



A Letter from your Teen's Pediatrician

Dear Parent or Guardian

Now that your son or daughter is a teenager, there are some things I would like to share with you that are important to provide the best care. Your son or daughter's body is changing, and so are his or her feelings. There are many health risks during the teenage years that we try to prevent, such as stress, accidents, violence, and early, unwise experimentation with sex, alcohol and drugs.

Some areas of teen health that we may talk about during a visit are:

- Fighting, danger, and violence
- Sexuality and sexual behavior
- Safety and driving
- Smoking, drugs, and alcohol
- Diet, exercise and body image
- Working/Jobs
- Stress/Depression
- Peer pressure and school
- Dating and relationships
- Family life

It is good for parents to have ongoing conversations with their teen about all of these issues. It is also important that they be allowed some time alone with their doctor to talk about their health and changes in their bodies and lives. This will help your teenager make good decisions. I encourage teenagers to share information about their health with their parents or guardians. However, there will be some things that your teenager would rather talk about with a doctor, nurse, or counselor. Tennessee law allows teenagers to receive some health care services on their own. Because adolescents can legally consent for some treatment, health care providers have to keep information related to those services CONFIDENTIAL. "Confidential" means I will only share this information if a teenager says it's alright. I will also share this information if someone is in danger.

I can contact you about most of the services your child receives. However, I need your teenager's permission to discuss services provided for:

- sexual health
- substance abuse

I ask that you support this policy and help our teens learn to care for their own health needs. I look forward to providing ongoing medical care for your child. I will be happy to talk to you about the questions or concerns you may have about this letter and your child's health.

The links below are good resources for parents of Teens.

<http://www.doctormikebradley.com/>

<http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/adolescence.html>

<http://www.ahaparenting.com/Ages-stages/teenagers>