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# INTRODUCTION

Sometime between the ages of 11 and 13, but sometimes earlier and sometimes later, boys and girls start turning into young men and women. This process of change is called “puberty,” and lasts for most of the teen years.

Here is an outline of the amazing hormonal story of what happens inside you when puberty starts. No one knows what throws the timer switch in your brain that starts puberty, but something does, and when that switch is thrown, hormones come down from your brain to your pituitary gland, which is the size of a walnut, right in the middle of your skull. The pituitary gland responds to these hormones by secreting hormones of its own, and these pituitary hormones travel in the blood stream to the rest of the body. These pituitary hormones then cause the testicles in boys, and the ovaries in girls, to secrete more hormones! These are the famous ones you have probably heard of: testicles secrete testosterone and the ovaries secrete estrogen. It is these hormones, testosterone and estrogen, that cause the body changes that we are familiar with.

Both hormones make you grow faster than before, to achieve your full adult height in a few years. Both cause hair to grow under your arms and in the pubic area. Girls develop breasts and their hips get wider; boys’ penises and testicles get bigger, and they become more muscular. Girls start to menstruate, usually about 2 years after their breasts start to develop. Boys start to have nocturnal emissions, or “wet dreams.” Boys get hair on the face; most teenagers also develop acne.

But different as the effects of testosterone and estrogen may be, the molecules are pretty similar to each other, and there are some crossover effects. For instance, boys can get some breast enlargement, called gynecomastia. Girls can get facial hair that we usually think of as belonging only to boys. It turns out that we are not so different from one another as we sometimes think.

The body changes are pretty obvious, but changes also happen in a teenager’s emotions and thinking. Many teenagers are very self-conscious and get embarrassed easily; their emotions are very close to the surface, so much so that it is sometimes hard to think. On the other hand, a teenager also becomes capable of much more complex thinking processes – that is, you get smarter. You develop sexual feelings, most often toward the opposite sex, but sometimes also toward your own sex. These new feelings can be very urgent and powerful, and can be both exciting, confusing, and upsetting.

In the teen years, your friends become more important to you than ever before. You start to become more independent in taking care of yourself and making your own decisions about clothes, friends, and activities. Your family remains vitally important to you, but as you become more independent, a different, more adult relationship develops.

Our goal at Bayside is to help you through these years in a supportive, sensitive way. Our job is to be on your side. Whatever problems and questions you may have, it is our job to listen to you and to help you when we can. We want to help you with your health problems and concerns, and to listen to what is going on inside you, and to help you feel good about growing up.

Because we are medical professionals everything you tell us is confidential, unless you tell us something very extreme – for instance, that you are considering murder or suicide. In those cases, we will try to do something to help, and it would certainly involve telling others. But for most other things, whatever you tell us will remain right here. Typically we will ask your parents to leave the room for at least some of the visit; this will allow us to speak more freely and will allow you some privacy.

Part of our job is to give you information, and part of our job is to find out where you are and what you are thinking about. We have assembled some information in this booklet that we think you might find helpful. Read it, and let us know what you think. We will also be giving you some questionnaires that will help you to think about yourself, and we hope will help us find out some things about you. If any of these articles or questionnaires make you embarrassed, we're sorry, but on the other hand, it's probably OK. Teens get embarrassed a lot, and sometimes we just have to accept that and move on. Otherwise we won't get to discuss things that are important.

Try to remember, we are all in this together. Where you are now, we were once there also. We all went through this process, and we have our own memories, some delightful, some painful. Your friends are going through it too. Some talk about it; some don't.

If you have questions, don't hesitate to ask them. That's what we are here for.

## **BODY CHANGES**

Here are charts and pictures of body changes during puberty.

**General order in which changes occur in girls' bodies:**

- Height and weight increase
- Breast budding
- Pubic hair growth
- More breast growth and pubic hair growth
- Axillary hair growth (under arm)
- Menstruation
- Ovulation one or two years after first period

**General order in which changes occur in boys' bodies:**

- Height and weight increase
- Testicular growth
- Pubic hair growth
- Penis growth
- More height growth
- Axillary hair growth (under arm)
- Lip and facial hair growth
- Voice change

## CHECKING YOUR BODY

Usually you are told, "Stop scratching!" or "Don't touch yourself." But as you get older, both boys and girls should touch themselves in two specific ways. Girls should get used to checking their breasts, and boys should get used to checking their testicles. Cancer is rare in children, and we don't want to worry you unnecessarily. But on the other hand, youth is a time to start good habits.

