



4171 Westport Road  
Louisville, KY 40207

6112 Crestwood Station  
Crestwood, KY 40014

**(502)896-8868**

[www.eastlouisvillepediatrics.com](http://www.eastlouisvillepediatrics.com)

## **Your Ten to Fourteen 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 is no wonder that 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 have 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 the 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 is OK to say NO”.
- ✓ Realizing the rejecting behavior by teens to parents and that some tension in parent-child relationships is a 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 his/her 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.



4171 Westport Road  
Louisville, KY 40207

6112 Crestwood Station  
Crestwood, KY 40014

**(502)896-8868**

[www.eastlouisvillepediatrics.com](http://www.eastlouisvillepediatrics.com)

Remember, much of the distress experienced in adolescence results from the fact that young people are not prepared for and do not 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. The following areas are important to consider in the health of your child and may be brought up at your regular check-ups.

### **Healthcare**

Preteens and teens should have physical examinations every year. At this time, we will see each of you together and possibly see your child for his/her first exam alone. Usually the older the child becomes, the more they prefer to have check-ups without their parents present. We will evaluate your child's health at these visits and answer any necessary questions you or your child may have. We will also update immunizations as necessary. At 11 years of age, your child will need immunizations including Tdap (Adacel), Menactra, and possibly a Varicella booster. Also, the AAP recommends that both girls AND boys get the Gardasil series to protect against HPV. If you have questions about any of the immunizations your child may need, please ask.

### **Dental**

We recommend regular dental check-ups every six months. Following your dentist's 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, soda, and candy at home.

### **Nutrition**

We hope your child eats proteins, dairy products, fruits, vegetables, and whole grain products. However, we know that many factors can prevent a perfect diet at this age: fast foods,



4171 Westport Road  
Louisville, KY 40207

6112 Crestwood Station  
Crestwood, KY 40014

**(502)896-8868**

[www.eastlouisvillepediatrics.com](http://www.eastlouisvillepediatrics.com)

increased use of snacks, outside activities affecting your family meals, particular likes and dislikes, interest in fad food diets, allergies, school lunches, and sack lunches.

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. 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 continues body growth and they especially need good sources of protein and iron. At regular check-ups we will graph your child's height and weight including their BMI (Body Mass Index) to determine if their weight is appropriate for their 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, sleeps excessively, or is moody or depressed please consult us concerning the situation. Most teens need 8-9 hours of sleep every night.

### **Skin and Scalp Care**

Skin and scalp care are areas of special concerns because teenagers are very self-conscious. Soaps like Dove are recommended for acne. A useful over the counter acne medication is benzoyl peroxide. Sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or more should be used.

### **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 too. Encourage your child to do more than watch TV and do school work. Reasonable and safe athletic activity should be fostered with your child's overall physical and mental health.



4171 Westport Road  
Louisville, KY 40207

6112 Crestwood Station  
Crestwood, KY 40014

**(502)896-8868**

[www.eastlouisvillepediatrics.com](http://www.eastlouisvillepediatrics.com)

## **Sexuality**

Inform yourself, if you don't know, about the physical development of boys and girls and of the body changes of 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 your child. We will be glad to discuss any questions you may have. You may also find books useful during this time. We have listed some in our suggested reading section. We recommend you preview any book you plan to use.

## **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.

- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Promote safety and maintenance of two-wheeled vehicles, skateboards, roller blades, dirt bikes, etc. Proper protective gear (helmets, knee pads, and elbow pads) should be emphasized.
- ✓ The AAP does NOT recommend trampolines for home use. They are considered safe only in supervised sports programs.
- ✓ Weight training should be done very carefully. Any organized sports should have adequate supervision and protective equipment.
- ✓ Teach water and swimming safety. Teens should swim with companions and make careful selection of places to swim and dive. For boating, use approved floatation equipment and official life preservers.
- ✓ Discuss the use of curling and flat irons, clothing irons, tanning beds, heat lamps, and sunbathing, etc.



4171 Westport Road  
Louisville, KY 40207

6112 Crestwood Station  
Crestwood, KY 40014

**(502)896-8868**

[www.eastlouisvillepediatrics.com](http://www.eastlouisvillepediatrics.com)

- ✓ Discuss the use of unsafe substances that can harm the body including alcohol, drugs, and tobacco.
- ✓ Teach respect for firearms.
- ✓ Discuss the proper use of power tools, hairdryers near water, etc.
- ✓ Teach and assess your child's ability to take care of him/herself (See Body Safety Handout).

### **A Few Words on Being a Parent**

We hope you enjoy your role as a parent but also have some time for yourself and your interests. Having friends who support you, listen to you, 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 for 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.

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 feeling of success, depression or other troubling behaviors. If these behaviors occur more than you expect please call to discuss the issue with us.

These and many other subjects come up between the ages of 10-14. We are available to discuss your concerns. The following are references we feel you may find helpful during these years.

### **Suggested Reading**

**NEXT CHECKUP: YEARLY**