



# BRIGHT FUTURES HANDOUT ► PATIENT

## 15 THROUGH 17 YEAR VISITS

Here are some suggestions from Bright Futures experts that may be of value to you and your family.

### ✓ HOW YOU ARE DOING

- Enjoy spending time with your family. Look for ways you can help at home.
- Find ways to work with your family to solve problems. Follow your family's rules.
- Form healthy friendships and find fun, safe things to do with friends.
- Set high goals for yourself in school and activities and for your future.
- Try to be responsible for your schoolwork and for getting to school or work on time.
- Find ways to deal with stress. Talk with your parents or other trusted adults if you need help.
- Always talk through problems and never use violence.
- If you get angry with someone, walk away if you can.
- Call for help if you are in a situation that feels dangerous.
- Healthy dating relationships are built on respect, concern, and doing things both of you like to do.
- When you're dating or in a sexual situation, "No" means NO. NO is OK.
- Don't smoke, vape, use drugs, or drink alcohol. Talk with us if you are worried about alcohol or drug use in your family.

### ✓ YOUR DAILY LIFE

- Visit the dentist at least twice a year.
- Brush your teeth at least twice a day and floss once a day.
- Be a healthy eater. It helps you do well in school and sports.
  - Have vegetables, fruits, lean protein, and whole grains at meals and snacks.
  - Limit fatty, sugary, and salty foods that are low in nutrients, such as candy, chips, and ice cream.
  - Eat when you're hungry. Stop when you feel satisfied.
  - Eat with your family often.
  - Eat breakfast.
- Drink plenty of water. Choose water instead of soda or sports drinks.
- Make sure to get enough calcium every day.
- Have 3 or more servings of low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk and other low-fat dairy products, such as yogurt and cheese.
- Aim for at least 1 hour of physical activity every day.
- Wear your mouth guard when playing sports.
- Get enough sleep.

### ✓ YOUR FEELINGS

- Be proud of yourself when you do something good.
- Figure out healthy ways to deal with stress.
- Develop ways to solve problems and make good decisions.
- It's OK to feel up sometimes and down others, but if you feel sad most of the time, let us know so we can help you.
- It's important for you to have accurate information about sexuality, your physical development, and your sexual feelings toward the opposite or same sex. Please consider asking us if you have any questions.

### ✓ HEALTHY BEHAVIOR CHOICES

- Choose friends who support your decision to not use tobacco, alcohol, or drugs. Support friends who choose not to use.
- Avoid situations with alcohol or drugs.
- Don't share your prescription medicines. Don't use other people's medicines.
- Not having sex is the safest way to avoid pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- Plan how to avoid sex and risky situations.
- If you're sexually active, protect against pregnancy and STIs by correctly and consistently using birth control along with a condom.
- Protect your hearing at work, home, and concerts. Keep your earbud volume down.

# 15 THROUGH 17 YEAR VISITS—PATIENT





## STAYING SAFE

- Always be a safe and cautious driver.
  - Insist that everyone use a lap and shoulder seat belt.
  - Limit the number of friends in the car and avoid driving at night.
  - Avoid distractions. Never text or talk on the phone while you drive.
- Do not ride in a vehicle with someone who has been using drugs or alcohol.
  - If you feel unsafe driving or riding with someone, call someone you trust to drive you.
- Wear helmets and protective gear while playing sports. Wear a helmet when riding a bike, a motorcycle, or an ATV or when skiing or skateboarding. Wear a life jacket when you do water sports.
- Always use sunscreen and a hat when you're outside.
- Fighting and carrying weapons can be dangerous. Talk with your parents, teachers, or doctor about how to avoid these situations.

Consistent with *Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents, 4th Edition*

For more information, go to <https://brightfutures.aap.org>.

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# Beyond Screen Time: A Parent's Guide to Media Use

Media in all forms, including TV, computers, and smartphones, can affect how children and teens feel, learn, think, and behave. However, parents (you) are still the most important influence.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) encourages you to help your children develop healthy media use habits early on. Read on to learn more.

## Media Use and Your Children

You can decide what media use is best for your family. Remember, all children and teens need adequate sleep (8–12 hours, depending on age), physical activity (1 hour), and time away from media. (See the “Media Use Guidelines” chart for general guidelines for media use based on age.)

Because children today are growing up in a time of highly personalized media use experiences, parents must develop personalized media use plans for their children. Media plans should take into account each child's age, health, personality, and developmental stage. Create a Family Media Use Plan online at [HealthyChildren.org/MediaUsePlan](http://HealthyChildren.org/MediaUsePlan). By creating a Family Media Use Plan, parents can help children and teens balance their media use with other healthy activities.

