

## For Parents and Caregivers: Welcome to Adolescent Care

Your care team:

Clinic hours:

Make or cancel appointments:

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Welcome to your medical home in the Adolescent Medicine Practice. A medical home is a trusting partnership between a health care team and an informed patient and caregiver. We provide quality health care for teens and young adults.

As with younger patients, our goal is to help your child behave in a way that helps them stay healthy, identify health problems early and provide health care at the highest quality. Your child is growing up and their body, their behavior and their health care needs are changing. Because of this, the way we provide healthcare will also change. It is important to keep your child's yearly health exams, as well as regular visits for vaccines, specialty exams or any problems that may arise.

As teens begin to develop into adults and take more responsibility for their lives, we ask for more input from them about their health. Although young children need their parent or guardian in the room to feel safe and give accurate medical history information, adolescents need some private time alone with their medical provider. As part of comprehensive health care, **it is our practice to ask parents/caregivers to wait outside for part of the interview and the physical exam and recommend the adolescent discuss their own view of a problem.** Talking to teens without the parent also gives teens a chance to ask questions or give information they may feel shy about. While we understand that some teens may talk to their parents about these topics, many may feel embarrassed to talk about their concerns in front of their parent or guardian. Sometimes teenagers may hide their behavior so a parent/guardian is not the first to find out. Our goal is to help prevent and identify these behaviors before they become serious.

New York State law requires that we offer some services to teens privately. Your teen can look for these services on their own at any health center. In most cases, these services will be confidential and free. By offering these private services, our goal is that your teen can trust us so they will share their concerns fully and we can help them to choose healthy behaviors. Empowering your teenager with health responsibility may also encourage them to adopt healthier behaviors on their own. At the same time, **we also encourage our teen patients to discuss any important questions or problems they may have with a parent or guardian at every opportunity.**

**It is also important for you to know that if your child is doing something to hurt themselves or others, we cannot keep this confidential and we will discuss this with an appropriate adult.**

The Adolescent Medicine team is available to answer questions and discuss health problems with you and your teen. We want to work together with you to help your teenager or young adult make the best choices for a healthy future.

## **The Adolescent Health Visit**

Adolescents should visit their primary care provider regularly. The American Academy of Pediatrics and some other organizations recommend visits at least yearly. When you make the visit, you can expect the usual steps, such as:

- Measurements of height, weight, and blood pressure; monitoring of general growth and pubertal development
- Screening tests for vision and hearing
- A full physical examination
- Vaccines
- Evaluation of possible chronic medical conditions

As children get older and start to become adults, the provider visits will start to include:

- Discussions of school performance, peer relationships, and future plans
- Risk assessments and preventive guidance regarding mental health, injury, substance use, sexuality, contraception, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), nutrition, exercise, and sports participation
- Discussions about STIs, testing and prevention
- Discussions about HIV and AIDS, testing and prevention

Other services available in clinic or by referral provided if needed:

- Working papers and sports participation physical exams
- Contraception counseling services
- Eating disorder assessments
- LGBTQ+ support services
- Referrals for mental/emotional health services
- Nutrition, exercise and lifestyle counseling and referrals
- Social work assistance
- Referrals to quit smoking
- Referrals to other medical providers and surgical specialists

### **Online Resources**

[Nycyouthhealth.org](http://Nycyouthhealth.org)

[Nyc.gov/teen](http://Nyc.gov/teen)

[Aap.org](http://Aap.org)

[Youngwomenshealth.org](http://Youngwomenshealth.org)

[Youngmenshealthsite.org](http://Youngmenshealthsite.org)