



# The Best You!

## Preteens Making Smart Choices

PATIENT EDUCATION



BARBARA WOODWARD LIPS  
PATIENT EDUCATION CENTER



# Get Set for a Healthy Life!

When you were younger, you probably didn't think about going to the doctor or being healthy. But now is the perfect time to start. **Learning how to take good care of yourself now will help you be healthier and happier for the rest of your life.**

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## Hang onto this

You'll go through a lot of changes over the next few years. Hold onto this information. If you ever have any health questions, you can always talk to your doctor or another member of your care team. Your health care team is here to help you!

# About Your Doctor's Appointments

## Did you know...

- ▶ That it's important to see your doctor at least once every two years for regular check-ups?
- ▶ That your doctor(s) may ask your parent(s) to leave the room, for at least part of your visit? They do that in case you have some questions you don't want to ask in front of your parents.

Even if your mom or dad stays in the room, **your doctor wants to hear from you!**

## Your doctor may ask you...

- ▶ How are you feeling? Any injuries lately? Any headaches, stomachaches or other pain?
- ▶ Are you usually happy or sad or angry?
- ▶ Is there anything that worries or scares you?
- ▶ How's school? Any problems with teachers, classes, homework, or other kids?
- ▶ Do you feel safe at school? At home?
- ▶ Are you curious about something that someone has told you about?
- ▶ Has anyone tried to make you do something that made you feel uncomfortable?
- ▶ Has anyone asked you to try alcohol, tobacco or drugs? Have you tried them?
- ▶ How much sleep do you usually get each night?
- ▶ What do you like to do when you have free time?

Your health care providers just want to learn a bit about you and your daily life so they can help you be safe and healthy as you grow into your teen years.

## If there's anything you don't understand

Ask your doctor or nurse to explain. Don't rely on your parents to ask questions. The doctor really wants to know what **YOUR** questions are!



## what you need to know...

At this age, it's really important that you know all about:

- ▶ Any medical condition you have, like diabetes, anxiety or asthma.
- ▶ Medications you take and why you take them.
- ▶ Any allergies you have. You also need to know what an allergic reaction looks like.

If you want to do things on your own — go to camp, stay overnight at a friend's house, go on a class trip — you need to know your health information so you can stay safe.

You need to be able to tell other people about your health **in case you have an emergency when your family isn't around.**

# Staying Healthy

Eating well & moving more

## *Taking care of you*

Get into the habit of doing things that are good for you now, and it will be easier for you to stay healthy as you get older. This section talks about some basics to keep your body in top form and help you feel good — now and later.

# 5210

5

Eat five servings of fruit and vegetables each day.

2

Limit your daily RECREATIONAL screen time to two hours or less. This includes watching TV, playing video games, goofing off on the computer, and anything else that puts you in front of a screen. This does not include time on the computer doing homework. Even if you've used all of your daily "rec" screen time, you still have to do your homework.

1

Move your body – in whatever activity you like – at least one hour a day.

0

Drink zero sugary drinks like pop.

## Getting your Zzzz's

A good night's sleep can give you energy, help you think more clearly and help you learn better. Basically, it can keep your body running the way it should.

As a preteen, **you need nine to ten hours of sleep** every night to feel rested. Try these tips to help you get it:

- ▶ Have a regular bedtime and wake time every day.
- ▶ If you have to wake up early for an event, change your bedtime the night before so you can still get the amount of sleep you need.
- ▶ If you nap, make it 30 minutes or less.
- ▶ Keep electronics out of your bedroom. Use your room mainly for sleeping.
- ▶ If you have a cell phone or other electronic devices, **turn it all off (not on vibrate) before bedtime.**
- ▶ Don't put off homework until right before bed.
- ▶ Do something relaxing to wind down about 30 minutes before you go to bed. (Watching TV doesn't count because it doesn't allow your mind to relax.)



## Keeping clean

As your body changes, your sweat glands rev up and bacteria on your skin makes your sweat smell stronger than it used to. **But you can get rid of body odor in three easy steps:**

- 1.** Take a shower or bath daily.
- 2.** Consider wearing underarm deodorant to hide the smell or antiperspirant to prevent sweat. Some products do both.
- 3.** Wear clean clothes every day.

# Staying Healthy

## Clearing up acne

**Acne** — also called pimples, blackheads, whiteheads, and zits — is very common in preteens. As you grow, your skin makes more oil. The extra oil can clog the tiny holes on the surface of your skin (pores) and lead to pimples. Here's how to handle acne:

### **Wash**

Gently wash your face once or twice a day with warm water and facial cleanser. Don't overdo it. Washing more often could irritate your skin and cause more acne. Be sure to wash before you go to bed.