## Why use digital media?

- Digital media use can
  - Expose users to new ideas and information.
  - Raise awareness of current events and issues.
  - Promote community participation.
  - Help students work with others on assignments and projects.
- Digital media use also has social benefits that
  - Allow families and friends to stay in touch, no matter where they live.
  - Enhance access to valuable support networks, especially for people with illnesses or disabilities.
  - Help promote wellness and healthy behaviors, such as how to quit smoking or how to eat healthy.

## Why limit media use?

Overuse of digital media may place your children at risk of

- **Not enough sleep.** Children with more media exposure or who have a TV, computer, or mobile device in their bedroom sleep less and fall asleep later at night. Even babies can be overstimulated by screens and miss the sleep they need to grow. Exposure to light (particularly blue light) and stimulating content from screens can delay or disrupt sleep and have a negative effect on school.
- **Delays in learning and social skills.** Children who watch too much TV in infancy and preschool years can show delays in attention, thinking, language, and social skills. One of the reasons for the delays could be because they interact less with parents and family. Parents who keep the TV on or focus on their own digital media miss precious opportunities to interact with their children and help them learn. Children and teens often use entertainment media

at the same time they're doing other things, such as homework. Such multitasking can have a negative effect on school.

- **Obesity.** Watching TV for more than 1.5 hours daily is a risk factor for obesity for children 4 through 9 years of age. Teens who watch more than 5 hours of TV per day are 5 times more likely to have overweight than teens who watch 0 to 2 hours. Food advertising and snacking while watching TV can promote obesity. Also, children who overuse media are less apt to be active with healthy, physical play.
- **Behavior problems.** Violent content on TV and screens can contribute to behavior problems in children, either because they are scared and confused by what they see or they try to mimic on-screen characters.
- **Problematic Internet use.** Children who overuse online media can be at risk for problematic Internet use. Heavy video gamers are at risk for Internet gaming disorder. They spend most of their free time online and show less interest in off-line or real-life relationships. There may be increased risks for depression at both the high and low ends of Internet use.
- **Risky behaviors.** Teens' displays on social media often show risky behaviors, such as substance use, sexual behaviors, self-injury, or eating disorders. Exposure of teens through media to alcohol, tobacco use, or sexual behaviors is associated with earlier initiation of these behaviors.
- **Sexing, loss of privacy, and predators.** Sexting is sending nude or seminude images, as well as sexually explicit text messages, using a cell phone. About 12% of youth 10 to 19 years of age have sent a sexual photo to someone else. Teens need to know that once content is shared with others, they may not be able to delete or remove it completely. They may also not know about or choose not to use privacy settings. Another risk is that sex offenders may use social networking, chat rooms, e-mail, and online games to contact and exploit children.
- **Cyberbullying.** Children and teens online can be victims of cyberbullying. Cyberbullying can lead to short- and long-term negative social, academic, and health issues for both the bully and target. Fortunately, programs to help prevent bullying may reduce cyberbullying.

## More Media Use Tips for Parents, Families, and Caregivers

- Do not feel pressured to introduce technology early. Media interfaces are intuitive, and children can learn quickly.
- Find out what type of and how much media are used and what media behaviors are appropriate for each child—and for you. Place consistent limits on hours of media use as well as types of media used.
- Select and co-view media with your child so your child can use media to learn, be creative, and share these experiences with your family.
- Check your children's media use for their health and safety.

## Media Use Guidelines

Age	Description	Tips
Younger than 2 years	<p>Children younger than 2 learn and grow when they explore the physical world around them. Their minds learn best when they interact and play with parents, siblings, caregivers, and other children and adults.</p> <p>Children younger than 2 have a hard time understanding what they see on screen media and how it relates to the world around them.</p> <p>However, children 18–24 months of age can learn from high-quality educational media, IF their parents play or view with them and reteach the lessons.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media use should be very limited and only when an adult is standing by to co-view, talk, and teach (for example, video chatting with family along with parents).</li> <li>• For children 18–24 months, if you want to introduce digital media,               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Choose high-quality programming.</li> <li>◦ Use media together with your child.</li> <li>◦ Avoid solo media use.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
2–5 years of age	<p>At 2 years of age, many children can understand and learn words from live video chatting. Young children can listen to or join a conversation with their parents.</p> <p>Children 3–5 years of age have more mature minds, so a well-designed educational program such as Sesame Street (in moderation) can help children learn social, language, and reading skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limit screen use to no more than 1 hour per day.</li> <li>• Find other activities for your children to do that are healthy for their bodies and minds.</li> <li>• Choose media that is interactive, nonviolent, educational, and pro-social.</li> <li>• Co-view or co-play with your children.</li> </ul>
5 years and older	<p>Today's grade-schoolers and teens are growing up immersed in digital media. They may even have their own mobile device and other devices to access digital media.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure media use is not displacing other important activities, such as sleep, family time, and exercise.</li> <li>• Check your children's media use for their health and safety.</li> </ul>
Tweens and teens	<p>Tweens and teens are more likely to have some independence in what they choose and watch, and they may be consuming media without parental oversight.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents should engage tweens and teens in conversations about their media use, digital citizenship, what they've seen or read, who they are communicating with, and what they have learned from their media use.</li> </ul>

See *More Media Use Tips for Parents, Families, and Caregivers*. Also, create a Family Media Use Plan online at [HealthyChildren.org/MediaUsePlan](http://HealthyChildren.org/MediaUsePlan). A Family Media Use Plan is useful to set consistent expectations and limits on media use for parents, children, and teens.