Women can save their own lives by getting to know what their breasts normally feel like, and checking them regularly, so they detect a new lump promptly. The place to look is the upper, outer segment of the breasts. A good time to feel is at a regular time when you are relaxed – bedtime or bath time are good times.

Likewise, men can save their own lives by getting to know what their testicles normally feel like, and checking them regularly, so they detect a new lump promptly. Likewise, bedtime or bath time are good times to check.

Again, advising you to make these checks is not so much for what you will detect during the teenage years, because cancer is so rare at that time. It is just a question of starting good habits early.

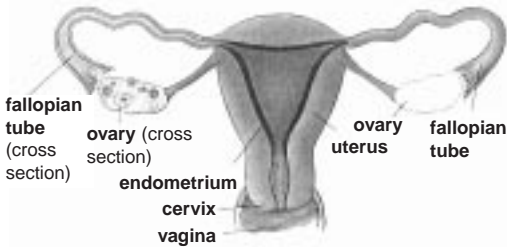
# THE PELVIC EXAM: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

The pelvic exam is an internal examination of the female reproductive organs: vagina, cervix, uterus, fallopian tubes, and ovaries.

## How Is It Done?

First you will need to go to the bathroom and urinate (pee) to empty your bladder so the examiner can feel your uterus better. You may also need to pee in a cup so your urine can be examined. You will lie down on your back on a special exam table that will hold your feet so that your legs will fall far apart. This allows the examiner to see your perineum (the area between your legs by your hips).

### Internal Anatomy

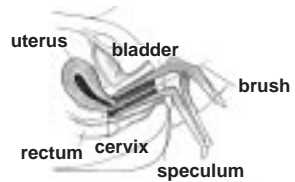


In the first part of the exam, an instrument called a speculum is inserted into your vagina. It is then opened and the examiner can see part of your vagina and your cervix (bottom of your uterus). You may

at first feel some pressure, but it should not be too uncomfortable.

Now some tests will be done. The examiner takes some mucus and cells from the cervix with a Q-tip and a wooden spatula. These tests are called a *pap smear* which looks for cancer cells. The other tests are done for sexually transmitted diseases: gonorrhea and chlamydia. Other tests that may be done depending on your symptoms, look for organisms such as yeast, gardnerella, and trichomonas. After that, the speculum is taken out of the vagina.

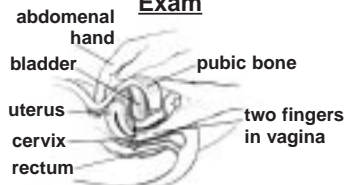
### Pap Smear



The second part of the exam is called a *bi-manual* or *two-handed exam*. The examiner puts two fingers of one hand into your vagina and touches your cervix. The other hand presses down on your lower abdomen. This is done to feel the size and position of your uterus and

### Bimanual Pelvic

#### Exam



## **Rectovaginal Exam**



ovaries, and to find out if there are any cysts, lumps or areas of tenderness or pain.

When this is done, the examiner takes one finger out of your vagina and puts it into your rectum. This is a *rectovaginal exam* and helps the examiner feel the position of your uterus and any lumps between the vagina and rectum.

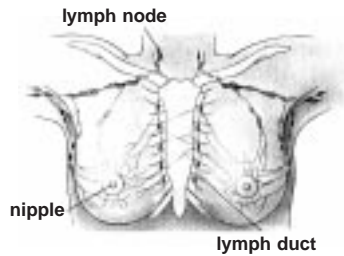
The pelvic exam is now done.

Sometimes, the examiner will ask if you know how to do a self *breast exam*. If not, you will be taught how to do this very important exam. Your breasts will also be checked by the examiner to make sure you have no lumps. You should perform breast exams monthly, the day after your period ends.

## **Does the Pelvic Exam Hurt?**

The exam normally does not hurt or cause pain. Sometimes when you are feeling tense and the muscles of your abdomen are not relaxed you may have a feeling of pressure in your lower abdomen as the speculum is inserted into your vagina. If you have an infection somewhere in your reproductive organs, this may cause you to feel more uncomfortable with the exam.