### **Don't squeeze**

It can make your acne worse! It can also create scars.

### **Try acne cream**

If acne keeps coming back or if it bothers you, try an acne cream that you can buy without a prescription.

### **See your doctor**

Most acne doesn't need a doctor's attention. If acne cream doesn't work, or if breakouts get worse, see your doctor.



## Being "sun smart"

Sun safety may seem like an easy choice to make. You've probably been wearing sunscreen since you were a baby. But at your age, an adult might not put sunscreen on you anymore, and there may not always be someone around to remind you to do it yourself.

It's as easy as "ABC."

- A. = AWAY.** Stay away from the sun during the middle of the day, especially 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. when its rays are strongest.
- B. = BLOCK.** Block the sun from your skin with sunscreen that has a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher. Put on more sunscreen every two hours and after you go swimming or have been sweating.
- C. = COVER.** Cover up with a t-shirt, a wide-brim hat and sunglasses when you're outside.



Why bother? Because...

- Sunburns can really hurt.
- Kids who get severe sunburns are more likely to get skin cancer when they're adults.
- You'll look better. Too much sun causes your skin to age faster, making it wrinkled and leathery.

Tanning isn't safe either!

Even if you think a tan looks good, **no tan is healthy!** It doesn't matter whether you get a tan from sunbathing, a tanning bed or just being outdoors without sunscreen. Protect your skin whenever you're outdoors and **never** use a tanning bed.

# Puberty

*This really is a good thing...*

During your preteen years, your body may start to change from being a kid body to an adult body. It may not be “fun” some days. But, believe it or not, puberty is an amazing, exciting time of growth for your body and your brain!

## WHEN?

There’s no “right time” or “right way” to go through puberty. Everyone is different, and that’s normal. Girls usually start puberty earlier than boys. Typically, it starts between 8 and 13 years old. For boys, puberty usually starts between 9 and 14. But if you don’t start puberty by the time you’re 13 or 14, this doesn’t mean that something’s wrong. Lots of kids fall outside of the typical age ranges.

## HOW?

Puberty is triggered by chemicals in your body called hormones.

- ▶ Hormones cause physical changes your body.
- ▶ Hormones can also cause your moods to change — and sometimes they can switch really fast! You might get mad, sad or lonely more often than you used to. You may be confused or scared about the changes you’re going through. Dealing with mood swings may not be easy. But these mood changes are normal, and they will get better over time.



## WHY?

Puberty happens so you can grow and become an adult. Physically, that means your body is bigger, and it can help make a baby. Emotionally, it means your feelings and moods may be different than when you were younger.

## WHERE?

You’re going to notice changes all over your body. Keep reading for more about that.

## for both boys & girls:

- ✓ **Height:** You're probably going to get taller during puberty. It may happen really fast or at a slower pace. It's all normal.
- ✓ **Weight:** Most people gain weight during puberty. For boys, that's often because your shoulders get broader and you get more muscle in your body. For girls, your hips get wider and your body starts building up more fat. These changes are all good.
- ✓ **Hair:** You're going to start getting hair in the area between your legs (your pubic area) and in your armpits. The hair on your legs may get thicker. Some boys will start to grow hair on their face and chest now too.



# Puberty

## for boys:

- Your voice gets lower. Don't be surprised if it "cracks" once in a while when you're talking. That happens to all the guys.
- You may have some swelling or tenderness in your chest. This won't last. As your body grows, it will go away.
- Your penis and testes (genitals) get larger.
- You may notice that your penis gets hard or stiff sometimes. That's called an erection. It can happen anytime. It may seem to happen for no reason.
- You may ejaculate while you're sleeping. When semen (a mixture of sperm and other fluid) comes out of your penis, it's called an "ejaculation." During puberty, many boys ejaculate while they're sleeping. This is called a wet dream. Don't worry, it's normal. It'll stop when you get older.
- Once you begin to ejaculate, if you have sex with a girl you could get her pregnant.

## Now is not the time to pick on other kids

Because everyone changes at different times in different ways during puberty, the differences in people can be really obvious. Making fun of someone — such as pulling on a girl's bra or mimicking a boy's cracking voice — are mean ways to treat someone who's just going through a normal part of life. Be nice — be respectful to others. Puberty can be rough. You wouldn't want other kids to be mean to you, would you?



