calcium and iron in his/her diet. 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:** Your teen may enjoy sports/team activities, dance, theater, art, as well as organized clubs. Encourage your adolescent to volunteer or be involved in a community based activity. Encourage your teen to be involved in family activities. Your teenager should be getting 60 minutes of physical activity every day. Your teen may enjoy reading; offer them the opportunity to check out books frequently. Your adolescent should have responsibilities or chores around the house. Your teen should be responsible for doing his/her own homework and getting to school/work on time. If your teen is working, talk to him/her about expectations, responsibilities, and ways of behaving respectfully in a public setting.

**Sleep:** You may feel like adolescent is “sleeping” his/hers 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: If your teen is driving, always have him/her wear his/her seat belt. Make passengers do the same. Never drink or do drugs while driving. Never text while driving. Never ride in a car with someone that has been drinking or doing drugs. Limit the number of passengers, nighttime driving, and distractions. Teach him/her to be a safe and cautious driver. Always follow the speed limit.

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 your teenager or 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 teen’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 adolescent about not playing with fire or matches.

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

Safety: Your adolescent should wear a helmet when riding a bike, scooter, or skating. Know where your teen is at all times. Make sure your teen has the proper safety gear needed for sports and other activities. Do not ride on ATVs. Wear appropriate protective gear at work and follow job safety procedures. Avoid high noise levels, especially in music headsets.

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 teen’s password for his/her online accounts. Check his/her accounts regularly. Make sure your teenager 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 adolescent 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, driving, 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 adolescent say "goodnight" to his/her electronics (i.e. turn them off at night).

Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco: This is the time when your teenager might be faced with peer pressure to try drugs, alcohol, and tobacco products. Educate your adolescent about making smart choices, and not using drugs (illegal, prescription, steroids, or diet pills of any kind), alcohol, or tobacco products. Encourage your teen to have friends with these same values. Alcohol and drugs are major factors in deaths among adolescents, contributing to motor vehicle crashes, homicides, and suicides.

**Teeth/Oral Health:** Your adolescent 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 teen 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:** Parents need to remember times are different than when they were a teen. During this time, your teen is developing his/her unique personality and opinions. Relationships with friends are still important, yet your teen may have other interests as he/she develops a better sense of who he/she is. Although adolescents continue to challenge authority figures, he/she needs limits, which provide a safe boundary to allow him/her to grow and function. Try to keep an open channel of communication with your teenager, negotiate limits and boundaries to help reduce major conflicts. Avoid the "being right" power struggle. Let your teen know he/she can call on you when he/she is in trouble. Parents can be a good sounding board, and with your guidance allow your teen to make his/her decisions and choice. Be respectful to your teen, listen to his/her concerns, and allow him/her privacy when requested. Encourage your adolescent to talk about his/her friends, school, and activities. Know how your teen is doing in school. Ask your adolescent about his/her accomplishments and challenges, any worries he/she may have, and if anyone is being mean or being a bully. Make sure your teen knows how to deal with conflict, without using violence. Get to know your teen's friends and their families; know where your teen is, what he/she is doing at all times, and if a responsible adult is present. Make sure your child has a safe place to go after school. Make sure your adolescent has a quiet place to do homework. Establish a family routine. Limit screen time (TV, computer, video games, iPad, and texting) to no more than one hour (outside of homework) a day of programs suited for your teen's age. Watch for changes in behavior, increasing sadness, hopelessness, or depression. If you notice these in your teenager, contact your pediatrician.

**Teen Hygiene:** Your teen needs to be showering every day and wearing clean clothes. Your adolescent may want to only wash his/her hair every other day to keep his/her hair from getting too oily. He/She needs to be wearing deodorant/antiperspirant. Get your teenager in a good habit of washing his/her face to help prevent acne.

**Sexuality Education:** Reinforce to your teen that no one is to see/touch your teen's private parts without permission. 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 for each other, and that saying "no" is okay. Healthy relationships also include 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 adolescent 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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