## **Lymphatic System**



## **Why Is the Pelvic Exam Done?**

A pelvic exam is done to check for size and appearance of your reproductive organs and to check for cancer and infections.

## **How Often Should I Have a Pelvic Exam?**

The recommendations vary depending on your age, family history and sexual activity. Generally, it is recommended that if you are sexually active, a pelvic exam should be done every year. If you are 18 years old, whether you are sexually active or not, you should have a pelvic exam at that time and once a year after that.

If you have a vaginal discharge that has an odor or is yellow or green in color or if you are having pain in your lower abdomen, you should see a health provider as soon as possible.

## **Is There Anything I Can Do to Help During the Pelvic Exam?**

Yes! You can try to relax your stomach muscles by taking deep, slow breaths through your mouth and by calming your thoughts by thinking of something pleasant.

## ACNE

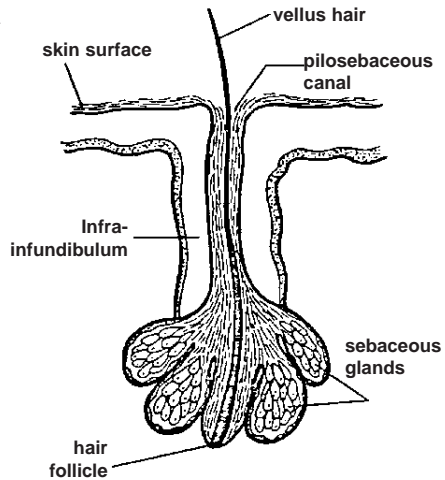
Most teenagers get acne, sometimes sooner, sometimes later, sometimes a heavy case, sometimes light. Acne comes from the hormones that not only make the obvious changes in our bodies that mark us as adults, but also change our skin and our skin gland production. Contrary to folk wisdom, acne does not come from dirt, from chocolate or pizza or anything else we eat, or from masturbating for that matter. Here are some things that do make it worse: occlusive and greasy hair products, heat and humidity, excessive washing, friction or pressure, and stress.

Pimples, or comedones, come from the sebaceous glands in our skin that surround the little hairs on our face and upper trunk. These glands secrete a substance called sebum, which then escapes up the hair shaft onto the surface of the skin. When your hormones kick in, however, two major things happen. First, the glands get bigger and secrete more sebum, and the sebum itself gets thicker and stickier, so it can't escape as easily. Second, the skin cells that line the sides of the hair follicles also get stickier, so they don't fall off so easily, and instead they hang around the hair and clog the exit for the sebum. The net result is that these follicles get clogged with sebum. If the clog is below the skin surface, it is called a "whitehead." If it is near the surface, the oil turns dark and is called a "blackhead."

There are further complications. We normally have on our skin and around the little hairs a bacteria called *Propionibacterium acnes*, or *P. acnes*. This bacterium acts on the sebum to make it infected and inflamed, and the whole mess can then break through the side of the hair follicle and get in to the surrounding skin. This looks like a big, infected pimple.

Luckily, we now have effective treatment for acne. If we keep in mind how pimples are formed, we can understand how these medicines work.

### THE SEBACEOUS FOLLICLE



# HELPFUL HINTS FOR TREATING ACNE

## General care of your skin

- Wash your skin twice a day, and after exercising or sweating. (Use Dove, Neutrogena or a soap with salicylic acid)
- Shampoo your hair frequently, and keep it away from your face.
- Avoid picking, or "popping" pimples or blackheads.
- Avoid oil-based products wherever you break out; whether it's on your face, neck, chest or back.
- Oil-free products are fine. "Acne cover-ups" are fine for pimples.
- Sunlight will often help acne. Remember to wear oil-free sunscreen!

## Treatment of acne

Retin-A (or tretinoin), is one of our best medicines. Retin-A makes the skin cells less sticky and makes them shed more easily so pimples don't form so easily. The sebum can then get out more easily the way it should. Put Retin-A on at night about 20 minutes after washing, and keep it on all night. After a week or two you will notice some peeling of the skin, and maybe some redness and irritation. Ignore this, or if it makes you really sensitive, decrease the dosage to every other day instead of every day. In just a few more weeks, your skin will be almost free of pimples. Be careful with sun exposure with Retin-A, however, because it can give you a rash sometimes. Be sure to use sunscreen.

