

Mendon Pediatrics

Points for Parents

Teenage Growth and Development: 11-14 years

Adolescence is a time of rapid physical, intellectual, social, and emotional growth. Knowing what kinds of changes to expect can help to decrease the "growing pains" for both parents and youth.

Quick Facts

The physical changes that take place during puberty are caused by hormones.

Because teens want to fit in, most choose friends whose interests, activities, and values are similar to their own.

Talking on the phone is one way teens develop their social skills.

Physical changes (Puberty)

For girls, puberty begins around 10 or 11 years of age and ends around age 16. Boys enter puberty later than girls—usually around 12 years of age—and it lasts until around age 16 or 17. Girls and boys usually begin puberty around the same time that their mothers and fathers did. Talk with your child about the following physical changes that will happen during puberty. The changes are listed in the order in which they generally occur.

Girls

- body fat increases
- breasts begin to enlarge
- pubic hair grows
- height and weight increase
- first menstrual period occurs
- hips widen
- underarm hair grows
- skin and hair become more oily
- pimples may appear

Boys

- scrotum becomes darker
- testicles grow larger
- penis grows longer and fuller
- pubic hair grows
- breasts can get "lumps" and become tender
- height and weight increase
- muscles develop
- wet dreams occur
- voice cracks and gets deeper
- skin and hair become more oily
- pimples may appear
- underarm and facial hair grow

Intellectual Development

- Most 11 to 14 year olds are still concrete thinkers—they perceive things as good or bad, right or wrong. This is normal. They are just beginning to imagine possibilities, recognize consequences of their actions, and anticipate what others are thinking.
- Youth begin to question family and school rules and challenge their parents.
- Preteens and teens tend to believe that bad things won't happen to them. This helps explain why they are risk-takers. For example, a young girl may believe she can smoke cigarettes without becoming addicted.
- Preteens and teens believe they are the center of attention. This explains why they are painfully self-conscious—a tiny pimple may seem like the end of the world.

Social and emotional development

- 1.Preteens and teens begin to spend more time with peers and less time with family.
- 2.Preteens and teens begin to form their identity by exploring different clothes, hairstyles, friends, music and hobbies.
- 3.Moodiness is common as youth struggle to search for an identity.

4. Preteens and teens push limits that adults put on them to assert their independence.
5. Preteens and teens have mixed feelings about "breaking away" from parents. One day your daughter may want nothing to do with you, the next she is constantly at your side.
6. Troubled youth may act out (for example, get into physical fights, use alcohol or other drugs, skip school) to express emotional pain.
7. Be aware of dangerous activities such as huffing, the choking game, and over the counter cold preparations, that are all used by some children in order to get a high. These activities can seriously injure your child and/or cause death. Keep an open dialog between you and your child to be sure that your child is not being influenced by peer pressure.

Tips for Parents

- Preteens and teens are sometimes embarrassed by their changing bodies and concerned that they are not developing at the same rate as their friends. Reassure your child that young people grow and develop at their own pace and that the changes are normal.
- Do not tease your child about pubertal changes.
- Explain the importance of good personal hygiene. Active sweat glands call for regular bathing and deodorant. For healthy teeth, everyone should brush twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste and floss daily.
- Set reasonable and appropriate limits. Preteens and teens want guidance.
- When differences arise, listen to your child and try to understand his or her point of view.
- Choose your battles! Hold your ground on important issues such as grades and drugs, and let go of smaller issues such as hairstyles and clothes. If it won't matter a year from now, is it worth arguing over?
- Allow your preteen and teen to make more decisions as he or she proves the ability to use good judgment.
- If your child is acting out, talk with him or her to get to the heart of the problem.
- Get counseling for your child or the whole family if you believe it could help.
- Talk with other parents about your concerns, their parenting experiences, setting limits, etc.

Starting at Age 13 at your child's well child exams:

- We will be asking them to fill out two separate forms:
 - Mandated by NY state is a form asking them whether or not they would like to be tested for HIV.
 - A confidential adolescent questionnaire which is standard practice of care through the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- These forms are discussed confidentially with your adolescent every year, starting at 13 yrs old.
- If you have any questions or concerns about these forms, please contact your provider.
- Additionally, at age 13, your adolescent begins a confidential relationship with their health care provider. They are allowed to share confidential information without a parent's knowledge. However, if there is any risk of them being a danger to themselves or to others, their parent will be notified.

Resources

Adolescent Health On Line <http://www.ama-assn.org/go/adolescenthealth>

Learning Network Parent Channel <http://www.familyeducation.com>

National Parent Information Network <http://www.ericps.ed.uiuc.edu/npin>

Nutrition Information <http://www.choosemyplate.gov>

Caring for Your Adolescent Ages 12 to 21, The American Academy of Pediatrics

Beyond the Big Talk: Every Parent's Guide to Raising Sexually Healthy Teens, Debra Haffner

It's Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex & Sexual Health, Robie Harris

Teen Tips: A Practical Survival Guide for Parents with Kids 11 to 19, Tom McMahon

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