- Stop use of devices or screens for 1 hour before bedtime. Do not let your children sleep with devices such as smartphones.
- Discourage entertainment media while doing homework.
- Plan media-free times together, such as family dinners.
- Decide on media-free, unplugged locations in homes, such as bedrooms.
- Engage in family activities that promote well-being, such as sports, reading, and talking with each other.
- Set a good example. Turn off the TV and put your smartphone on "do not disturb" during media-free times with your family.
- Use sites like Common Sense Media ([www.commonsensemedia.org](http://www.commonsensemedia.org)) to help you decide if movies, TV shows, apps, and video games are age and content appropriate for your children and your family values.
- Share your family media rules with caregivers or grandparents to help ensure rules are consistent.
- Talk with your children and teens about online citizenship and safety. This includes treating others with respect online, avoiding cyberbullying and sexting, being wary of online solicitations, and safeguarding privacy.
- Remember that your opinion counts. TV, video games, and other media producers, airers, and sponsors pay attention to the views of the public. For more information from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), visit <http://reboot.fcc.gov/parents>.
- Encourage your school and community to advocate for better media programs and healthier habits. For example, organize a Screen-Free Week in your town with other parents, teachers, and neighbors.

### From Your Doctor

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# How Teens Can Stay Fit

## What can I do to get more fit?

Any type of regular, physical activity can improve your fitness and your health. The most important thing is that you keep moving!

Exercise should be a regular part of your day, like brushing your teeth, eating, and sleeping. It can be in gym class, joining a sports team, or working out on your own. Keep the following tips in mind:

- **Stay positive and have fun.** A good mental attitude is important. Find an activity that you think is fun. You are more likely to keep with it if you choose something you like. A lot of people find it's more fun to exercise with someone else, so see if you can find a friend or family member to be active with you.
- **Take it one step at a time.** Small changes can add up to better fitness. For example, walk or ride your bike to school or to a friend's house instead of getting a ride. Get on or off the bus several blocks away and walk the rest of the way. Use the stairs instead of taking the elevator or escalator.
- **Get your heart pumping.** Whatever you choose, make sure it includes aerobic activity that makes you breathe harder and increases your heart rate. This is the best type of exercise because it increases your fitness level and makes your heart and lungs work better. It also burns off body fat. Examples of aerobic activities are basketball, running, or swimming.
- **Don't forget to warm up** with some easy exercises or mild stretching before you do any physical activity. This warms your muscles up and may help protect against injury. Stretching makes your muscles and joints more flexible too. It is also important to stretch out after you exercise to cool down your muscles.

Your goal should be to **do some type of exercise every day**. It is best to do some kind of aerobic activity without stopping for at least 20 to 30 minutes each time. Do the activity as often as possible, but don't exercise to the point of pain.

## A Healthy Lifestyle

In addition to exercise, making just a few other changes in your life can help keep you healthy, such as

- Watch less TV or spend less time playing computer or video games. (Use this time to exercise instead!) Or exercise while watching TV (for example, sit on the floor and do sit-ups and stretches; use hand weights; or use a stationary bike, treadmill, or stair climber).
- Eat 3 healthy meals a day, including at least 4 servings of fruits, 5 servings of vegetables, and 4 servings of dairy products.
- Make sure you drink plenty of fluids before, during, and after any exercise (water is best but flavored sports drinks can be used if they do not contain a lot of sugar). This will help replace what you lose when you sweat.
- Stop drinking or drink fewer regular soft drinks.
- Eat less junk food and fast food. (They're often full of fat, cholesterol, salt, and sugar.)
- Get 9 to 10 hours of sleep every night.
- Don't smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, or do drugs

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## For Teens: How to Make Healthy Decisions About Sex

Before you decide to have sex or if you are already having sex, you need to know how to stay healthy. Even if you think you know everything you need to know about sex, take a few minutes and read on. Your doctor wants to make sure you know the facts.



### Important Reminders:

- No one should ever be forced to have sex (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/dating-sex/Pages/Date-Rape.aspx>)! If you are ever forced to have sex, it's important to never blame yourself and to tell an adult you trust as soon as possible.
- Not using alcohol and drugs (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/substance-abuse/Pages/Talking-to-Teens-About-Drugs-and-Alcohol.aspx>) will help you make clearer choices about sex. Too many young people have sex without meaning to when they drink alcohol or use drugs.