Antibiotics for acne can be applied directly to the skin or taken orally. Antibiotics can kill the P. acnes bacteria, so even though it won't affect the formation of whiteheads or blackheads, it will keep them from getting red and infected.

Benzoyl Peroxide 5%, which you might already be taking is an over the counter medicine for the treatment of acne. This medicine also kills the bacteria P acnes and produces a drying effect. It may cause your face to peel and get a little red. Benzoyl Peroxide may be used at bedtime, but you can use it in the morning if Retin-A is used at night.

## Common mistakes in treating acne

- Avoid excessive scrubbing and don't use exfoliants.
- Avoid any oily or greasy make-up, lotions or sunscreens. Use "non-comedogenic" or "nonacnegenic" products.
- Apply acne medications (benzoyl peroxide, Retin-A or antibiotic creams, gels or lotions) to the entire face, not just the areas where there are pimples.

There are no fast acting "magic cures." Virtually all acne therapies require 6 to 8 weeks of continuous use to obtain positive results!

## TALKING ABOUT OUR BODIES AND ABOUT SEX

When many of us older folk were teenagers— lo those many years ago! – we didn't have sex education in the schools, and often parents didn't talk to us much about it. Truthfully, nay of us were pretty ignorant growing up and we had to spend a lot of time discovering things for ourselves.

We don't want this to happen to you. It's true that nowadays there might be too much sex on TV and in the movies, but at least you cant talk about it. Looking back, we regret that we were brought up in ignorance and we want you to have it better than we did.

One of our objectives with our teens at Bayside is to give you the chance to ask questions with just you and the doctor or nurse practitioner in the room. It will all be confidential, even from your parents, and we won't think that anything you say will be stupid. You probably won't be as ignorant as we were. And if you are, that's all the more reason to ask questions.

Many of you may have questions about sex or sexuality, please ask us! And don't be embarrassed when we ask you questions. Remember it is confidential, and we are just trying to discuss things that are important to you and to your health.

For more information about your sexual health:

[www.mtv.com/onair/ffyr/protect/](http://www.mtv.com/onair/ffyr/protect/)

This is a website provided by MTV that provides a lot of information about sexual health.

[www.seventeen.com/sexsmarts](http://www.seventeen.com/sexsmarts)

This is a website created by Seventeen magazine about teenagers and sex

[www.advocatesforyouth.org/youth/index.htm](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/youth/index.htm)

Find out more about your health, especially sexual health. This site has lots of good links as well!

## NUTRITION AND EXERCISE

Eating and exercising are some of the most basic elements of life. As a teenager you will be more and more in charge of these areas for yourself, so here is some information to help you make decisions. As you decide how you are going to eat and exercise, remember that you are not only affecting your health right now, but as you establish your habits, it will set the tone for the rest of your life.

### Food Choices

The problem with our American diet is that we eat too many calories, generally too much fat, often too many carbohydrates, and often not enough fiber. So, go real easy on fast food (fast food has an amazing amount of calories!), eat fresh fruit and vegetables, use non-fat milk rather than whole milk, eat chicken and fish, easy on the chips and fries. Try to go easy on sodas and juices – they have lots of sugar and calories. Water is a much better alternative.

Try to stay away from salt. Salt is somewhat addictive and can lead to high blood pressure. You don't have to be a fanatic, just take it easy on the salt shaker.

Get in the habit of eating fiber. Our modern diet is very refined, which means that when we eat our food most all of it is absorbed in our intestines and there isn't much left to form a bowel movement. This leads to constipation and stomach aches. An easy way to solve this is to eat a bran cereal in the morning. Fresh fruits and vegetables also have good stores of fiber.

Teenagers need lots of calcium, usually more than they get. Taking one Ultra Tums a day will usually correct this.

### Food Habits

Be sure to eat frequently enough! Not eating all day and then gorging yourself doesn't work well. It's better to eat at least three times a day. The important thing is this: when you eat, don't make yourself so full you can hardly move. It's better to eat frequently, but make each meal a moderate one. Also, if you can, wait until you are hungry to eat; don't eat just because it seems like it's time.

