

11-14 Year Check Up

Well Child Appointments can be made online at AustinRegionalClinic.com.



PHONES, TABLETS, AND COMPUTERS - WHAT DO YOU CHOOSE FOR YOUR FAMILY?

Playing on phones and tablets has opened up many new opportunities to create and connect. However, just like every area in our kids' lives, we need to be present and engaged. There are some health consequences when kids have too much screen time. Too much screen time reduces their face-to-face communication skills and can lead to depression if they spend too much time online. Executive planning problems can be seen with prolonged screen time. (Executive planning is the



ability to control impulses and the ability to switch between

things they are doing). Children are often using their screens while doing their homework; this multi-tasking can affect their learning.

To promote responsible screen use, try these strategies to avoid common pitfalls:

- Parents need to be involved in their kids' electronic life just as much as they are in their off-screen life. In all areas of their life, make sure you know the friends they are chatting with and set limits to how and when they use their screens, just as you set limits in other areas of their life.
- Make sure that other priorities come first. Exercise, family time, reading time, and a regular bedtime should be part of your child's daily routine. Prevent screen time from replacing or delaying any of those.
- Create "unplugged" spaces in the home. This might be your place where you eat meals or where you connect and talk about your day. The relationship with your child is more important than replying to your work emails or following your favorite

twitter feed. Make sure everyone is putting *their* devices down for that special time.

- Remove all screens out of the bedroom where your child sleeps starting the hour before bedtime. Set up a charging station in another area of the house. Preteens are very likely to feel that they need to respond to a friend's post or text in the middle of the night, but consistent, uninterrupted sleep is more important.
- Consider using resources that rate available apps and movie choices (for example, Common Sense Media). These can be helpful as your child asks to let them see movies or download apps their friends are viewing.
- Know as much as you can about the games your kids play and the videos they watch. Don't be afraid to be curious. You might say, "Who was playing that game with you?" "Can strangers join your game?" or "What can you post in this game or app?"
- Your preteen is eager to have independence in many areas, like biking alone or walking around the neighborhood alone. Similarly, your child will be anxious to be more independent in their screen use. With that independence comes responsibility. Consider having discussions with your child around your family's values and how that relates to what they play and watch. Topics to cover are: do we allow you to chat or watch shows with cuss words, naked bodies, shows that show violence, smoking, and drinking?
- Kids will be kids. They will make mistakes in their media use. Try to handle those mistakes with empathy and turn those mistakes into teachable moments.
- Some families decide to allow the preteen to 'test drive' using the internet or texting/chatting with friends before they allow social media accounts. Some families set up conditions as part of that 'test drive,' such as parents have access to the device and accounts to periodically check to be sure the preteen is following family rules.
- Consider talking with your child about when it's OK to break a friend's trust. Your child might run into friends who tell them to keep a secret. If that secret is that they have been hurt or plan to hurt themselves or others,

then that is a secret that is too big for a child to keep. Remind them that you are here for them to brainstorm how to handle those 'too big' secrets.

The American Academy of Pediatrics has released a Media Use Toolkit, which can help parents set goals for your individual family.

More information is available at:

www.healthychildren.org/MediaUsePlan.



Internet Safety

Here are some other points to share with your preteen of how to protect themselves online.

- Be respectful. If you wouldn't say something to someone's face, then don't text it, IM it, or post it. Even messages and photos that promise to self-delete can be saved and shared by others.
- Set your privacy settings on every app or website you access, so only close friends and family members can see your stuff.
- Remember that people aren't necessarily who they say they are online. Be skeptical. Some preteens do this by asking any new contact a question which that person should know, such as "what's the color of my backpack or binder?"
- Don't send pictures to people you don't know in real life and don't view pictures that strangers send to you.
- Keep your passwords private from friends and other adults (other than perhaps your parents).
- Try to cut yourself out of digital drama. If you're not sure that your friend would like the picture you took of them, ask before you post it. If they're not your friend, don't post pictures of them. And don't post cringepeeps of other people.
- Never give out your name, address,

birthday, email or phone number to web sites or people, unless you are the one trying to buy something and you know they are using a secured HTTPS site.