## FOR girls:

- ▶ Your breasts start to develop. Your nipples may get fuller and darker first. Sometimes one breast grows more quickly than the other. That's pretty common.
- ▶ Your ovaries begin to release eggs. Once this begins, if you have sex and one of your eggs is fertilized, you could become pregnant. If the egg isn't fertilized, the egg and the lining of your uterus are shed through your vagina. That's your "period," also called a menstrual cycle.
- ▶ Each period typically lasts 2 to 8 days. It's very common for your first few periods to be irregular and unpredictable. Keep track on a calendar when your periods begin. Over time, you'll probably start to see a pattern, so you'll know approximately when to expect the next one. Everyone is different, but many girls get their periods about 20 to 36 days apart.



## "PMS" symptoms

Getting your period can be uncomfortable. You may have premenstrual symptoms (often called "PMS") in the days before your periods begin. You could have some or all of these symptoms from month to month: headache, bloating, feeling tired, mood swings, and breast tenderness. During your period, you may get cramps. Over-the-counter medications like ibuprofen can help. If your symptoms are so bad that they keep you home from school or make it hard for you to do other activities, see your doctor.



# How to Manage Your School Years

## Three ways to make schoolwork a bit easier

- 1. Use a calendar.** Put assignments, due dates and activities on a calendar. Choose an electronic or a paper calendar — whatever works best for you! Does your family keep events on a calendar, too? Add family events that affect you to your calendar. Show your calendar to your parents so they'll know that you have blocked time for homework & other activities.
- 2. Plan ahead.** Once you have your calendar going, figure out when you're going to get everything done. Add notes to your calendar for at least the next 1 or 2 weeks — or more for upcoming big projects. If you have a study hall, use that time to do your homework, and set aside time each evening to finish it. Check your calendar every day.
- 3. Get help when you need it.**
  - ▶ **Talk to your teachers.** If you're having problems in a class, if you're confused about the directions or you're struggling with your schoolwork, the best person to talk to is usually the teacher. If you're not comfortable doing that or if the problem is bigger than one class, ask your homeroom teacher, an advisory teacher or a lead teacher to help.
  - ▶ **See your guidance counselor.** Most middle schools have a guidance counselor. You can go to this person for any issue: school, friends, feelings, family issues, and anything else that's on your mind.
  - ▶ **Get help from parents or others.** If you've tried to work on a problem by yourself and it hasn't helped, ask someone else for help. Some schools have regular hours after school when staff or older students are available to help.



## Don't panic

Lots of kids get nervous about school. When you're anxious or scared about something that isn't dangerous, the best way to handle it is to practice dealing with it until it becomes routine or boring. For example:

**If this happens:** The thought of trying to get your locker open makes you sick to your stomach.

**Try this:** Go to school before classes start and practice the combination. (P.S. This is a common issue for kids!)



**If this happens:** You're having a hard time finding your classes.

**Try this:** Stay after school and walk through each day's class schedule, including trips to your locker.

**If this happens:** You get so nervous during tests that you "freeze up" and can't remember anything.

**Try this:** This is a common problem for kids of all ages. Start to study for the test a few days before; don't wait until the night before to do it. Keep your self-talk positive, such as, "I know this subject. I can do this!" Also, tell your teachers and guidance counselor that you get nervous about tests. Many schools offer help to students who have trouble taking tests.

The idea is to take control...

of whatever is worrying you (making you anxious). Get comfortable with it. Sometimes that's all you need to do to calm your nerves.

# Activities

## It's all about making choices

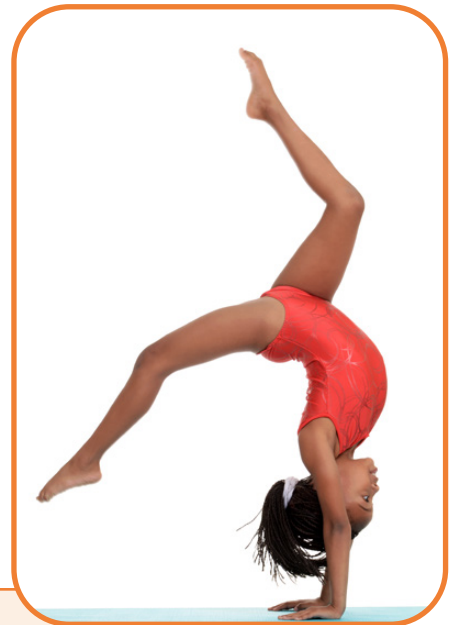
You have a lot of choices about what to do with your time when you're not in school. You could consider:

- Clubs such as yearbook, newspaper, glee, and foreign languages.
- Community or volunteer activities, such as reading to kids at the library, walking an elderly neighbor's dog, visiting people in a nursing home, helping with house and yard work for a person who has a disability.
- Singing or playing a musical instrument.
- Sports, dancing or cheerleading.
- Theater.