### Are You Ready for Sex?

Sex can change your life and relationships. Having sex may affect the way you feel about yourself or how others feel about you.

Many teens believe waiting until they are ready to have sex (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/dating-sex/Pages/Deciding%20to%20Wait.aspx>) is important. The right time is different for each teen. For example, some teens may want to wait until they are older (adults); other teens may want to wait until they feel their relationship is ready.

### You may feel that your relationship is ready when:

- You can be completely honest and trust the other person, and the other person can trust you.
- You can talk with the person about difficult topics, such as feelings, other relationships, and if the person has had a sexually transmitted infection (STI) (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/sexually-transmitted/Pages/Types-of-Sexually-Transmitted-Infections.aspx>).
- You can be responsible, protecting yourself and your partner against STIs and pregnancy with condoms (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/dating-sex/Pages/No-Condom-No-Sex.aspx>) and birth control (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/dating-sex/Pages/Birth-Control-for-Sexually-Active-Teens.aspx>).
- You can respect the other person's decisions about not having sex and about using protection.

However, if you are in love or really like someone, you may ignore the signs of an unhealthy relationship.

### The following signs mean your relationship is **not** ready for sex:

- Your partner is jealous or possessive. For example, your partner prevents you from spending time with your family or other friends, texts or instant messages you constantly, or checks your cell phone to see who you are talking with.
- Your partner pressures you to have sex and refuses to see your point of view.
- Your partner manipulates you by either bullying you or threatening to hurt himself if you end the relationship.

### Why Wait?

There's nothing wrong if you decide to wait. Not everyone is having sex. Half of all teens in the United States have never had sex. If you decide to wait, stick with your decision. Plan ahead how you are going to say no so you are clearly understood. Stay away from situations that can lead to sex.

### Here are reasons why waiting to have sex makes sense:



- **Sex can lead to pregnancy** (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/dating-sex/Pages/Teenage-Pregnancy.aspx>). Are you ready to be pregnant or become a teenaged parent? <sup>Back to Top</sup> It's a huge responsibility. Are you able to provide food, clothing, and a safe home for your baby?
- **Sex has health risks.** A lot of infections can be spread during sex. Sexually transmitted infections (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/sexually-transmitted/Pages/Types-of-Sexually-Transmitted-Infections.aspx>) include chlamydia, gonorrhea, hepatitis B, herpes, HIV (the virus that causes AIDS), human papillomavirus (HPV), or syphilis.
- **Sex can lead to emotional pain and distractions.** You may feel sad or angry if you let someone pressure you into having sex when you're not really ready. You also may feel sad or angry if you choose to have sex but your partner leaves you. Your partner may even tell other people that you had sex with her.

## How Can You Prevent Getting an STI?

Nothing works perfectly to prevent STIs except abstinence (no sex). However, if you're going to have sex, using condoms is the best way to reduce the risk for getting STIs. You can also get a vaccine to protect against HPV (<http://www.healthychildren.org/english/safety-prevention/immunizations/pages/Human-Papillomavirus-HPV-Vaccine-What-You-Need-to-Know.aspx>).

Remember to use a latex condom every time you have sex—no matter what other type of birth control (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/dating-sex/Pages/Birth-Control-for-Sexually-Active-Teens.aspx>) you and your partner might also use. To protect against getting an infection from having oral sex, use a condom, dental dam, or non-microwavable plastic wrap. Your doctor can explain all these things to you.

To make sure you stay healthy, get regular medical checkups. If you have had sex in the past or are having sex, your doctor may recommend testing for STIs.

## What Do You Need To Know About Condoms?

- Condoms work best when used correctly.
- Most teens use male latex condoms. Buy the type with a reservoir (nipple) at the tip to catch semen, if available. Female condoms are another option. Never use a male and female condom at the same time; they might tear.
- Follow the instructions on the package to make sure you are using them the right way.
- Check the expiration date on the package. Don't buy or use expired condoms.
- You can carry condoms with you at all times, but do not store them where they will get hot (such as in the glove compartment of a car). Heat can damage a condom.
- The following additional tips about using male condoms are from the "Condom Fact Sheet In Brief" published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
  - Use a new condom for every act of vaginal, anal, and oral sex throughout the entire sexual act (from start to finish). Before any genital contact, put the condom on the tip of the erect penis with the rolled side out.
  - If the condom does not have a reservoir tip, pinch the tip enough to leave a half-inch space for semen to collect. Holding the tip, unroll the condom all the way to the base of the erect penis.
  - After ejaculation and before the penis gets soft, grip the rim of the condom and carefully withdraw. Then gently pull the condom off the penis, making sure that semen doesn't spill out.
  - Wrap the condom in a tissue and throw it in the trash where others won't handle it.
  - If you feel the condom break at any point during sexual activity, stop immediately, withdraw, remove the broken condom, and put on a new condom.
  - Ensure that adequate lubrication is used during vaginal and anal sex, which might require water-based lubricants. Oil-based lubricants (ie, petroleum jelly, shortening, mineral oil, massage oils, body lotions, and cooking oil) should not be used because they can weaken latex, causing breakage.

