

Wellness Guide at 11-14 Years Old

Helpful tips to support your child's development at this stage of life.



Development

- **Emotions:** All young adolescents face social and emotional challenges. The ability for impulse control and responsible decision making are still developing.
- **Communication:** Young teens often argue for the sake of arguing, jump to conclusions, appear self-centered, and constantly find fault in the adult's position. Take time to listen and try to find a way to peacefully respond before reacting. Role model and teach that conflicts can be resolved with nonviolence.
- **Influence:** Parents should not underestimate their ability to positively influence opinions and decisions.
- **Rules:** Provide clear boundaries, rules, and expectations. Include discussions about bedtime, homework, T.V., chores, cell phone, etc.
- **Lifestyle:** Parents can help by modeling healthy lifestyle behaviors and having open conversations with their teen.
- **Concerns:** Mood changes, stress, and anxiety are common and may impact academic, behavioral, and social functioning. Your pediatrician is available for consultation if you have concerns.

TEEN HEALTH HUB WA

Safety

- Discuss strategies for unsafe or uncomfortable situations (peer pressure, risk taking, etc). Remind your child they can call you anytime for help without fear of punishment.
- Encourage helmet use.
- Use protective gear for sports.
- Concussions can occur when your child has a head injury, collision, or fall. Symptoms vary and most kids do not lose consciousness. We can evaluate your child for concerns and give advice on safe return to play. When in doubt, sit it out.

CONCUSSION & INJURY RESOURCES

- Your child is still safest in the back seat of the car. The front seat is OK after age 13.
- Verify that smoke alarms are working properly.
- The safest option is to remove firearms from the home. If present, keep firearms locked, unloaded, and stored separately from ammunition.
- Lock away cigarettes, lighters, alcohol, marijuana, and vaping devices.
- Keep medicines out of reach.

IMPORTANT RESOURCES

POISON CONTROL: (800) 222-1222

SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE: 988

WA MENTAL HEALTH REFERRAL LINE:
(833) 303-5437

Digital Media Plan & Safety

- Establish rules for internet and phone use. Discuss digital respect when posting on social media or texting. Bedtime and mealtime should be electronic-free zones.
- Visit the AAP website to create a [Family Media Plan](#).
- Parents should monitor privacy settings in personal devices, apps, social media, virtual assistants, and wireless networks.
- Multitasking with homework will result in work errors, longer to complete work, and mental fatigue from rapid task switching.
- Do not tolerate cyber-bullying. Help your child block the offender and report cyber-bullying to the school principal and Internet Service Provider.
- Review with your child that it is never OK to give personal information online unless they have parental approval.

THE 5 C_s OF MEDIA USE

Overseas Travel

If your family will be traveling internationally, schedule a virtual eTravel consultation at least 4–6 weeks before departure to review travel health recommendations, vaccines, and medications.

TRAVEL CONSULTATION

Health

- Encourage calcium/Vitamin D (400 to 600 IU/day)/iron intake and balanced nutrition. Avoid sugar-sweetened beverages and energy drinks.
- Visit the dentist regularly. Use toothpaste with fluoride and encourage flossing.
- Encourage daily physical activity for the whole family. We recommend 60 minutes of exercise every day.
- A simple bedtime routine, proper sleep (preteens need 9-11 hours and teens need 8-10 hours) and daily breakfast help them reach their potential.

HEALTH RESOURCES

PHYSICAL FITNESS & SPORTS

CHRONIC CONDITION RESOURCES

Body Image

- Young teens typically demonstrate an enhanced sensitivity to appearance. Clothing, accessories and hairstyles are often used as a way to fit in with peers and express themselves.
- Be conscious about how you talk about food and appearances as concerns of body image, dieting and weight may arise.
- Try providing healthy foods at home and allowing your child to participate in food shopping or meal preparation. Find ways to support their healthy choices and efforts.
- Try to eat healthy family meals together at home.

EATING DISORDER AWARENESS

FUELING THE TEENAGE YEARS

School

- Young teens often still need guidance with organization and setting priorities as academic expectations are rising.
- Academic struggles may be a sign of learning disabilities, attention deficits, stressors at home or school, substance use, or anxiety/depression. Consider discussing concerns with your child's teacher or health care provider.
- Showing interest in their school/schoolwork, and communicating with their teacher shows them you value their education and development.

ACADEMIC/BEHAVIORAL CONCERNS

Puberty

- Access to accurate and culturally appropriate information is essential for your child.
- Encourage your child to ask questions and answer in a way they can understand.
- Consider books and parent/child classes for additional help.
- Talk with your tween or teen about family expectations for friendships, curfews, dating, respect, boundaries, consent, and safe online behavior. Keep conversations open and supportive.
- Encourage routine hygiene.

PUBERTY RESOURCES

#ASKALLEGRO: PREPARING YOUR PRE-TEEN SONS FOR PUBERTY

#ASKALLEGRO: TALKING WITH OUR DAUGHTERS ABOUT PUBERTY

Confidentiality

- Beginning around age 13, part of your teen's healthcare includes spending some time one-on-one with their provider. In Washington, teens also gain additional confidentiality rights at this age for sensitive topics like mental health, substance use, and sexual health.
- We encourage open communication and will always involve parents when there are safety concerns.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

MYIR MOBILE [↗](#)

SCHOOL, SPORTS, & CAMP FORMS [↗](#)

PATIENT EDUCATION [↗](#)