Maybe you're looking to try something new. Maybe you want to take your participation in an activity to a higher level. **Getting involved can be a fun way to use your talents, develop new skills and make new friends.**

To help figure out if an activity is right for you, ask yourself a few questions:

- Is it something I'm interested in?
- Am I willing to commit the time it will require?
- Am I doing it because I want to?
- Can I fit it into my schedule and get all my schoolwork done?



## It's not a lifetime commitment

Sometimes it may seem like you just can't stop doing something, even if you want to. For example...

Sarah has been in gymnastics since she was three. Her mom and dad think it's great. She used to love it, too. But now that she's 11, it's not so fun anymore. She has to be at the gym four nights a week. She'd like to try out for a part in the school play, but she can't do both. Sarah's parents have spent lots of time and money on practices, fees and uniforms. She feels guilty. Her coach says, "Winners never quit."

# If you think you want to change your activities...

## but you aren't sure how, try these steps:

- **Think about your current activity.** Do you want to quit entirely? If not, maybe you can decrease the amount of time you spend on it or take your level of competition down. Maybe you can take a few months off and see how you feel later.
- **Be realistic.** Almost every activity takes hard work and commitment. You'll likely get worn out and tired of everything at some point. But if you can honestly say you just aren't interested in that activity or you don't enjoy it most of the time, then it may be time to move on.
- **Think about your timing.** Remember the other people who may be relying on you. For example, to drop out of the school play a week before the performance or quit your basketball team halfway through the season wouldn't be fair to the others who count on you. You may need to finish what you've started. Then think about what you want in the future.
- **Is there a different activity you want to try now?** If yes, stop to think about the commitment, effort, enthusiasm, and timing it would demand of you. Be sure you're ready for that before you talk to your parents. (If you don't want to try a new activity now, move on to the next step.)
- **Be honest.** Talk to your parents about what you're thinking and how you feel about this. Tell them specifically why you want to make a change. If you want to try something else, tell them why that activity would be different than this one. Listen to your parent's thoughts and feelings. Work with your parents to decide what's best for you.



### Keep it positive

No matter what activity you do, you can make it a good experience for everyone!

- Show **respect** to everyone involved, including the adults in charge.
- **Encourage** the other kids around you.
- If your activity involves competition, be a **gracious** winner and loser.
- Be willing to **work hard** and **learn**.

# Relationships

## The friendship factor

Getting to know a lot of people can be fun. But if you want to have REAL friendships, choose your friends wisely.

### A real friend would:

- Like you the way you are.
- Make you feel comfortable.
- Treat you with kindness and respect.
- Be honest with you.



### A real friend won't:

- Ask you to do something you know is wrong, like skipping school, being mean to others or using alcohol.
- Make you feel unsafe.
- Do things that make you uncomfortable.
- Demand that you change something about yourself.

## Letting some friendships go...

- **If one of your friends treats you badly or makes you feel bad about yourself**, find someone else to hang out with. No “friend” should ever make you feel bad about yourself!
- **If you no longer have a lot in common with old friends**, as you get older and make new friends, you may discover that you don't have as much in common with some of your “old” friends. It's natural for friendships to change and for some friendships to end as you mature.

## Cliques & peer pressure

A “clique” (pronounced “click”) is a group of people who don’t let many other people into the group. If the people you hang out with talk about deciding “who’s in” and “who’s out,” that’s not just a “group of friends.” It’s more like a clique. Do you really want to be part of that?

It can feel great to be part of a group. But sometimes “a tight group” pressures its members into doing things that are wrong — or at least things that aren’t right for you. That’s peer pressure.

For example...

- A couple of boys at school come up to you at your locker and one hands you a pair of running shoes. “Hide these,” he whispers. “They’re Ryan’s. We can’t wait to see the look on his face when he can’t find them.” Then they laugh and walk away.
- During study hall, a friend who’s in your math class sits down next to you. “Have you finished today’s assignment?” she asks. You nod. “Let me take a look. I didn’t have time to get mine done. If I turn it in late, I’ll get into huge trouble.”



## what do you do?

Some kids go along with peer pressure because they want to fit in or they’re afraid of being teased if they don’t. If you’ve been pressured before, you probably know that the best way to avoid it is to plan ahead. If you’re asked to do something that you don’t want to do, be strong and stand up for yourself. You can just say, “No thanks,” and walk away. You don’t have to explain anything else.