## What Types of Birth Control Are Effective?

Talk with your doctor about birth control (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/dating-sex/Pages/Birth-Control-for-Sexually-Active-Teens.aspx>). Your doctor can answer questions about safe and effective methods, side effects, and costs. Here are some forms of birth control (all types for females; condoms for males) from most effective to least effective at preventing pregnancy.

- **Intrauterine devices (IUDs):** IUDs are small T-shaped devices placed inside the uterus by a doctor. They are highly effective at preventing pregnancy and may also be prescribed to help decrease menstrual bleeding and pain. The copper IUD contains a small amount of natural copper and prevents pregnancies for up to 10 years. There are 2 levonorgestrel IUDs, both of which contain a hormone and prevent pregnancy for 3 to 5 years depending on which one is used. Intrauterine devices when used as prescribed are about 99% effective in preventing pregnancy.
- **Contraceptive implant:** A contraceptive implant is a tiny flexible rod that a doctor puts under your skin in your upper arm. It slowly releases a hormone that prevents pregnancy for 3 years. A contraceptive implant when used as prescribed is about 99% effective in preventing pregnancy.

- **Contraceptive injection:** Depo-Provera is a shot given every 3 months. It's effective, and you don't have to remember to take a daily pill. The contraceptive injection when used as prescribed is 99% effective in preventing pregnancy. However, when used typically (eg, women may occasionally forget to get a shot exactly on time), it is 94% effective in preventing pregnancy.
- **Birth control pills, patch, and ring:** "The pill," the birth control patch, and the ring all contain 2 hormones, an estrogen and a progestin.
  - **Birth control pill:** You take one pill each day. Birth control pills when used as prescribed are about 99% effective in preventing pregnancy. However, when used typically (eg, women may occasionally forget to take a pill), they are 91% effective in preventing pregnancy.
  - **Birth control patch:** The birth control patch is an adhesive patch that is placed on the skin. You wear the patch 3 weeks, remove the patch for 1 week, put on a new patch at the end of the fourth week, and repeat these steps. The birth control patch when used as prescribed is about 99% effective in preventing pregnancy. However, when used typically (eg, women may occasionally forget to replace the patch on time), it is 91% effective in preventing pregnancy.
  - **Birth control ring:** You insert the birth control ring in your vagina, it stays in for 3 weeks, you remove it for 1 week, and you put in a new one at the end of the week. The birth control ring when used as prescribed is about 99% effective in preventing pregnancy. However, when used typically (eg, women may occasionally forget to put in a new birth control ring on time), it is 91% effective in preventing pregnancy.
- **Condoms:** Male condoms used the right way have about a 98% chance of preventing pregnancy, and female condoms have a 95% chance, but they must be used each time you have sex and used correctly. When they are not used correctly, male condoms may only have an 82% chance of preventing pregnancy, while female condoms may only be effective 79% of the time.

## What Are Other Types of Birth Control?

The following types of birth control are less common and not as effective at preventing pregnancy:

- **Withdrawal:** The male "pulls out" before he ejaculates or "cums." It does not prevent pregnancy or STIs. Even a small amount of sperm can lead to pregnancy or an STI.
- **The "rhythm method:"** You avoid having sex during certain times of your monthly cycle. Because teens tend to have more irregular periods, this method is less effective at preventing pregnancy.
- **Spermicides:** These are creams and foams used during sex to kill sperm. They may add protection to other methods but are not effective when used alone.

## What Is Emergency Contraception?

Emergency contraception (EC) (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/dating-sex/Pages/Emergency-Contraception.aspx>) is a form of birth control that you use **after** you have unprotected sex. Unprotected sex includes not using birth control, condoms breaking during sex, or forgetting to take birth control pills.

- Emergency contraception can be taken up to 5 days after sex but is most effective when taken as soon as possible after sex.
- You can buy EC pills over the counter and no longer need to show proof of age. The types of EC pills available over the counter are levonorgestrel at 1.5 mg (eg, Plan B One-Step or Next Choice One Dose).
- Another type of EC pill is ulipristal acetate 30 mg (eg, Ella), which you can only get with a prescription.
- A doctor can also put in a copper IUD that will provide both EC and regular birth control.

## Remember:

If you decide to have sex, it's important that you know the facts about birth control, infections, and emotions. Decisions of when to become sexually active, how to protect yourself from STIs, and how to prevent pregnancy are yours. These are important decisions and are worth talking about with adults who care about you, including your doctor.