Probably the worst thing we do to our bodies is sit in front of the TV and eat and drink – taking lots of calories in and using almost none. You are going to do it sometime, but try not to do it as a regular habit.

## **Exercise**

P.E. in school is generally not enough exercise for you. To be healthy we need to have regular exercise for all of our lives. The best way to do this is to find things that you like to do and do them a lot. It might take some work to find out what you like best, but it is important that you find it.

The best exercise is aerobic exercise – you can tell if you are getting this if you are huffing and puffing. At a minimum get 30 minutes of exercise three times a week, preferably a lot more. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Walk instead of ride.

As you get older you will settle into a pattern, but you will be starting that pattern now. Our bodies were meant to be used. You can monitor how you are doing by asking us to show you where you measure out on the Body Mass Index (BMI). It is a good measure to monitor yourself all through life.

## CONTRIBUTING TO YOUR BONE BANK

I always thought that when my mother said, "Drink your milk! It's good for you!" that it was just something that mothers say. Well, it turns out she was right. Drinking skim milk, and taking calcium in other forms (like Tums) between the ages of 8 and 28, is very important. So is getting enough weight-bearing exercise. Here's why:

The strength of our skeletons depends on how we contribute calcium to our "bone bank." According to the genes we have inherited, 60% of our contribution isn't under our control, our bodies just "do it." But 40% of our bone strength depends on our own actions.

Our most important action is taking in enough calcium between the ages of 8 and 28 and especially between 12 and 16! That's when our bodies lay down calcium in the bones, and most of that activity is in the teenage years. During those years we need to eat and drink a lot of calcium – 1,000 mg. a day as a preteen, and 1,500 mg. a day as a teenager. An 8 ounce glass of milk gives us 300 mg., so if we were to get our full dose of calcium from milk, we would have to drink 5 glasses of skim milk a day! (Skim to avoid the fat that causes heart disease). That's a lot of milk. Other foods have calcium, too – orange juice, meats and green leafy vegetables for example, but milk has the most.

Obviously, getting enough calcium just by eating is hard, so, we recommend that all teenagers take two Ultra Tums a day, after a meal, which contributes 1000 mg. of elemental calcium. (Read the label to be sure.)

The second action to take is to indulge steadily in weight-bearing exercise, like running, for instance, or lifting weights. For those of you who like to swim, as I do – sorry! The people with the weakest bones of all are long distance swimmers! Bones form actively according to how they are stressed, so running will do it, but swimming won't.

Finally, for all of you who think you weigh too much, there is an upside: heavy people develop the strongest bones. If you are skinny, you have to be extra sure to take your Tums.

What is the payoff from taking calcium and exercising? Strong bones. We have all known older persons who have broken their hips or collapsed their vertebrae, and even younger persons who tend to break bones. Exercise and drink your milk while you are a teenager, and you won't be one of them. But do it now, because the bone bank doesn't take deposits when you are older!

## SMOKING

Everybody who isn't totally unconscious knows that smoking is bad for you. Then why do some people smoke?

The answer is, they are victims of a corporate America plot. Smoking is addictive, so if you are a corporation and you want to make money, all you have to do is attract teenagers to start smoking, and if they do, they will have to pay you money for the rest of their lives in most cases. So how do you get teenagers to start smoking? You advertise, of course, and you show how smoking is cool. Since teenagers often don't want to be like their parents, and since they often don't trust what parents say, you emphasize that smoking is something young people do. And since teenagers frequently don't think about the long term, you don't worry much about that either. Just make those cigarettes available, make the packages hip and attractive, and some of those teenagers will be fooled, and you the corporation have good profits for the rest of those teenagers lives.

Everyone knows cigarettes cause many different types of cancer, and lung diseases, and heart disease, but for the most part these diseases don't appear for a decade or more. You might be interested to know, however, that another effect of smoking is to make you smell bad. This is an effect you don't have to wait for, you can experience it right away. People who smoke stink. Get close and smell the difference.