If you see a friend being pressured to do something they don’t want to do, it can be powerful to simply walk away together. **Real friends won’t make you go against what you believe in.**

# Relationships

## stop bullying

When someone does something on purpose to hurt another person, that's bullying. Bullying can be just a one-time thing. But it often happens more than once to the same person.

Bullying can include any of the following things:

- Teasing.
- Insults.
- Leaving someone out of a conversation, group or event.
- Spreading gossip or rumors.
- Sending mean, threatening or hurtful messages or photos through e-mail, text messages or online social networks.
- Physical violence, like pushing, shoving, hitting, or kicking.
- Playing mind games — like promising to be someone's friend, but then making fun of that person.



## Are you...

- **Bullying other kids?** Take another look at the list above. Have you done any of these things? If so, the people around you may think you're a bully, particularly if you've acted this way more than once. What does it say about you if you'll go out of your way to hurt another person? What you're doing is wrong. It can cause long-lasting damage to others and to you. Talk to an adult you trust about what's going on. Find a way to stop it.
- **Being bullied?** Talk to an adult you trust right away! You don't deserve mean treatment. You shouldn't have to put up with it. You don't have to deal with it alone.
- **Standing by?** If you see bullying happening and don't say anything, you are part of the problem. Your silence encourages the bully to keep it up and gives him or her power. Don't stand around and watch it. Don't encourage it. Don't take part in it in any way. If you see bullying happening, tell your teacher or guidance counselor at school, or talk to your parents.

## Speak up!

### **Bullying hurts — everyone**

If you're part of bullying in any way, it can hurt you. Kids involved in bullying — those who are bullied, the bystanders and the bullies themselves — have a higher chance as they get older of:

- Feeling badly about themselves (low self-esteem).
- Having a hard time trusting others.
- Doing poorly in school.
- Suffering from depression or anxiety.

### **Kids aren't the only ones who bully**

Adults sometimes bully, too, and that's not OK. If an adult in your life is consistently unkind to you, unfairly singles you out, or treats you in ways that embarrass or threaten you, talk to another adult you trust right away.

# Relationships

## Are you thinking about dating?

Before you go too far down that road, talk to your parents. Let them know what “going out” or “dating” means to you. Is it talking on the phone? Texting a lot? Meeting up at a football game or a school dance? Don’t be surprised if your parents have questions too, as well as some rules about dating. Talking with them can be a good thing. It may help you feel prepared for spending more time with the opposite sex.

**The preteen years are pretty early to start dating seriously.** It may be more fun to just meet a lot of different people and spend time with groups of friends. You have a lot of time ahead to get to know some of those new friends better.

## Decide what's right for you

Even if you agreed to “go out” with someone, you should never feel pressured into doing something you don’t want to do!

- If you feel uncomfortable about something: try to talk to the other person about it.
- If you feel threatened or unsafe at any time: get away and be safe. Then tell your parents or another adult you trust. (That’s really important to do!) Get out of that relationship right away.
- If you want to stop dating: that’s fine. Like other friendships, it’s normal for dating relationships to end. Just be honest and respectful when ending a relationship.



## wondering whether you're gay or lesbian?

It's common during the preteen years to begin to think about who you're attracted to. If you're not sure who that may be, that's okay. Maybe you're wondering whether you are gay or lesbian. Or maybe you're wondering about some other feelings and thoughts you have.

### **Sure, it's easy to talk to your friends...**

But if you want some **SIMPLE, HONEST ANSWERS** about your growth and development — or any other health topics — you can get them from your doctor.

You can ask to talk to your doctor alone — without a parent in the room. And you can ask about keeping the talk private.

If you can't get in to talk to your doctor, be sure to talk to an adult you trust. It's better to ask a few questions than to be curious or confused!



# Dealing With Your Feelings

C A L M Cheerful  
Happy Confused  
sad Annoyed MAD  
Excited Frustrated

Having lots of different emotions — sometimes for no clear reason — is part of being a preteen. New hormones can cause your feelings to change quickly, without warning. **The feelings you have may surprise or confuse you.**

For example...

- ▶ **When Sam gets home from school, the first thing his dad says nearly every day is, “Start your homework.”** Sam was going to do it anyway; he always does. So why does Dad have to bug him about it? Sam is so frustrated that he throws his full backpack against his bedroom door.
- ▶ **Kelsey has always been a little taller than most of the kids in her class.** But now it bugs her. Sometimes kids make fun of her. And every time, Kelsey’s face turns red and she begins to cry.

