

Woburn & North Andover Pediatric Associates

7 Alfred Street, Baldwin Park II, Woburn, MA 01801 - Phone 781-933-6236, Fax 781-938-8050
800 Turnpike Street, North Andover, MA 01845 - Phone 978-557-5712, Fax 978-557-5406



Routine Physical Exam: 11 - 14 years

Development

- He/she should:

- Develop better memory, solve problems with logical thinking
- Start to understand abstract ideas such as honesty and justice
- Have hobbies, be active in sports, arts, clubs, or church groups
- Assume more responsibilities (babysitting, planning family meals or outings)
- Become more skillful, develop improved speech, accuracy, and dexterity

- Your child is going through many transitions – physically, cognitively, and socially. The onset of puberty marks the beginning of adolescence, typically between 9 – 14 years of age.

- Puberty is a sequence of stages of maturation affecting nearly every body system.

All: enlargement of genitals, body odor, growth spurt, appearance of pubic and underarm hair, and increased muscular strength and endurance

Girls: development of breasts, increased fatty tissue in the buttocks, thighs, breasts, menstruation (at any point from 9-16 years)

Boys: voice changes, facial hair growth

- The ability to solve problems, make good decisions, and cope with stress are extremely important skills for your teen to develop. Help your child set priorities, manage stress, and make progress toward goals.

- Parents who are **accepting, caring, firm, and democratic** have adolescents who are less depressed, enter into risk taking behaviors at a later age, and better succeed academically. Set clear expectations and consequences for unacceptable behaviors.

- Your teen needs 8-10 hours of sleep every night. Teens are very aware of changes in their bodies – they often have increased headaches & fatigue because they need more sleep. Fatigue is often due to overscheduling of activities or disrupted sleep. Help your teen find a balance between school, sports, and activities. Try to keep sleep schedules the same during the week and on weekends. Keep phones and internet capable devices out of the bedroom.

- Adolescents have concerns regarding their body image, establishing their identity, and conflicts between their need for independence from authority figures versus a need to be dependent and nurtured. This often leads to mood swings and conflicts within the family. Try to be **accepting, caring, democratic, and firm**.

- Visit: www.HealthyChildren.org, search topics like “Physical Changes During Puberty”

Safety

- Limit screen time (TV, videogames, computer, iPad, etc.) to less than 2 hour per day.

- Monitor computer games, mobile device use, TV, and internet for use and content. Do not allow TV or internet devices in the bedroom.

- Your child may ride without a booster seat when the adult safety belt fits correctly (across the middle of the chest & shoulder, lap belt is low & snug across the upper thighs and not the belly, back against the vehicle seat back with knees bent over the edge of the seat). All children younger than 13 years should ride in the back seat.

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- Reinforce avoidance of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, diet pills, steroids, and inhalants. Discourage tattooing, body piercing, and tanning beds.
- Discuss safe sex and birth control options. Encourage abstinence as the safest way to prevent pregnancy and avoid sexually transmitted diseases (STD's) including HIV.
- Sports injuries are common. Always wear protective equipment for activities (bikes, scooters): appropriate sized helmet, wrist/elbow/knee pads, mouth guards. Encourage supervised sports activities.
- Ensure smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are working appropriately. Make and practice (1-2 time per year) a plan for escape in case of fire.
- Gun safety can be a tough topic to address but it is important. If it is necessary to keep a gun in your home, be sure it is stored unloaded and securely locked. Ammunition should be stored separately and also locked. Discuss firearm safety with your child.
- Visit: www.HealthyChildren.org, search topics like "Talk to Your Teen About Drugs"; www.CommonSenseMedia.com; www.KidsHealth.org, search "Internet Safety"

Nutrition

- Protein, mineral (including calcium), total calorie, and vitamin needs are reaching adult values. Iron needs are increased further with menstruation. Encourage high iron foods like meats, legumes, and leafy greens. Ensure sufficient calcium intake through low fat or fat free dairy, dark green leafy veggies, beans, and fish.
- Help your child learn to choose appropriate foods, including plenty of fruits and vegetables. Limit high fat or low nutrient foods & beverages.
- Share family meal time to make meal time pleasant, encourage conversation, and avoid distractions at the dinner table (no TV or mobile devices).
- This is often a time when there is rebellion against previous family eating habits. Your teen may choose snacks, fast foods, or alternative diets (vegetarian, vegan, etc.) as a major source of nutrition.
- Dietary supplements to gain or lose weight are not recommended.
- Your child should try to get at least 1 hour of exercise each day.
- Visit: www.ChooseMyPlate.gov; www.HealthyChildren.org, search "Nutrition and Supplement Use"

Family/Social and Behavior

- Peer groups become increasingly important to providing a sense of acceptance, support, belonging. Beware of how your teen's friends are influencing him/her, as there can be negative aspects too. Watch for: changes in mood, drop in school performance, change in peer group. If you have concerns about depression, substance use, eating disorders, or school problems, please talk to your child's pediatrician.
- Get to know your teen's friends and families by encouraging your teen to invite his/her friends into your home.

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- Discuss your expectations regarding curfews, parties, dating, drinking, smoking, etc. Discuss risk taking dangers and peer influenced activities (dares, "showing off", sexual activity, substance use). Be clear and firm about the consequences for unacceptable behaviors.