- Don't use sites that allow you to create a name that is not your own to talk to other people. While this sounds good at first, it makes it easier for others to anonymously say mean and hateful things to you.
- Don't impersonate or pretend to be other people to create accounts. Report people who try to impersonate you to the company's website.
- Don't use location apps that help your friends find you in a crowd. Strangers who are not your friends can hack in and track you, plus companies use this to lure you to buy their stuff.

DEVELOPMENT

Physical Growth

These next few years will bring many changes to your preteen's body. In addition to rapid height gain, your child will see changes to their body related to puberty. This can lead to curiosity or even anxiety in some preteens. It is normal to be self-conscious about these changes and for a preteen to have an increased need for privacy.



However as their caretakers, it's important that you have an ongoing discussion with your preteen about how their body will change. Think about creating space for these discussions, perhaps when you're alone with your preteen in a car or other quiet place. Some families choose to use books to help start the discussion. Don't forget also to begin or continue the discussion of their sexuality. These discussions should include your family's values about what healthy dating looks like, what is OK to communicate electronically, and when you recommend to begin having sex. They also need information about sexually transmitted illnesses, including HIV, and birth control. It is normal for your preteen to be embarrassed or not want to talk about this with you. Even if they appear to not be listening, they often hear us

and know they can come to us in the future when they have questions.

There is a wide range of normal for the onset of puberty. Boys tend to start puberty later than girls. Most boys have first signs of puberty somewhere between 10 and 12 years. For boys, delayed puberty is defined as having no sign of puberty by age 13.

Breast development for most girls begins between 9 and 11 years. The first menstrual period usually occurs about 2 years after the beginning of breast development. Delayed puberty for a girl is defined as no breast development by age 13 or no menstrual period by age 16. Discuss any concerns you have with your child's physician.

When menstruation starts, it's often a small amount of vaginal bleeding at the beginning. Most preteens use pads at the first few cycles. If your daughter chooses to use tampons, remember to discuss that prolonged wearing of the same tampon can lead to toxic shock. Toxic shock causes fever, red rash to the skin, severe muscle aches and confusion. Go to the doctor right away if your daughter is showing signs.

ACL Injury Prevention

The anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) is a ligament that is commonly injured in athletes, especially those in middle school. Girls this age have an increased risk compared to boys. The ACL is one of the four major ligaments that holds the knee joint together. Injuries to this ligament often need surgery. In the long term, injuries to the ACL make arthritis of the knee more likely.

Prevention programs are available to reduce the chance for injury. These programs are recommended for all athletes in the high-risk sports listed below, but female athletes in their early-to-mid teens stand to benefit the most. These prevention programs are ideally initiated pre-season or in-season with a duration of at least 6 weeks. These prevention programs aim to "pre-program" safer movement patterns to reduce the chance of injury when the season starts. Bracing of the knee has not been shown to reduce the chance of ACL injuries.

High risk sports:

- Gymnastics
- Football
- Basketball
- Lacrosse
- Soccer
- Rugby
- Volleyball

For more information, check out:

<https://www.ctpomd.com/acl-injury-camp>
<https://www.austinregionalclinic.com/templates/ARC/Assets/acl-injury-prevention->

[guide.pdf](#)

<https://healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/injuries-emergencies/sports-injuries/Pages/ACL-Injuries.aspx>

Acne

It's time for most preteens to consider regular routines to prevent acne. The first place to start is to have your preteen wash their face morning and night with a gentle cleanser. For mild or common acne this is often the most important step. We don't recommend popping pimples because this leads to more scars. Acne develops as puberty begins because of hormones changing in your preteen's body. Foods do not cause or worsen acne.

