

# Teen Health Kit for Parents

## ✓ Making the Most of Your Visit to a Health Care Professional

Most visits to a health care professional are hurried affairs these days. Build a "health partnership" with your health care professional by preparing for your visit. These tips can help your teen get the care and attention he or she needs:

1. Take a list of questions about your teen's health concerns. Review the questions before you meet with your health care professional so you're prepared to ask them. (See questions below for ideas.)
2. Know your teen's allergies and family health history and discuss them, as appropriate.
3. Share information about all medications your teen is currently taking, both prescription and over-the-counter (OTC), as well as vitamins, dietary supplements and herbals, with your pharmacist and health care professional.
4. Ask about the benefits and potential side effects of any prescription or OTC medication your health care professional recommends.
5. Always have your teen take a medication as prescribed or instructed on the label: The dosage (daily amount and frequency) of a medication has been proven to provide the safest and most effective therapy. Never take more of a medicine than your doctor or the label recommends.
6. When a test or treatment option is presented for your teen, ask:
  - a. Why it is being recommended?
  - b. What is the test or treatment designed to do?
  - c. Are there other treatments or options we should consider?
  - d. How can I find out if my insurance will pay for this test or treatment?
  - e. How can I arrange payments and is there an assistance program I can contact if I don't have medical insurance?
  - f. Can you recommend whom I might see for a second opinion, if I decide to pursue one?
7. To discuss pain symptoms, describe pain by (1) location, (2) severity, (3) when it occurs, (4) how long it lasts, (5) whether it's localized or spreading and (6) what makes it feel better or worse.
8. Ask for a complete report on any tests you have performed and whom to contact (and when) for the results.
9. Try not to leave the health care professional's office with unanswered questions. Before you leave, ask whom you should contact (and how--by phone or e-mail, for example) if you have additional questions.

SOURCE: National Women's Health Resource Center and the Consumer Healthcare Products Association

### QUESTIONS TO ASK A HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL

1. How often should I bring my child in for an examination?
2. How can I help prevent my child from developing diabetes, which runs in our family?
3. How can I help my overweight daughter lose weight?
4. What birth control options work best for teens? Does that option protect against sexually transmitted diseases?
5. If my daughter takes birth control pills, will this make her less likely to practice safe sex?
6. Can I legally have my son's blood tested for drugs without telling him?
7. Should I be concerned when my daughter sleeps all weekend, rather than socializes?
8. Because my teen rarely talks to me, could you tell me what his major concerns are after you examine her or him?
9. How can I tell if my child is just difficult, like many teenagers, or is troubled?
10. How can I tell if my daughter is addicted to drugs, or is just experimenting with them?

#### Useful Web sites:

American Academy of Pediatrics

[www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)

[www.healthierus.gov](http://www.healthierus.gov)

#### Local Resources:

Livingston County Department of Health

(585) 243-7270

[www.co.livingston.state.ny.us/doh\\_home.htm](http://www.co.livingston.state.ny.us/doh_home.htm)

Genesee Valley Health Partnership, Inc.

Healthy Communities that Care

(585) 748-5146

[www.gvhp.org](http://www.gvhp.org)



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