## Additional Resources:

- Effective Birth Control for Sexually Active Teens (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/dating-sex/Pages/Birth-Control-for-Sexually-Active-Teens.aspx>)
- Expect Respect: Healthy Relationships (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/dating-sex/Pages/Expect-Respect-Healthy-Relationships.aspx>)
- Sexually Transmitted Infections Prevention (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/sexually-transmitted/Pages/Sexually-Transmitted-Infections-Prevention.aspx>)
- Emergency Contraception (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/dating-sex/Pages/Emergency-Contraception.aspx>)
- Center for Young Women's Health (<http://www.youngwomenshealth.org/>)



- The Emergency Contraception Web Site (<http://www.not-2-late.com/>)
- National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy (<http://www.stayteen.org/>)
- Sex, Etc. (<http://sexetc.org/>) (Rutgers University)
- Young Men's Health (<http://www.youngmenshealthsite.org/>)

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# Expect Respect: Healthy Relationships

## Signs of a Healthy Relationship

- Respecting each other
- Knowing that you make each other better people
- Sharing common interests, but having outside friends and activities too
- Settling disagreements peacefully and with respect



Relationships are supposed to make both people feel happy. People should feel good about what happens when they are together.

## Respect

- You ask each other what you want to do.
- No one tries to control the other person.

## Common Interests

- You enjoy doing things together, but no one feels forced to do anything.
- If you do have a disagreement—and it's OK to disagree—you both get to say what you want, talk until you're both happy, and then go out and enjoy what you've planned.

## Being With Each Other or Being Apart

- You enjoy each other's company and feel happy when together.
- You each feel free enough to have your own friends and interests outside the relationship.

## Ways To Make Your Relationship Healthy

### Respect Each Other

Show you really care by sharing your thoughts and feelings. Listen to what your partner has to say.

### Ask About The Other Person's Interests

Talk about sports, music, or movies—whatever helps you get past any awkward feelings and get to know each other better.

### Have A Life Outside The Relationship

People are more attractive to each other if they have other interests. Keep up with your schoolwork, friends, and the activities you enjoy that do not involve your partner.

### Resolve Disagreements With Love and Respect

People don't always have to agree on movies, music, or favorite sports, or even on how often to call or see each other. It is only natural for people to disagree. The important thing is how you reach an agreement. With a good attitude, you can have a healthy disagreement.

## Signs of An Unhealthy Relationship (/English/ages-stages/teen/dating-sex/pages/Dating-Violence-Tips-for-Parents.aspx)



Feelings of fear, stress, and sadness are not part of a healthy relationship.

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## Lack of respect

You “go along” with something even if you think it is not right. You feel bad about what happens when you are together.

## Being held back

Your partner does not let you succeed in school ([/English/ages-stages/teen/school/pages/Poor-School-Performance-How-Parents-Can-Help.aspx](#)), or you are made to feel guilty about doing things that interest you.

## Controlling behavior

You may hear, “If you love me, I need to know where you are.” Your partner does not care about your friends.

## Feeling “crazy in love”

One or both of you calls the other all the time. You feel your partner is possessive and smothering.

## Getting blamed for your partner’s problems

You hear, “This is all your fault.”

## Feeling jealous most of the time

A little bit of jealousy is normal. A lot of jealousy, or allowing jealousy to control what goes on between the two of you, will hurt the relationship.

## Trying to change the other person’s behavior

One of you tells the other, “My way or no way.”

When you can talk about a problem, an unhealthy relationship can become a healthy one. But, if you can’t find ways to enjoy the time that you spend together, it may mean that it is time to end the relationship.

## Crossing The Line

There are some things that should never happen in a relationship. Your relationship has serious problems if any of the following things are happening.

### Verbal Abuse

Screaming, swearing, bullying, or calling each other names is never all right.

### Pushing, Shoving, Hitting, or Kicking In Anger

### Trying To Control The Other Person’s Behavior Forced Sex ([/English/ages-stages/teen/dating-sex/pages/Date-Rape.aspx](#))

You always have the right to refuse attention or affection.

### Threats

If one of you does not get your way, a threat is made to hurt either the other person or yourself.

### Breaking or Hitting Objects During An Argument

If your relationship is crossing the line, the behavior needs to stop right away or the relationship needs to end. If you are having trouble ending a relationship, seek the help of an adult who cares about your well-being.

Talk with an adult you trust about how to end an abusive relationship safely. Use what you have learned to help make your next relationship better.

## No Excuse For Abuse

### Nothing You Say or Do Is A Reason To Be Abused

When things have calmed down, try saying:

- “I hated it when you swore at me. Don’t do that again.”

- "Don't treat me that way. I have done nothing to deserve being \_\_\_\_\_."
- "If you are upset, tell me. I can try to help, but yelling, screaming, and swearing at me does not help." [Back to Top](#)
- "If you treat me like that again, it's over."