If your preteen is having more than just a few pimples, try using a cream or face wash with benzoyl peroxide morning and night every day (this is sold over the counter). Choose ones that have a lower percentage (2-5%) and note that it can take up to 6 weeks of using it every day until you notice any improvement. These sorts of acne medications can bleach fabrics; be sure to wash it all off before wiping face and hands on towels or clothing. Sometimes this medicine is too drying, especially if they've had eczema in the past.

If benzoyl peroxide is not working or it's too drying, schedule an appointment with your doctor to talk about other prescription medications. There are lots of medications that we use for acne, so if you don't see any changes after using a prescription every day for 4-6 weeks, be sure to return to talk it over with your doctor.



Emotional Development

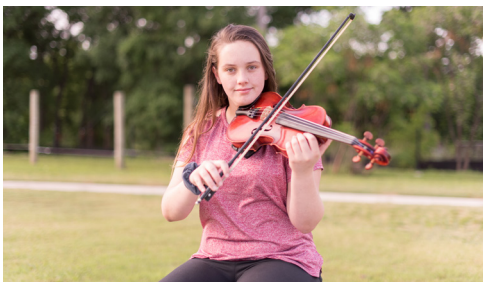
It is common that in the early adolescent years things are very black and white. To them things are great or they are absolutely terrible. It is common for your child to seem to have an almost obsessive focus on themselves. They can be very self-conscious about their appearance and feel that their friends are judging them.

Your child may question things including your household rules, your beliefs, and your authority. This is normal and part of

the maturing process, but keep in mind it's your responsibility to set appropriate limits. As they pass into middle adolescence, they are more likely to just ignore you - spending more time with peers and even experimenting with new ideas. As your teenager is changing, changes in the family will also occur. However, even during the most stressful times, remember these basic ideas:

- Continue to listen to each other, even if you disagree.
- Don't confuse the thing you are unhappy about with the person who is doing it. Keep your anger focused on the actions, not directed at your child.
- Avoid *constant* criticism. **Remember that your child needs to hear about the things you really enjoy about them.** Show interest and spend time enjoying what they are interested in.
- Pick the important battles, and let the unimportant ones take care of themselves. When there are disagreements, try to find a common ground or area of compromise. If nothing else, agree to disagree and be clear about where each of you stands and why.
- Don't preach and don't nag. Try to keep your conversations rational and respectful of your teenager's feelings.

As long as your child is maintaining their regular schedule of meals and sleep and is working toward their future goals (for most, that's getting good grades), then they are likely in a good place. If your child is acting withdrawn, not eating or sleeping regularly, or letting their grades and dreams pass them by, then it's time to seek out help. Another sign of needing help might be a shift in personality, such as excessive aggression or anger. Talk with your physician about your concerns. Also consider other places for help. Talk to your school's counselor and consider getting help from a mental health provider. Getting help is not a sign that you've failed as a parent. This shows a positive approach to improving a negative situation.



Drug Abuse Prevention - Parents are Powerful

Parents are the most powerful influence on their children. Although there is no guarantee that your child won't use drugs

or alcohol, parents do have a strong role to play. Prevention starts by making sure that you are talking with, and listening to, your child regularly. Tell your child that you don't want them to smoke weed, vape, or use other drugs. And don't use drugs or alcohol yourself. Correct your child when they say things that are not true, such as "everyone smokes weed." And discuss when you see drinking or smoking on a show or video. Talk about how the consequences of drinking or smoking are often not shown on the screen.

Marijuana use in adolescence leads to abnormal brain development. Young people still have developing brains and so are more vulnerable to long term effects than adults. This can lead to lifelong changes to overall happiness and job earning potential. When they are smoking, it affects their attention, memory and learning. The marijuana in circulation today is a more potent form than was previously available to past generations. This can lead to a feeling of being extremely fearful in the smoker.

There is confusion about vaping or e-cigarettes (also known as 'Juuling').

