

MIDDLE ADOLESCENCE – 14-17 YEARS

Promotion of healthy habits

Get adequate sleep.

Exercise vigorously at least three times per week. Encourage friends and family members to exercise.

Discuss with the health professional or your coach athletic conditioning, weight training, fluids, and weight gain or loss.

Limit television viewing to an average of one hour per day.

Injury and violence prevention

Wear a seat belt while driving or riding *in* the car. If you are driving, insist that your passengers wear seat belts. Follow the speed limit.

Learn how to swim.

Do not drink alcohol, especially while driving, boating, or swimming. Plan to have a designated driver if drinking.

Protect yourself from skin cancer by putting sunscreen on before you go outside for long periods of time. Avoid tanning salons.

Test smoke detectors in your home to ensure that they work properly. Change batteries yearly.

Always wear a helmet when on a motorcycle, in an all-terrain vehicle, or riding a bicycle. Even with a helmet, motorcycles and ATVs are very dangerous.

Wear protective sports gear such as a mouth guard or a face protector.

Wear appropriate protective gear at work and follow job safety procedures.

Avoid high noise levels, especially in music headsets.

Do not carry or use a weapon of any kind.

Develop skills in conflict resolution, negotiation, and dealing with anger constructively.

Learn techniques to protect yourself from physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, including rape by either strangers or acquaintances.

Seek help if you are physically or sexually abused or fear that you are in danger.

Mental health

Take on new challenges that will increase your self-confidence.

Continue to develop your sense of identity, clarifying your values and beliefs.

Explore new roles without hurting yourself or others.

Accept who you are and enjoy both the adult and the child in you.

Trust your own feelings as well as listening to the ideas of good friends and valued adults.

Seek help if you often feel angry, depressed, or hopeless.

Learn how to deal with stress.

Set reasonable but challenging goals.

Understand the importance of your religious and spiritual needs and try to fulfill them.

Nutrition

Eat three meals per day. Breakfast is especially important. Eat meals with your family or residential group on a regular basis.

Choose and prepare variety of healthy foods.

Choose nutritious snacks rich in complex carbohydrates. Limit high-fat or low-nutrient foods and beverages such as candy, chips, or soft drinks.

Choose plenty of fruits and vegetables; breads, cereals, and other grain products; low-fat dairy products; lean meats; and foods prepared with little or no fat. Include foods rich in calcium and iron in your diet.

Select a nutritious meal from the school cafeteria or pack a balanced lunch.

Achieve and maintain a healthy weight. Manage weight through appropriate eating habits and regular exercise.

Oral health

Brush your teeth twice a day with a pea-size amount of fluoridated toothpaste, and floss daily.

Take fluoride supplements as recommended by the health professional based on the level of fluoride in your drinking water.

Ask the health professional any questions you have about how to handle dental emergencies, especially the loss or fracture of a tooth.

Schedule a dental appointment every six months, unless your dentist determines otherwise based on your individual needs/susceptibility to disease.

As your permanent molars erupt, ensure that your dentist evaluates them for application of dental sealants.

Do not smoke or use chewing tobacco.

Sexuality

Identify a supportive adult who can give you accurate information about sex.

Get accurate information about birth control and sexually transmitted diseases.

Having sexual feelings is normal, but having sex should be a well thought out decision. Do not have sex if you do not want to.

Not having sexual intercourse is the safest way to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infection/AIDS.

Learn about ways to say no to sex.

If you are engaging in sexual activity, including intercourse, ask the health professional for an examination and discuss methods of birth control. Learn about safer sex.

Practice safer sex. Limit the number of partners and use latex condoms and other barriers correctly.

If you are confused or concerned about your sexual feelings (for the same sex or opposite sex), talk to a trusted adult or the health professional.

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Prevention of substance use / abuse

Do not smoke, use smokeless tobacco, drink alcohol, or use drugs, diet pills, or steroids. Do not become involved in selling drugs.

If you smoke, find out about smoking cessation programs.

If you use drugs or alcohol, ask for help (e.g. a substance abuse treatment program).

Avoid situations where drugs or alcohol are easily available.

Support your friends who choose not to use tobacco, alcohol, drugs, steroids, or diet pills.

Become a peer counselor to prevent substance abuse.

Promotion of social competence

Spend time with your family doing something you all enjoy.

Participate in social activities, community groups, and team sports.

Make sure you understand your parents' limits and the consequences they have established for unacceptable behavior.

Develop satisfying peer and sibling relationships.

Discuss with the health professional and your family and friends your strategies and coping mechanisms for handling negative peer pressure. Practice peer refusal skills.

Continue your progress in separating from your family, making independent decisions, and understanding the consequences of your behavior.

Promotion of responsibility

Respect the rights and needs of others.

Serve as a positive ethical and behavioral role model.

Follow family rules, such as those for curfews, or driving.

Share in household chores.

Learn about how you can take on new responsibility for your family, peers, and community.

Learn new skills that may be useful with your friends, family or community (e.g., CPR).

Discuss with the health professional becoming a health care consumer. Practice a healthy lifestyle.

Promotion of school achievement

Be responsible for your own attendance, homework, course selection, and extracurricular activities.

If you feel frustrated with school or are thinking about dropping out, discuss your feelings and options with a trusted adult.

Identify talents and interests that you want to pursue.

Make plans for what you will do after high school, e.g., college options (including financing), vocational training, the military, or other career choices.

Promotion of community interactions

Ask for help with food, housing, or transportation if needed.

Participate in social, religious, cultural, volunteer, or recreational organizations or activities.

Advocate for community programs (recreational, sports, educational).

Discuss current events and social responsibility with friends, family, and others.

Learn about your cultural heritage and that of others. Participate in activities that reflect cultural diversity (e.g. holidays, festivals, musical events, dance performances).

Find out what you can do about community problems such as unemployment, lack of housing, violence, crime, environmental issues, or poor public services.

ANTICIPATORY GUIDANCE FOR THE PARENT(S)

Decide with the adolescent when he can do things on his own, including staying at home alone.

Establish realistic expectations for family rules, with increasing autonomy and responsibility given to the adolescent.

Reach agreement with the adolescent about limits, consequences for breaking rules, and appropriate disciplinary actions.

Enhance the adolescent's self-esteem by providing praise and recognizing positive behavior and achievements.

Minimize criticism, nagging, derogatory comments, and other belittling or demeaning messages.

Spend time with the adolescent.

Respect the adolescent's need for privacy.

Discuss with the health professional your own preventive and health-promoting practices (e.g. using seat belts, avoiding tobacco, eating properly, exercising and doing breast self-exams or testicular self-exams).