Here are some tips to help you ride the rollercoaster of emotions:

- ▶ **Skip the comparisons.** Everyone else does NOT have life figured out. Judging yourself and how you feel on the inside by the way someone else looks on the outside isn’t fair. Lots of kids your age probably feel the same way you do (even if it looks like they don’t).
- ▶ **Don’t let your feelings “rule” your reactions.** Even though you might get angry or sad or frustrated, that doesn’t mean you have to act a certain way. You may feel an emotion strongly, but you have a choice about how you respond to it. Once you say or do something, you can’t take that back. So pay attention to your feelings, but try not to let them control you.
- ▶ **Be kind — to yourself.** If you blow up at someone or do something you wish you hadn’t, give yourself a break. It happens to everyone sometimes. Take responsibility and apologize if you need to. Then move on.

## Mirror, mirror...

The way you feel about your body and how you look can have a big impact on how you feel about yourself overall. So remember . . .

### What's on "screens" isn't real!

It may be tempting to compare yourself to the people you see on TV, on-line and in magazines. But that's not a fair comparison. Many celebrities have had plastic surgery or other treatments to change their looks. And most photos have been air-brushed or changed in some way. **What you see probably isn't a "real" person. It's an image someone created to help them get attention or get a job.**

### Everyone feels self-conscious

It may seem like all the people around you notice every change in you. But if they're your age, they are probably going through the same thing and are focusing on their own changes, not yours.

### You need to focus on healthy choices

Don't skip meals or go on a diet because you think you need to lose weight. To grow the way you should, your body needs a regular schedule of nutritious foods.



# Dealing With Your Feelings

## Feeling sad?

Sudden mood swings are common for preteens. But if you feel irritable or unhappy most days — if those feelings last for two weeks or more — it may be more than a mood swing. Talk to your parents or another adult you trust and ask to make an appointment to see your doctor. He or she can help you figure out what's going on.

Being sad once in a while is OK.  
But if it affects...

how you handle your daily life, tell a trusted adult. If you ever have thoughts of killing yourself or if you think you can't live anymore, **get help right away.** Tell a trusted adult, tell your doctor or call the suicide prevention lifeline: 988 or 1-800-273-8255.

**If you know someone who is thinking about suicide or has attempted suicide, tell an adult you trust. You may worry that your friend will get mad. But when it involves a life-threatening situation, getting help is what a real friend does!**



## Feeling anxious?

### Everyone gets a little worried sometimes

Feeling nervous, scared or worried is called anxiety. A little anxiety can sometimes help you — it can motivate you to do your best at school and at home.

**But too much worry for too long is not good.**

Feeling anxious should not keep you from doing what you want or need to do.

**If you think anxiety is getting in the way of your daily life, tell your parents, doctor or someone you trust.**



## How do you know if your anxiety is a problem?

If you:

- Become anxious even when you are safe.
- Worry about things that will probably not happen.
- Are more afraid of something than most people.
- Feel nervous most of the time.
- Do something over and over to prevent something bad from happening.
- Avoid doing things or going places.

**If you are feeling or doing any of these things, anxiety might be a problem for you. Your doctor can help you! Tell your parents and make an appointment.**

# Safety

## Be safe

Getting more freedom as you get older can be part of the fun of growing up. But no matter how old you are and no matter how much freedom you have, you need to stay safe.

**People your age have a higher chance than anyone else of getting hurt because of an injury.**

So keep the following safety tips in mind.

### In the car

**True or false:** Once you've outgrown a child safety seat, you're big enough to ride in the front seat of a car. **False. Anyone younger than 13 should sit in the back seat.** The airbags in the front seat of a car are meant to protect an adult-size body. Kids can be seriously hurt in the front seat if an airbag goes off during a crash.

### Buckle up!

On every car trip, no matter how short, wear a safety belt. It could save your life. And in many states, wearing a safety belt is the law.

### On your bike

#### What to do:

- Always wear a helmet.
- Learn hand signals and use them when you turn.
- Ride with traffic.
- At least once a year, have an adult check your bike tires and brakes and adjust the seat and handlebars to the right height.
- Stop and look both ways at intersections and when you approach a street.

#### What NOT to do:

- Never ride at night.
- Don't ride double.

Wear protective gear when you go skiing, skating, sledding, or snowboarding too!



**If it has wheels,  
you need to wear a safety  
belt, a helmet or both!**

## Around the house

Home alone? Use the checklist below to help you stay safe. If you're not sure about some of these, ask your parents before you stay by yourself the next time.

### You should know how to:

- Lock and unlock the doors.
- Use the phone and cell phone.
- Contact your mom, dad or another adult if you need help.
- Work the home security system, if you have one, and know what to do if the alarm goes off.