Some decisions in life are temporary and pretty easy to get out of. A date that doesn't work out, hey, it's history. A bad car, sell it or junk it and move on. But other things are more difficult to get out of. Unfortunately, one of these hard things is smoking, because once you are addicted it is very hard to quit. If you think we're trying to scare you, you're right. Because cigarettes scare us too. We wouldn't tell you this if it weren't true.

If you have started smoking, please let us know. This is important for your health. We'll probably talk to you about what it might take to get you to quit, we may even lecture a little. Mostly, we will try to support you and offer you some advice—for you to at least think about. We are on your side!

Don't be a fool for corporate America profits. Just don't start and you'll be okay.

Here are some web sites with some more information about smoking:

California Smokers' Helpline Teen Website:

<http://nobutts.ucsd.edu>

<http://wholetruth.com>

This is a computer game format to learn more about ciarettes

Smoke Free Movies: Tired of the corporate America plot.

This website tries to get teens to take a stand against smoking in the movies.

[www.smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu](http://www.smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu)

Foundation for a Smoke Free America:

[www.anti-smoking.org](http://www.anti-smoking.org) or their teen website at

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

The American Lung association has a youth smoking site with information about preventing and stopping:

<http://beta.lungusa.org/smokefreeclass/>

## FEELINGS

Being a teenager really changes your world. You begin to spend more time with your friends and less time with your family. You may begin to really try and figure out who you are, exploring different friends, music, interests and activities. You will start to become more independent in taking care of yourself and making your own decisions.

In addition, many teenagers become more emotional, and their emotions are very close to the surface. These emotions may include feeling happy, sad, excited, stressed, really the full range. It is important to have someone to talk to about your feelings. Usually, you will probably feel most comfortable talking to your friends, and less comfortable talking to your parents. It is important though to have an adult you can talk to about your feelings, especially if any of them are overwhelming. This adult might include, a parent, a teacher, a counselor, an aunt or uncle, or maybe even a doctor! We hope that you feel comfortable talking with us about how you are feeling, and don't be surprised if we ask you!

It is especially important that you let us know if you are feeling very sad. We may be able to help with this, but we can't help if you don't let us know (unfortunately we aren't mind readers!). There are lots of resources available for teens who are feeling sad or depressed, we can be one of those resources and help you to find others.

If you are really in need of help and can't think of where to turn, here are some options in an emergency:

California Youth Crisis Line 1-800-843-5200

This is a statewide, toll free, 24-hr, confidential phone line available to young people ages 12 to 24. For more information, check out their website at [www.youthcrisisline.org](http://www.youthcrisisline.org)

Teen Line 1-800-852-8336 or 1-800-TLC-TEEN

This is a free and confidential phone line available nightly from 6pm to 10pm where you can talk with another teen (staffed by high school students who are supervised by counselors). For more information, check out their website at [www.tenlineonline.org](http://www.tenlineonline.org)

And remember, we are here for you if you need us!

# DEALING WITH NORMAL ADOLESCENT REBELLION

*By Barton D. Schmitt, MD*

## **The Problem**

The main task of adolescents in our culture is to become psychologically emancipated from their parents. Before the teenager can develop a new, adult relationship with his parents, he must cast aside the dependent relationship of childhood and gain control of his life. This process is characterized by a certain amount of normal rebellion, defiance, discontent, turmoil, restlessness, and ambivalence. Emotions usually run high, and mood swings are common. Adolescent rebellion usually starts at 12 to 14 years of age. Under the best circumstances, it continues for about two years; it is not uncommon for this stage to last four to six years.

## **The Solution**

The following guidelines may help you and your teenager through this difficult period.

Treat your teenager as an adult friend. By the time your child is 12 years old, start working on developing the kind of relationship you would like to have with her when she is an adult. Treat her the way you would like her to treat you when she is grown up. The goal is mutual respect, support, and having fun together. Strive for relaxed, casual conversations during shared activities such as bicycling, hiking, shopping, playing catch, driving, cooking, working, and especially mealtime. Friendship with your teenager doesn't mean bending your own behavior or values in an attempt to be popular with her, however. Use praise and trust to help build her self-esteem. Recognize and validate her feelings by listening carefully and making nonjudgmental comments. Remember that listening doesn't mean you have to solve your teen's problems. The friendship model is the best basis for family functioning.