Vaping is not safe but many preteens and teens think it is the 'safer' alternative. Vape liquid often contains nicotine, as well as other chemicals that can harm your child's brain. Also, the liquid in vapes can be flavored to make it appealing to kids, with candy and fruit flavors. Vaping is not safe. Many people who start with vaping will become cigarette smokers. Some people have died after vaping, even when there was not nicotine or THC in the vape liquid or juice.

Pay attention if your preteen's friends start experimenting with weed, vapes, alcohol, or other drugs. Preteens and teens are more likely to try these things if their friends do. Make sure to give a clear message that you don't want your preteen or teen to smoke or use other drugs. Seek out help if you feel that they continue to use any of these.

NUTRITION

Early adolescence is a time of increased independence, increased peer influence, and shifts in meals and sleep patterns. While our children will push to have choices, they need and desire decision support. Parents are the greatest influence. Healthy nutrition habits are formed at home. Parents need to model healthy behaviors. Actions speak louder than words. Sitting down together as a family regularly for dinner is not only good for nutrition, but can help decrease future school truancy, drug use, as well as provide a host of other positive benefits for your preteen/teen. Some tips for mealtime:

- Utilize the MyPlate visual as a guide – your child's plate should be 50% fruits and veggies.
- When working on a healthy weight, help your child go for seconds of fruits and veggies first, before seconds of the carb (bread, rice, pasta) portions.
- Remember that skipping meals can lead to more eating of high fat foods later on.
- Plan your menu together as a family in advance, focusing on fresh fruits, vegetables and lean proteins.



Healthy food choices as well as structured, predictable meal and snack times

are important for parents to establish. It is easier for your child to manage their hunger if they know when they can expect their next meal or snack. Parents determine the food choices a child has at home when they shop at the grocery store. Stock your home with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, and low-fat, low-sugar snacks. Limit your buying of cookies, sodas, and chips.

Occasional treats like ice cream are fine, but nutritious options for healthy snacks include:

EXAMPLES OF HEALTHY SNACKS

- Fresh or dried fruit
- Low-fat/frozen yogurt
- Celery stalks, cucumber slices
- Frozen banana slices or grapes
- Air popped or low-fat popcorn
- Crackers or unsalted pretzels
- Adding a protein food makes snacks more satisfying. *Try adding yogurt, a boiled egg, cheese sticks, peanut butter, or nuts to a snack.*

Early lunch periods, eating to unwind, and boredom can all contribute to over-snacking. Stopping at a store after school may also lead to increased, unhealthy snacking. Limiting snack money and discussing healthy choices may help. Oversee your child's selections of snacks and have a plan for the after-school snack.

Fad diets may appeal to a child concerned about weight. Unfortunately popular diets are often unhealthy and not appropriate for children and adolescents. They may even set up an unhealthy relationship with food that can lead to problems with a healthy body image down the line.

Instead of dieting, parents need to encourage a balanced diet and an active lifestyle as the best approach for weight control. If your child is considering adopting certain eating behaviors (like vegetarianism) or if you would like guidance on how to have a healthier lifestyle for your teen, please talk to your doctor.

Fiber

Include fiber (which comes from fruit, vegetables, whole grains, legumes (beans), and nuts) in your and your child's diet. There are many health benefits of fiber including helping lower cholesterol, preventing constipation and helping keep you feeling fuller longer.

Is My Child a Healthy Weight?

Body Mass Index (BMI) is widely used to help categorize weight. BMI compares height and weight, and norms vary by age and sex. A BMI between the 85th and 95th percentile is defined as overweight and a BMI at or above the 95th percentile is defined as obese. Talk to your doctor if you have concerns about your child's weight.

WORRIED ABOUT GETTING ENOUGH HEALTHY FOOD FOR YOUR FAMILY?

CALL 1-800-5HUNGRY FOR RESOURCES.

Bone Health

Close to half of a person's bone mass is accumulated during the years between 10-20 years old. This is a critical time for bone formation. If your child doesn't have enough calcium intake in the preteen years, then they have a higher risk of osteoporosis and spine problems when they are elderly. Plus, they can get stress fractures that keep them out of sports for 6-9 months in their teen years.