### You should know what to do if:

- There's a small fire.
- A smoke alarm goes off.
- There's a tornado or other severe weather.
- The electricity goes off in your house.
- A stranger comes to your door.
- Someone calls for a parent who isn't home. (Hint: don't tell anyone that you're home alone or you're babysitting, etc.)



# Safety

## Getting emergency help

In most cities, “911” is the number to call when there’s an emergency. If you’re not sure whether that’s the number to call in your town, check with someone right away.

So how do you know when something is a real emergency?

## Call 911 or your local emergency number when:

- ▶ Someone seems very sick, is having a hard time speaking or breathing, faints, or passes out.
- ▶ There’s been a car accident — you were in it or saw it happen.
- ▶ A house is on fire. (If it’s your house, get out before you call.)
- ▶ You see that someone is being hurt or a crime is taking place.

If your “gut” says something is really wrong, even if you’re not 100% sure it’s an emergency, CALL. You could save someone’s life.

**Never call for emergency help as a joke  
or just to see what will happen!**



## Gun safety

Many homes have guns, and a lot of people use them safely. But guns can be very dangerous too. Follow these tips:

- If you see a gun in your home or someone else's, don't touch it. **Get away from the gun.** Tell an adult if the gun isn't in a secure place. Guns should be locked in a safe or in another secure area; the bullets should be too.
- If you're interested in guns, take a firearms safety course.
- Always assume that a gun is loaded.
- Never pretend to shoot a gun.



### If you don't feel safe...

**TRUST YOUR GUT!** If something doesn't feel right or you're uncomfortable, get away from that situation immediately! Find an adult you trust and ask for help. **Don't face an unsafe situation alone and don't feel like you have to "live with it" because you don't have options. Ask for help. Make sure you get the help you need to feel safe.**

# Internet Safety

## online know-how

Websites, social media, cell phones, and other electronic communication give you access to people and information from all over. That can be exciting, but it's also a big responsibility.

only chat with  
people you know  
"IRL" (in real life)

Is that 13-year-old girl you met in an online chat room really 13? There's no way for you to know. "She" could actually be a 50-year-old man. **Some people online are not who they seem to be.**



Did you know that as many as one in five kids who use chat rooms have "met" people online who want to harm them? Those people are called "predators." Think about your friends. **One in five kids has been approached by an online predator.** Even if a new online friend says they live just a few miles away and now they want to meet IRL, don't go!

**Don't share personal information  
with anyone you meet online.  
Never, ever agree to meet alone with  
someone you've only known online!**

## Be careful about what you share!

- If a website asks for details about you, **DON'T GIVE OUT THAT INFORMATION**. For example, don't answer questions about your hometown, school name or school mascot, your hobbies, the names of your family members, or your favorite movies and TV shows. Think about who can see that information and why they want it.

**Just because a site asks for details about you, it doesn't mean you have to give out that information! Most of the time, it's better to give less information than more. If you're asked to give someone your personal information, first talk to a parent or another adult you trust.**

- **Some websites have rules about how old you need to be to participate.** Check this out with your parents before you sign on.

- **Keep your parents in the loop.** If something bad happens online, a parent can get help. You should also tell your parent(s) all of your user names and passwords for your e-mail and any other websites you use.

- **Communicate respectfully and gently.** Before you type, ask yourself if it's something you would feel comfortable saying in person. Would you want your parents to read that? If your answers are "No," don't text, e-mail or post it.



- **Don't believe everything you read online.** There's a lot of information online. **Not all of it is true.** It can be hard to figure out which sites you can trust. Instead of relying on the Internet, trust experts you know. For example, if you have questions about your health, talk to a member of your health care team.
- **Forever and ever and ever.** Once you post something on the Internet or send it via text, it's out of your control. You can't get it back, and it can't be erased.

## Think about your future

You may not be worried today about getting a job. But remember: what you post online today **STAYS ONLINE FOREVER**. Someday, a possible employer is going to do a search on your name. Do you want them to see what you're posting now? Do you want your parents, teachers or siblings to see it someday?

# Internet Safety

If someone is bothering you online...

- If it's a fairly minor thing, don't respond. Block that person so they can't send you more messages. If you see them in real life, ignore them. It's okay to ignore people who are bothering you!
- If it's not a minor thing — if someone is pressuring you, threatening you or harassing you online:
  - ◆ Get help ASAP. Don't keep it to yourself. **Some kinds of threats ARE ILLEGAL!** Work with your parents to try to solve the problem. Tell the police if necessary.
  - ◆ Don't try to "get even" by doing something to hurt or embarrass that person. It might make things worse. You might get into trouble too, for threatening the bully.
  - ◆ Do not erase the messages or any photos that were sent to you.
  - ◆ Do not respond to the threats. Show your parents immediately, especially if there's an auto-delete feature on the app that was used.



