



Congratulations!

You are now the parents of an adolescent. Adolescence (age 11-21) marks the beginning of the journey from childhood to adulthood. One of the adolescent's developmental tasks is achieving autonomy and independence from their parents. Your adolescent will grow physically, emotionally, mentally, and socially. As he goes through this period he will be faced with many important choices: studying, working, friends, family, sports, driving, sex, drinking and smoking. As your adolescent's health care provider we would like to partner with you to help you provide guidance.

1. Tell your adolescent that you love him. Tell him often and show him by giving him space to grow, succeed, and make mistakes. It is especially important to let him know you love him even when he upsets you.
2. Be there for your adolescent. Take an active interest in his activities and try to include him in yours. Set aside time for one-on-one activities and give him your undivided attention.
3. Encourage your adolescent to talk by asking questions that lead to more than "yes/no" answers and listen when he talks. Ask him how he feels and help him to describe what he is feeling. Be ready to listen when he is ready to talk. The reward will be more open communication between you and your adolescent.
4. You are the greatest influence on your adolescent's life! Talk to your adolescent about what you believe and what you expect of him.
5. Parenting is one of the most difficult jobs. Don't be afraid to ask for help. As your adolescent grows you are also growing and learning as a parent. You don't have to have all the answers. Talk to friends, other parents, and your health care provider.
6. Set rules and live by them. Part of your job as a parent is to create a safe environment. Limits will actually make your adolescent feel safe and loved. Make sure your adolescent knows what is acceptable behavior and help him to develop self-control. Discuss rules as a family and discuss consequences of broken rules and be sure to follow through.
7. Talk to your adolescent about things that may be uncomfortable such as feelings, relationships, sex, or drugs. It is your job as a parent to help him learn how to handle difficult situations. Sometimes you won't have all the answers, but this may give you the opportunity to find answers together.
8. Praise your adolescent for the good things that he does. Telling him that you are proud of him helps to build his self-esteem.
9. Help your adolescent set goals. Encourage him to think beyond today. Be there to help guide his decisions. Expect your adolescent to succeed.
10. Remember, you are the parent. No one ever said that parenting would be easy. Sometimes you will have to make difficult decisions that your adolescent won't like. He is not an adult yet and still requires your guidance.



Health Professional Visits During Adolescence

It is important that your adolescent gets regular check-ups every year, especially if he or she plays sports. This is a time to monitor growth and development and to ensure that immunizations are up to date. The recommended immunization schedule for your adolescent has changed. He could require the following: a Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis booster, a second chicken pox vaccine (if your child has not had the disease), the meningococcal vaccine, the Hepatitis A vaccine, and the HPV (cervical cancer) vaccine if your adolescent is female.

Adolescents are often confronted with many challenges and decisions that may affect their health. Some may choose to engage in risky behaviors such as alcohol use, drug use, unprotected sex, etc. As your adolescent's health care provider we would like to develop a trusting relationship and provide an environment conducive to open discussion about any of his healthcare concerns.

It is important for parents and providers to become partners to assist adolescents in their transition to adulthood. We at Cary (Apex, & Fuquay-Varina) Pediatrics request that all adolescents 11-21 see the provider with and without a parent. The parent will be given an opportunity to address any concerns. North Carolina law protects adolescents by allowing them access to confidential care; time alone with the doctor. Please consider this as a chance for your adolescent to talk with a health care provider and become responsible for his well-being. Your confidence in him to have this time will build his self esteem and trust in himself. Of course if the information that is shared endangers the adolescent's or another individual's life we are legally obligated to share it with the appropriate people.

Thank you for choosing us for your adolescent's healthcare needs. To further assist you with your journey through adolescence the following websites are recommended:

<http://familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home.html>

<http://www.kidshealth.org/parent/growth/growing/adolescence.html>

<http://www.youngwomenshealth.org>