Avoid criticism about "no-win" topics. Most negative parent-adolescent relationships develop because the parents criticize their teenager too much. A great deal of the teen's objectionable behavior merely reflects his desire to conform to the current tastes of his peer group. Peer-group immersion is one of the essential stages of adolescent development. Dressing, talking, and acting different from adults

help your teenager to feel independent of you. So just back off, as your teenager would say.

Try to avoid criticizing clothing, hairstyles, makeup, music, dance steps, friends, recreational interests, room decorations, use of free time, use of money, speech, posture, or religion and philosophy. Allowing your teen to rebel in these areas often prevents testing in other areas, such as experimentation with drugs, truancy, or shoplifting. Intervene only if your teenager's behavior is harmful, illegal, or infringes on your rights. The more you talk about strange and untraditional behavior, the longer they will last.

Let society's rules and consequences teach responsibility outside the home. Your teenager must learn from trial and error. As she experiments, she will learn to take responsibility for her decisions and actions. Parents should speak up only if the adolescent is going to do something dangerous or illegal. Otherwise, they must rely on her own self-discipline, pressure from her peers to behave responsibly, and the lessons learned from the consequences of her actions (the proverbial school of hard knocks).

City curfew laws will help control late hours. A school's requirement for punctual attendance will influence when your teen goes to bed at night. School grades will usually hold her accountable for homework and other aspects of school performance. (You should make clear your support for the rules imposed by the school and community.) If your teenager has bad work habits, she will lose her job. If she makes a poor choice of friends, she may get into trouble or find her confidence broken. If she doesn't practice hard for a sport, she will be pressured by the team and coach to do better. If she misspends her allowance or earnings, she will run out of money before the end of the month.

If by chance your teenager asks you for advice about these problem areas, try to describe the pros and cons in a brief, impartial way. Ask some questions that help her think about the main risks. Then wrap up your remarks with a comment such as, "Do what you think is best." Teenagers need plenty of opportunities to learn from their mistakes before they leave home and have to solve problems without an ever-present support system.

Clarify the house rules and consequences for breaking them. You have the right and the responsibility to make rules regarding your house and other possessions. Written ones cut down on misunderstandings. A teenager's preferences can be tolerated within his own

room, but they need not be imposed on the rest of the house. You can forbid loud music or incoming telephone calls after 10 p.m. that interfere with other people's concentration or sleep. You should make your teen's friends feel welcome in your home, but clarify the ground rules about parties or where snacks can be eaten. Your teen can be placed in charge of cleaning his room and washing and ironing his clothes. You can insist upon clean clothes and enough showers to prevent body odor. You must decide whether you will loan your teenager your car, bicycle, camera, radio, TV, clothes, or other possessions.

Reasonable consequences for breaking house rules include loss of telephone, TV, stereo, and car privileges. Working for the money to repair or replace damaged articles is also appropriate. Rarely, you may need to ground your child for a day or a weekend.

Use family conferences to negotiate house rules. Some families find it helpful to have a brief meeting after dinner once a week. At this time, your teenager can ask for changes in the house rules or bring up family issues that are causing problems. You also can bring up issues that concern you (such as your teen's demand to drive her too many places and your need for her help in arranging carpools). The family unit often functions better if the decision making is democratic. The objective of negotiation should be that both parties win. The atmosphere should be: "Nobody is at fault, but we have a problem. How can we solve it?"

Give space to a teenager who is in a bad mood. When your teenager is in a bad mood, she generally won't want to talk about it with you. If teens want to discuss a problem with anybody, it is usually a close friend. In general, it is advisable to give your teen lots of space and privacy at such times. This is a poor time to talk to her about any topic, pleasant or otherwise.

Use "I" messages for rudeness. Some talking back is normal. We want our teenagers to express their anger through talking and to challenging our opinions in a logical way. We need to listen. Expect your teenager to present his case passionately, even unreasonably. Let the small stuff go; it's only words. But don't accept disrespectful remarks, such as calling you a "jerk." Unlike a negative attitude, these mean remarks should not be ignored. You can respond with a comment like, "It really hurts me when you put me down or don't answer my question." Make your statement in as nonangry a way as possible, even though you may be legitimately angry. If your adolescent continues to make hostile, unpleasant remarks, you should leave the room. Don't

get into a shouting match with him because this type of behavior is unacceptable. What you are trying to teach is that everyone has the right to disagree and even to express anger but that screaming and rude conversation are now allowed in your house. You can prevent some rude behavior by being a role model of politeness, constructive disagreement, and the ability to apologize.