## Obedience Is Not Respect

### Nothing Anyone Says or Does Is A Reason For You To Be Abusive

You deserve to be liked and respected. Using force, power, or control only gets "your way." This is not how to get respect.

### If You Push Your Partner Around, You May Get Your Way, But You Lose Your Partner's Respect, Support, and Love.

#### If You Are Crossing The Line, STOP!

If you can't stop, get help.

- A teacher, coach, or counselor at school can help you learn how to treat your partner with respect.
- A spiritual leader or an adult at an after-school activity or club can help you learn how to control emotions (/english/health-issues/conditions/emotional-problems/Pages/default.aspx), like anger or jealousy, and avoid abusive behavior.

By changing your behavior, you can get the true respect, support, and love that you deserve.

**Last Updated** 11/2/2009

**Source** Connected Kids: Safe, Strong, Secure (Copyright © 2006 American Academy of Pediatrics)

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# CONNECTED KIDS

Safe Strong Secure™

A program of the American Academy of Pediatrics

## BULLYING: IT'S NOT OK

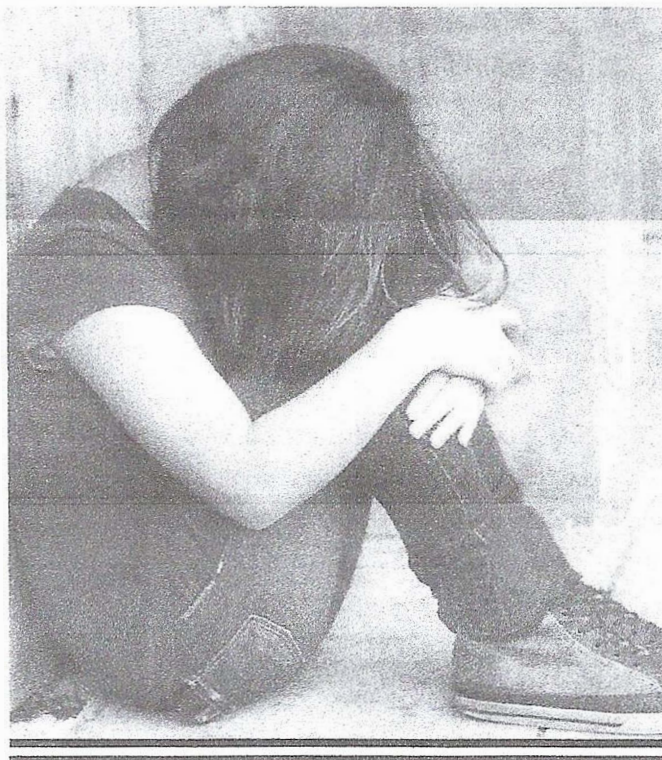
Bullying is when one child picks on another child again and again. Usually children who are being bullied are either weaker or smaller, as well as shy, and generally feel helpless. Some children and youth are at higher risk of being bullied, such as those with disabilities or other special health care needs and those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.

Bullying occurs when there is an imbalance of power. Sometimes children argue with each other or make bad choices in their behavior, which is not bullying.

Cyberbullying occurs electronically, using things like social media sites, texting, chat rooms, or instant messaging. Cyberbullying can happen any time—day or night—and is visible to many more people than traditional bullying. It's very hard to undo or hide what the child who is cyberbullying has done.

### FACTS ABOUT BULLYING

- Both girls and boys can be bullies.
- A child can be both the bully and the victim.
- Bullies target children who cry, get mad, or easily give in to them.
- There are 3 types of bullying.
  - Physical—hitting, kicking, pushing, choking, punching
  - Verbal—threatening, taunting, teasing, hate speech (This can also include electronic messaging)
  - Social—excluding victims from activities or starting rumors about them



- Bullying happens
  - At school, when teachers are not there to see what is going on
  - When adults are not watching—going to and from school, on the playground, or in the neighborhood
  - Through electronic methods, such as social networks, texting, and instant messaging

Common characteristics of bullies and victims (from [www.StopBullying.gov](http://www.StopBullying.gov))

Generally, children who are bullied have one or more of the following risk factors:

- Are seen as different from their peers, such as being overweight or underweight, wearing glasses or different clothing, being new to a school, or not having what kids consider “cool”
- Are seen as weak or unable to defend themselves





- Are less popular than others and have few friends
- Do not get along well with others, are seen as annoying or provoking, or provoke others for attention

Those who bully others do not need to be stronger or bigger than those they bully. Often, these students require support to change their behavior and address other challenges that may be influencing their behavior. Children who bully may have more than one of the following characteristics:

- Are aggressive or easily frustrated
- Have less parental involvement
- Have issues at home
- Think badly of others
- Have difficulty following rules
- View violence in a positive way
- Have friends who bully others

**EFFECTS OF BULLYING**

Children who experience any kind of bullying—including cyberbullying—can experience long-term effects, even into adulthood. Bullying can have consequences for both the bully and the victim, who

- Have a higher risk of substance use
- Are more likely to skip or drop out of school
- Can have health complications
- Have poor school performance
- Experience depression or other mental health challenges

**TALK WITH YOUR CHILD ABOUT BULLYING**

Even if you don't think your child is bullied, a bully, or a bystander, you will be helping protect your child just by asking these questions.