"Cyber bullying" is a serious issue.

Even if you are worried or embarrassed about what was sent to you or what you did in reply, you have to find an adult you trust to help you! Tell that person everything right away.

# Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs

Do you think  
teens look  
cool when...

they use alcohol, tobacco or other drugs? If you used any of these substances, would it make you more popular? Would it help you fit in better with your peers?



Think again.

These are dangerous (and expensive) habits. Drinking alcohol and smoking are illegal for people your age. Taking “street” drugs — like methamphetamine (meth), ecstasy (X) and others or prescription drugs that aren’t yours — is against the law no matter how old you are. And they’re all really bad for your health.

- **Do you want a job someday?** If you get caught for underage drinking, smoking or using drugs, that crime will stay on your record for a long time. Employers do drug tests and they do a background search looking for arrests. Having an arrest record will greatly limit your job options.
- **Do you want to get good grades?** Using alcohol and drugs can damage your brain. This hurts your ability to learn and messes up your chance at getting a good education. You need a good brain and a good education if you want to have a successful life.
- **Do you want to do sports or other after-school activities?** If someone finds out you’ve been drinking, smoking or using drugs, you’ll probably have to sit out for a while. You may even get kicked out of your activity forever.

**To make it easier, hang out with people who don’t drink, smoke or use drugs.**

Then you won’t have to worry about your friends trying to talk you into doing something that you don’t want to do!

# Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs

More reasons to say no...

## Alcohol:

- Makes you sick.
- Messes with your mind so you do and say dumb things.
- Hurts almost every part of your body.

## Tobacco:

- Stains your teeth.
- Makes your hair, clothing and breath smell awful.
- Is a hard habit to break.
- Makes your skin wrinkle sooner.
- Makes it more likely that you'll get cancer and have other health problems, like heart and lung diseases.

## Drugs:

- Are very hard to quit once you start.
- Are dangerous. Not only are illegal drugs terrible for your health, but there's also no way to know how they're made or what's really in them. Many illegal drugs can kill you, sometimes on the first try.

**Remember:** Prescription medicine should only be taken by the person it was given to. It could be very dangerous for anyone else to take!

## How to say "NO"

If you're offered alcohol, tobacco or drugs, it's hard to know what to say. Keep your answer simple, like:

- *No thanks. I'm not into that.*
- *It makes me sick.*
- *My parents will ground me for months.*
- *I don't want to get kicked out of \_\_\_\_\_.*  
(Add your own sport or other activity.)



## But your parents drink...

Yes, many adults drink alcohol — and it's legal for them to do that. But it's NOT legal for you to drink. Also, many adults can have a few drinks per week, depending on what kind of drinks they are — and it's not a problem for them. But that's not true for you. The fact is that if you are a preteen or teen, your body can't handle alcohol the same as an adult body usually can.

**The younger you are when you begin to use alcohol,  
the more likely you are to get addicted to it.**

People who begin drinking before age 15 are five times more likely to abuse alcohol or become an alcoholic than those who begin drinking after the age of 20. This is a real problem. Stay away from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Please!

## Seriously, talk to your parents.

Ask them what they think about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Ask them what they think you should do if you find yourself around kids who are drinking, smoking or using drugs. Use their ideas to help you decide how you want to handle those moments.



**Even if people around you smoke, drink or use drugs,  
that doesn't mean it's a good idea.**

**Don't give in to peer pressure.**

**Make your own smart choices!**

# Be the Best You!

Follow these steps, and you'll be on your way to a healthy future...

- See your doctor when you need to.
- Move: run, jump, bike, skate, dance, play!
- Eat healthy foods.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Discover your talents.
- Try new things. Find new interests and activities!
- Plan ahead.
- Be kind to yourself and to the people around you.
- Say no to alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.
- Be safe.
- Get help when needed.
- Have fun!



Good Health

EAT WELL Relax

Discover Meaning

SLEEP **move**



## BARBARA WOODWARD LIPS PATIENT EDUCATION CENTER

Mrs. Lips, a resident of San Antonio, Texas, was a loyal Mayo Clinic patient of more than 40 years and a self-made business leader who significantly expanded her family's activities in oil, gas and ranching. Upon her death in 1995, Mrs. Lips paid the ultimate compliment by leaving her entire estate to Mayo Clinic. By naming the Barbara Woodward Lips Patient Education Center, Mayo honors her generosity, her love of learning, her belief in patient empowerment and her dedication to high-quality care.

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