Call our office during regular hours if:

- You think your teenager is depressed, suicidal, drinking frequently, using drugs, or in danger of running away.
- Your teenager is taking undue risks, such as reckless driving or unsafe sex.
- Your teenager has no close friends.
- Your teenager's school performance is declining markedly.
- Your teenager is skipping school frequently.
- Your teenager's outbursts of temper are violent.
- You feel your teenager's rebellion is excessive.
- You find yourself escalating the criticism and punishment.
- Your relationship with your teenager does not improve within three months after you begin using these approaches.
- You have other questions or concerns.

## RESOURCES FOR YOU

Click on these websites for some more information about your health!

<http://teenhealthfx.com>

This website provides a lot of information, and some of it comes from other teens! It also has a lot of great links

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

This website has A LOT of information about everything!

[www.teencentral.net](http://www.teencentral.net)

This website is a teen helpline, created by teens for teens.

Sites for girls:

[www.4girls.gov](http://www.4girls.gov)

Lots of helpful information about being a healthy teenage woman is available on this website.

[www.iemily.com](http://www.iemily.com)

This website has a ton of information about health and wellness, and it's just for teen girls.

There are lots of web resources available for your parents too—here are a few if you want to pass them along:

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

This website provides some information for parents on how to talk with their kids about tough issues.

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

This website has lots of information for you and your parents.

[www.keepkidshealthy.com/adolescent/adolescent.html](http://www.keepkidshealthy.com/adolescent/adolescent.html)

This website provides information for parents about just what it says “keeping teens healthy!”

## VOCABULARY OF TERMS

*Areola:* The circle of darker skin surrounding the nipple in both the male and female breast.

*Axillary:* The axilla is the armpit. "Axillary hair" means the hair in the armpit.

*Breast buds:* The beginning of breast development. This happens when tissue under the nipple raises slightly and you can feel the beginnings of the mammary gland developing. While this happens primarily in girls, boys can have it also. It can be on one or both sides.

*Ejaculation:* The process by which semen is excreted from the penis. This is usually when the penis is in a state of erection and is preceded by sexual excitement.

*Erection:* The state of the penis when it is stiff, caused by blood being pooled in the blood vessels of the penis.

*Estrogen:* The female sex hormone that acts on the body to produce female development.

*Genitals:* The external sex organs.

*Intercourse:* The technical term for having sex. This is the process whereby the penis enters the vagina.

*Masturbation:* The production of sexual excitement by rubbing.

*Menarche:* (Pronounced men-ark-ee.) The beginning of menstruation.

*Menstruation:* Also known as a "period." This periodic bleeding from the vagina, usually monthly, comes about when the lining of the uterus is shed.

*Ovaries:* The small female glands in side the abdomen right by the uterus, one on each side. These glands produce estrogen, the female hormone, and also produce eggs, one each month, that if they meet with sperm, can produce a child.

*Ovulation:* The usually monthly process by which a ripe egg cell is released from the ovary and travels through the Fallopian tube to the uterus.

*Penis:* The male sex organ.

*Pubic:* The middle groin area. When hair grows here it is called pubic hair.

*Puberty:* The time during which the body develops from that of a child to that of an adult.

*Scrotum:* The sac of skin that contains the testicles, just below the penis.

*Semen:* The fluid excreted by the penis by ejaculation.

*Sperm:* The tiny cells produced by the testicles which, when combined with an ovum, or egg, will produce a baby. Sperm is contained in semen along with other fluid.

*Testicles:* The two egg-shaped organs inside the scrotum. This is where sperm is made.

*Uterus:* This is the organ in a woman's lower abdomen where a baby grows. When a sperm and ovum meet and merge, the tiny sac of cells that will become a baby implants itself right here.

*Vagina:* The tube-like organ where the penis enters for intercourse. This is the passageway through which a baby enters the world.

*Vulva:* This is the collective name for the female external genital organs (the ones you can see.)