



4171 Westport Rd-Louisville, KY 40207

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www.eastlouisvillepediatrics.com

10-14 year old

Your child is in a period of transition between childhood and adolescence. This is a time of rapid physical and psychological change. Your preteen is, or soon will be, beginning the physical changes of puberty and psychological changes of normal emotional separation from parents and beginning independence of the early teenage years. It's no wonder why parents feel overwhelmed when they think of these changes and are concerned about whether they and their child are prepared.

Children and parents have new feelings and face new situations they've never experienced before.

Parents of 10-14 year olds may find the following skills useful:

- Being available but not pressing your child too far.
- Making every effort to keep lines of communication open, especially helping your child with decision making, talking about "What if" situations to help practice decision making, and conveying the idea that "It's OK to say NO."
- Realizing the rejecting behavior by teens to parents and that some tension on parent-child relationships is part of the child eventually achieving full independence.
- Providing undemanding love and concern.
- Allowing more independence but maintaining suitable limits for teen's safety and well being.
- Spending time with your child and knowing what your child is doing in her/his leisure time and with whom.
- Serving as a model for the ethical, spiritual, and behavioral values that you would like your child to adopt.
- Expressing your feelings to others (when your child is not present) about the sometimes frustrating experience of coping with a teenage child - let off "steam" and get support from your friends and family.
- Maintaining your own "life" and interests.

Remember, much of the distress experienced in adolescence results from the fact that young people are not prepared for and don't understand changes going on within themselves. These changes include their intellectual, physical, hormonal, and emotional development. Familiarizing yourself with the impending changes and sharing the facts with your child will be very helpful in dealing with their concerns and minimizing inadequate and self conscious feelings.

Older children and teens should take more and more responsibility for their health. They can do this by having information. The following areas are important to consider in the health of your child and may be brought up at your regular check-ups.



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Regular Health Care

Preteens and teens should have physical examinations and routine lab work done every two years. At this time we will see each of you together and possible see your child for his/her exam alone. Usually the older a child becomes, the more they prefer to have check-ups without their parent present. We will evaluate your child's health at these visits and answer necessary questions you or your child might have. We will also update immunizations as necessary.

DENTAL

We recommend regular dental check-ups every 6-12 months. Following your dentists advice on tooth care and orthodontia (if necessary) will help your child have healthy teeth for a lifetime. To prevent plaque buildup and cavities, provide fresh fruits and vegetables in your child's diet and avoid the use of sticky sweets and candy at home.

NUTRITION

We hope your child eats proteins, dairy products, fruits, vegetables, and grain products and has an excellent diet. However, we know that many factors can prevent a perfect diet at this age: fast foods, increased use of snacks, outside activities affecting your family meals, particular likes or dislikes, interest in fad food diets, allergies, school lunches, sack lunches, etc.

We appreciate the difficulties in providing a quality diet. Nutritional needs for those who are overweight, underweight, and/or involved in sports might be a concern at this age, and we will be glad to discuss these and other nutritional issues with you.

In general, children do need extra calories at this age to support continued body growth, and they especially need good sources of protein and Iron. At regular check-ups we will chard your child's height and weight to determine if weight is appropriate for height.

SLEEP

Encourage adequate sleep, but allow your child to help you know what amount is right. Children may need extra sleep at this age. If your child seems unable to sleep, or sleeps excessively, or is moody or depressed, please consult us concerning the situation. Teens need 8-9 hours of sleep at night.

SKIN and SCALP CARE

These are areas of special concern because teenagers are very self-conscious. Soaps like Dial, P-300, Safeguard, or Fostex are recommended for acne, and a useful over-the counter acne mediation is Benzyl Peroxide. Sunscreens of a SPF of 15 or more should be used by all.



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EXERCISE

Regular and vigorous exercise at least 4 days a week is necessary for health. We encourage you to value exercise in your own life so your child will! Encourage your child to do more than watch TV and do schoolwork. Reasonable and safe athletic activity should be fostered with your child's overall physical and mental health.

SEXUALITY

Inform yourself, if you don't know, about the physical development of boys and girls and of the body changes for puberty. These changes include menstruation for girls and nocturnal emissions or "wet dreams" for boys. These are normal sexual issues at this age and should be shared with 10-14 year olds. We will be glad to discuss this with you.

It is difficult to recommend any one book for sexual education at this age. We have included some books dealing with this subject on the list below. Other sources of useful books are the public library, school or church. To make sure these books include the information and values you would like to convey to your child, we recommend that you preview any book you plan to use.

MENTAL HEALTH

We hope you enjoy your role as a parent, but also have some time for yourself and your interests. Having friends who support, listen to and renew YOU are essential. Clergymen/women, school counselors, teachers, or other professionals can also offer support and guidance.

Your care for your child is the foundation of their emotional health. A strong foundation enables your child to build his/her strengths and to see him/herself as a valuable person. Children don't usually need to rebel, take drugs, or do other "acting-out" behaviors if they get appropriate attention from parents and have learned that one can have a good time without drugs and/or alcohol.

SAFETY

Accidents are the greatest threat to children. Teaching safety principles and maintaining a constant attitude of sensible living will encourage safety in your home.

- Motor vehicles- teach pedestrian and passenger safety. Using seat belts is essential. Reinforce the dangers of the use of drugs and/or alcohol when operating a motor vehicle.
- Bike safety- promote safety and maintenance of 2 wheeled vehicles, skateboards, roller blades, dirt bikes, etc. Proper protective gear (helmets, knee and elbow pads, etc.) should be emphasized.



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- Trampolines- the American Academy of Pediatrics does NOT recommend trampolines for home use. They are considered safe only in supervised sports programs.
- Weight training- this should be done very carefully. Any organized sports should have adequate supervision and protective equipment.
- Swimming and boating- teach water and swimming safety. Teens should swim with companions and make careful selection of places to swim and dive. For boating, use approved flotation equipment and official life preservers.
- Burn hazards- discuss use of curling irons, clothing irons, tanning beds, heat lamps, sunbathing etc.
- Body respect- discuss use of unsafe substances that can harm the body - especially alcohol, tobacco, drugs. Teach respect for firearms!
- Electrical hazards- discuss proper use of power tools, hairdryers near water, radios, etc.
- Body safety- teach and assess your child's ability to take care of him/herself (See Body Safety handout).

A healthy balance between school, home and other activities such as sports, church, groups, extracurricular activities, etc., can help your child realize his/her potential and have a purposeful life. Almost all children experience some personality or mood swings, lack of feelings of success, depression, or other troubling behaviors. If these behaviors occur more that you expect please discuss this with us.

These and many other subjects may come up through the years between 10 and 14. we are available to discuss your concerns. This following are reference we feel you will find helpful during these years.

References:

Preparing for Adolescence, by James Dobson, Bantam Books, N.Y., 1978. (Christian Perspective)

Period, by JoAnn Gardner- Loulan, Volcano Press, Inc., 1981.

How to Live Almost Happily with a Teenager, by Lois and Joel Davitz, Winston Press, 1982.

Straight Talk about Drugs and Alcohol, by Elizabeth Ryan, Dell Publishers.