

Teen Health Kit for Parents

✓ Keeping Your Teen Healthy

Your teen's good health depends on so many things: Avoiding peer pressure to drink alcohol and smoke cigarettes, getting enough sleep, exercising and eating nutritious foods. You can teach your teen many of these behaviors by being a healthy role model yourself. By being straightforward and by encouraging open communication, you can help keep your teen healthy. Be sure to check out the many resources available to parents to learn more about teen health. Consider these tips for helping your teen establish a healthy lifestyle:

1. Emphasize the importance of responsible self-care, including regular exercise, nutrition and good oral and skin hygiene. Be a role model for good-health practices.
2. Talk to your health care professional if you're worried that your teen is overweight. Arrange for an obesity assessment and for an evaluation for the medical conditions that can be associated with obesity, such as Type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure.
3. Don't criticize your teen's weight or body shape. Before starting any weight-loss plan for your teen, discuss your concerns with your teen's health care professional. He or she may refer you to a registered dietitian or to a weight-management program designed for teens.
4. Answer your teen's questions about sex honestly and provide resources to help him or her make safe and healthy decisions about sex. Bring the topic up if he or she doesn't.
5. Make age-appropriate rules and enforce them.
6. Encourage your teen to get at least nine hours of sleep each night.
7. Instruct teens on how to use over-the-counter (OTC) medications safely and appropriately and how to follow labeling instructions. Be a role model for using all prescription medications as prescribed and OTCs as directed on the label. Never use more medicine than instructed.
8. Engage in regular discussions about the powerful influences of peer pressure.
9. Keep the lines of communication open and avoid judging or preaching.
10. Help your teen learn how to roll with the punches and put life's stresses into perspective.

Sources: American Medical Association, The Nemours Foundation and the Consumer Healthcare Products Association

Useful Web sites:

KidsHealth
www.kidshealth.org

Mayo Clinic Teen Health Center
www.mayoclinic.com/health/teens-health/N99999TN99999

Local Resources:

Genesee Valley Health Partnership, Inc.

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This Teen Health Kit is provided by the Genesee Valley Health Partnership www.gvhp.org.

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