- How are things going at school?
- What do you think of other kids in your class?
- Does anyone get picked on or bullied?
- What is lunchtime like? (or recess)
- Is anyone texting, tweeting, or posting mean things on social networks?

**HELP YOUR CHILD RESIST BULLYING**

You cannot always help your child avoid all bullying, but you can help him build coping skills to deal with difficult situations. Spend time with your child, show him love and encouragement, and model good behavior toward others. Talk through difficult situations with your child so he knows he can trust you with his problems.

**WHEN YOUR CHILD IS BULLIED**

It can be upsetting to find out your child has been bullied. Let her know you are there for her, willing to listen, and taking action to make sure it doesn't continue. Here are some things you can do.

- *Help your child learn how to respond.* For example, "Let's talk about what you can do and say if this happens again."
  - Look the bully in the eye.
  - Stand tall and stay calm.
  - Walk away.
  - Not respond to electronic messages and cut off communications with those who are sending unwanted messages.
  - Show bullying texts, posts, or e-mails to a parent or other trusted adult.





- Teach your child how to say in a firm voice.
  - "I don't like what you are doing."
  - "Please do not talk to me like that."
  - "Why would you say that?"

For many children, these skills do not come naturally. It is like learning a new language—lots of practice is needed. Practice so, in the heat of the moment, these skills will come to your child naturally.

- **Teach your child when and how to ask for help.** Your child should not be afraid to ask an adult for help when bullying happens. Since some children are embarrassed about being bullied, parents need to let their children know being bullied is not their fault.
- **Encourage your child to make friends with other children.** There are many adult-supervised groups, in and out of school, that your child can join. Invite your child's friends over to your home.
- **Support activities that interest your child.** By participating in activities such as team sports, music groups, or social clubs, your child will develop new abilities and social skills. When children feel good about how they relate to others, they are less likely to be picked on.
- **Alert school officials to the problems, and work with them on solutions.** Since bullying often happens outside the classroom, talk with the principal, guidance counselor, or playground monitors, as well as your child's teachers. Write down and report all bullying, including cyberbullying, to your child's school. By knowing when and where the bullying occurs, you and your child can better plan what to do if it happens again.

**WHEN YOUR CHILD IS THE BULLY**

No parents want to think their child would bully another child, but it does happen and parents must be ready to respond. If you know your child is bullying someone, take it very seriously.

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*Now is the time when you can change your child's behavior.*

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In the long run, bullies continue to have problems. These often get worse. If the bullying behavior is allowed to continue, these children often become adults who are much less successful in their work and family lives and may even get in trouble with the law.

- Help your child understand what bullying is and why it is a problem. Help your child understand how bullying hurts other children. Give real examples of the good and bad results of your child's actions.
- Set firm and consistent limits on your child's aggressive or hurtful behavior. Be sure your child knows that bullying is never OK.
- Be a positive role model. Children need to develop new and constructive ways for getting what they want. All children can learn to treat others with respect.
- Use effective, nonphysical discipline, such as loss of privileges. When your child needs discipline, explain why the behavior was wrong and how your child can change it.
- Find positive ways to stop bullying with the school principal, teachers, counselors, and parents of the children your child has bullied.
- Supervise your child and help develop individual skills and interests. Children with too much "time on their hands" are more likely to find themselves in bad situations.



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## BULLYING: IT'S NOT OK

- Supervise their time online, and monitor what sites they are visiting. Require them to friend you on social media sites and share their passwords with you.
- Ask for help. If you find it difficult to change the behavior, reach out to a professional, like a teacher, counselor, or your child's pediatrician.

It is important for everyone in the community to work together to build a safe environment for all children. Partner with your child's pediatrician, school district, and local community leaders to create anti-bullying messages and policies. Find more information at [StopBullying.gov](http://StopBullying.gov).

### WHEN YOUR CHILD IS A BYSTANDER (with additions from [StopBullying.gov](http://StopBullying.gov)):

Most children are neither bullied nor bullies—they just watch. There are things your child can do to help stop bullying.

- Don't give bullying an audience. Often, those who bully are encouraged by the attention they receive from bystanders. Children can help stop bullying by actively not supporting it.
- Set a good example.
- Help the child who is bullied get away.
- Tell a trusted adult. Talking with an adult is not tattling. Standing up for another child by getting help is an act of courage and safety. To make it easier, suggest taking a friend.
- Be a friend. Children can help someone who's been bullied by simply being nice to him. Being friendly can go a long way toward letting him know that he's not alone.

The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

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