The recommended daily intake of calcium is 1300 mg (that's about 3-4 glasses of milk). Make sure what your child eats every day provides this amount of calcium. Most adolescents only get 400-800 mg of calcium a day. **If your child is not a regular milk drinker, you should consider giving them a calcium plus vitamin D supplement.** Make sure to only have 500-600mg of supplemental calcium at a time. If you need more, then take it multiple times in the day.

- Choose water and milk. Preteens who drink soda or sweet tea drink less milk every day.
- Aim for three to four servings of milk or milk products a day.
- Calcium fortified foods like juices, bread, and cereals can supply needed calcium, especially if your child does not like milk/milk products, or does not tolerate milk.

- Calcium in green leafy vegetables is poorly absorbed. It is not practical to obtain a large amount of your calcium needs from vegetables alone. For example leafy green vegetables have 30-100mg per cup, and 8oz of milk has 300mg.
- Foods that are high in salt make your child's body lose calcium and can make your bones not develop normally. High salt is found in chips, canned or frozen foods, and foods from restaurants.

SAFETY

Car Safety

Children should ride in the back seat of the vehicle until they are 13 years old. Set a good example for your preteen by using hands free devices for your cell phone in the car and not texting while you are driving.

Bike Safety and Helmets for Kids on Wheels

Teach road safety. All scooters and bikes should ride on the right side of the street. Teach them to signal for turns. Be sure to wear reflective gear and use lights if riding after dark.

Skateboarders, bike riders and other kids-on-wheels should wear helmets. Did you know that there are different helmets for different activities? Helmets for skateboarders or BMX participants are designed differently than bike helmets, to protect the head for that particular sport. To learn more: <https://www.cpsc.gov/safety-education/safety-guides/sports-fitness-and-recreation-bicycles/which-helmet-which-activity>.

We do not recommend hoverboards, 4-wheeler or all-terrain vehicles, or dirt bikes for children this age.



Sun Safety

Sun burns and sun exposure causes early wrinkles, freckling and skin cancer. Avoid the sun during the hours of 10am to 4pm. If outside, stay in the shade, wear a hat, and use sunscreen. Sunscreen with UVA and UVB protection is best.

Fire Safety

Do not smoke or allow smoking in your home. Install smoke alarms on every level

of your home and test the alarms every month. It is best to use smoke alarms that use long-life batteries, but if yours do not, change the batteries once a year.

Gun Safety

If you have children, it is best to not have a gun in your home. For those who keep a gun in the home, follow these safety rules:

- Always keep the gun unloaded and locked up.
- Lock and store the bullets in a separate place.
- Hide the keys to the lock boxes.

Teach your child to leave a house or situation immediately if they see a gun, and ask the homes where your child visits if they have guns stored properly there.

If your child will be hunting, make sure to enroll them in a hunter safety course. These are offered through Texas Parks and Wildlife.

Hearing Safety

Many preteens are now using earphones or headphones to enjoy their music or their video games. Noise-induced hearing loss cannot be surgically or medically fixed once it occurs. Hearing loss can happen with a one-time loud noise exposure or repeated noise exposures over time. Teach your preteen to listen at the quietest volume setting that they can hear. Use earplugs when going to concerts or other loud settings.

RESOURCES

Websites and Reading

www.healthychildren.org

Parenting website sponsored by the AAP

www.choosemyplate.gov

USDA Dietary Guidelines. This website has child-friendly materials and practical information for parents.

www.AustinRegionalClinic.com

See patient education section

Caring for Your Teenager

The American Academy of Pediatrics

Caring for Your School-Age Child:

Ages 5 to 12, The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

SAMHSA.gov Has an app called 'They Hear You' that helps parents practice discussing how to talk about drug and alcohol use with your child.

Do you have a high school athlete? Championship Hearts does a heart screening for athletes including an EKG and a limited ultrasound of the heart. <https://www.champhearts.org/>