



ADOLESCENT CARE FROM 12 TO 14 YEARS

www.northfultonpediatrics.com

770-442-1050

SUGGESTED DIET: Offer your adolescent selections from the basic food groups at all meals and snacks. They should follow the same recommended low fat, low cholesterol diet that you do. It is not necessary to totally eliminate higher fat foods from their diet, rather serve them in moderation and balance them with more frequent servings of lower fat choices.

Milk & Dairy Products: At the peak of their growth spurt, both boys and girls need a daily calcium intake of 1300 milligrams. In order to meet this calcium requirement, they should consume 4-6 servings of dairy products each day. 1% or skim milk is recommended. Other milk products include low fat yogurt, cottage cheese, ice cream & frozen yogurt. Calcium fortified orange juice is one good alternative for those who won't drink much milk. There are also calcium supplements such as Viactiv or Caltrate. These products are absorbed well by most individuals.

Meat/Protein: 6-8 ounces per day of meat, fish, eggs, legumes or nuts.

Fruits & Vegetables: Fill half the plate with fruits and vegetables. 3 servings a day of fruit / 4 servings of vegetables.

Breads & Cereals: 5-6 servings per day of whole grains such as wheat cereal, brown rice or oatmeal. A serving is 1 slice of bread, 1 ounce of cereal or ½ cup pasta or rice.

- Limit "empty" calorie snacks such as soda, chips, candy and cookies. Encourage selections such as fresh fruit, vegetables, nuts, cheese, popcorn & yogurt.
- Encourage your adolescent to choose their fast foods carefully. Most of these items are high in calories and fat. Select items like grilled chicken or salads with lower fat dressing.
- Limit soda intake since it can lower the level of calcium that your body absorbs.
- Crash dieting is a common response to adolescent's obsession with self-image and appearance, and it can be hazardous to their health. Teach them that a more sensible approach is to increase activity and gradually decrease calorie and fat intake. The weight is much more likely to stay off this way.
- Discuss your child's interest in special diets (vegetarian) with us.
- Vitamins: 600 IU of vitamin D is recommended daily.

SLEEP

Adolescents require approximately 9 hours of sleep per night. With the combination of homework, TV, sports, and social activities, many adolescents are sleep deprived. Encourage regular bedtimes especially during the school year.

ACTIVITY – A WAY OF LIFE

- Physical activity should become as routine a part of their lives as eating and sleeping. Set a good example by making it part of your life too.
- Exercise increases cardiovascular endurance, improves large muscle strength, and increases flexibility.
- Organized sports are an important way to enhance self-esteem. For some kids, individual sports such as dance, cycling, or even walking, may fit their lifestyle.
- Don't let the TV, video, or computer become a major pastime for your children. Monitor what they watch as well as how much (2 hours a day maximum) time they spend watching TV, computer, and video games. Scrutinize their internet usage closely.

ACADEMIC SUCCESS/RESPONSIBILITIES

In the midst of their search for independence and separation from their family, you remain an important influence in your adolescent's life.

- Set high (but realistic) expectations for your adolescent and let them know that you expect them to work up to their capabilities.
- Take an active interest in their schoolwork; assist them when problems occur or with study skills.
- Praise them for achievement and help them get back on track when they fall short of what's expected of them.
- Attend school curriculum meetings, teacher conferences, and school activities.
- Assist your adolescent in prioritizing the tasks and activities in their life, making sure that their homework and home responsibilities come first, ahead of television, phone calls and social activities. Time management is a valuable lesson to learn.
- School failure or decline should prompt you to consider possible substance abuse or depression.

DISCIPLINE

- It is important that your adolescent has increasing independence with appropriate limits set for their safety and well-being.
- Discipline is not synonymous with punishment but consists of education and training for self-control and preparation for adulthood. It involves rewards and privileges, restrictions, and delaying gratification.
- Set fair rules with appropriate limits, and be consistent in enforcing them. Write them down as a reminder for all.

GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

- Commit yourself to really listening to your adolescent and give them your full attention, maintain eye contact and avoid distractions. Ask questions and try to see why they feel the way they do.
- Choose your words carefully so you are not misunderstood. Be specific. Avoid condescending language.
- Find as many situations as possible in which you can give praise and approval.
- Don't try to problem-solve in the heat of anger. If it becomes a shouting match, stop, and revisit the subject later when both sides have calmed down. Take time to think about consequences for misbehavior.
- Don't pretend to know all of the answers. When you are wrong, admit it. Apologize if you make a mistake.
- Show your adolescent that you really care; be affectionate, and express your unconditional love.
- Continue to make the extra effort to keep the communication flowing – even when you feel that they are not doing their part.

PEER GROUPS AND FRIENDS

- All adolescents have a need to belong and be accepted by peers.
- They become very focused on social life, friends and school.
- Close friendships with members of the same sex are developed.

- Most enjoy doing activities with a peer group that may have members of both sexes.
- Make an effort to get to know your adolescent's friends.
- Be sure all of their activities are properly supervised or chaperoned.

PUBERTY

- Both boys and girls have pubertal concerns, so talk to them about these changes prior to their occurrence so they will be prepared (examples: menstruation, use of tampons, wet dreams).
- Be sensitive to their need for privacy.
- Girls first show changes in breast development, body hair, broadening of hips; menstruation will begin about 2 years later. The average onset of puberty is 10 years and menstruation 12 years for girls, but is quite variable.
- Boys frequently begin to have nocturnal emissions "wet dreams", facial and body hair, broadening of shoulders and voice changes. The average onset of puberty is 12 for boys, but is quite variable.
- An open dialogue with your adolescent about puberty and sex can help ensure that they learn facts within a framework of values that your family feels is important.
- Give straightforward explanations to questions and also use "teachable moments" (a pregnancy in the family, TV or news stories about AIDS, rape, homosexuality, etc.) to discuss appropriate, sexually related topics.

ACNE AND SKIN CARE

- Acne is caused by the effects of hormones on the skin's oil producing glands – hormones that become active during puberty and stimulate the oil glands to produce a substance called sebum. This leads to inflammation and the appearance of redness, blackheads and pustules.
- A diet of French fries and pizza won't worsen acne (but we don't recommend it).
- Encourage your adolescent to wash their face daily with a mild soap/cleansing agent and use an over the counter cream containing benzoyl peroxide for small flare-ups.
- Some forms of acne require prescription medications to improve this condition.

SAFETY

- Reinforce the practice of appropriate safety measures to prevent/limit their risk of injury. Helmet use on bikes and water safety is essential. Insist on regular use of lap belts/shoulder restraints in the car.
- Keep guns locked up and out of reach. If you prefer, teach responsible use of guns and knives.
- Drug education must be ongoing and should include illegal substances as well as alcohol. Tobacco temptations are everywhere. Discourage usage in any form including cigarettes and "dip". Discuss inhalant abuse.
- Set a good example by limiting your own use of alcohol, tobacco and medications.
- Ensure safe after school supervision.
- Teens who want to lift weights should be encouraged to do more frequent repetitions with lower weights. Maximum presses are hazardous until later adolescence. There is no place for supplements other than calories and protein. All weight lifting should be supervised by a parent, coach, or a trainer.

Your child's next well childcare visit should be in one year.

Additional Resource for Parents

Visit our web site at www.northfultonpediatrics.com

Caring for your Adolescent, Ages 12 to 21, by American Academy of Pediatrics

What's Happening to My Body? Book for Boys or Book for Girls by L. Madaras and D. Saavedra.

The Period Book by Karen Gravelle

Positive Discipline for Teenagers, by Jane Nelson, and L. Lott

www.aap.org/bookstore

www.chop.edu/service/vaccine

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