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WESTERN HEALTH ADVANTAGE |

YOUR TEEN'S HEALTH 2017

Western Health Advantage is dedicated to giving you and your family solutions for a healthy future. This resource provides information that is relevant to your teen's well-being and includes information for both you and your child.

I encourage you not to wait until your child is sick to take them to the doctor but to build a partnership with your child's doctor through regular annual well visits. In addition to a physical exam, your child's annual well care visit will provide you and your child's doctor the opportunity to discuss important health topics and ensure your child is getting the recommended health screenings and immunizations.

With the help of regular well care visits, your child's doctor can often detect and address health problems before they become more serious.*

*Disclaimer: Coverage for WHA services depends on eligibility at the time of service.

**Schedule your teen's well visit today.
Help them take charge of their health!**

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Sources: healthfinder.gov | cdc.gov | onguardonline.gov



Why immunizing your teen is important.

Many serious diseases still exist, and teens need to be protected against them just as infants need this protection. Getting immunizations is a life-long practice, so be sure to ask your child's doctor about the recommended childhood vaccinations during the next well care visit.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that the following immunizations be completed by age 13:

- Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (Tdap)
- Human papillomavirus (HPV)
- Meningococcal (MCV4)

Need a complete list of immunizations for teens?

Visit mywha.org/shots.

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HPV Vaccine

If you knew about a vaccine that could prevent a certain cancer, wouldn't you want to take advantage and give your child the chance to be protected?

The Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine does just that. It targets the most common types of viruses that cause cervical cancer and genital warts.

Who should get the vaccine? The HPV vaccine is routinely recommended for girls who are 11 or 12 and young women up to age 26 who have not been vaccinated. Doctors may also immunize girls beginning at age nine.

The full three-dose series must be completed for your child to be protected against the virus. The HPV4 vaccine, which is recommended for the prevention of genital warts in girls, may also be given to boys ages 9 to 26.

To learn more, visit cdc.gov.

Check It Out [cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen]
Provides the basics about immunizations and vaccinations, talks to parents about why it is so important to immunize and provides answers to common questions.

Get the Most Out of Your **Teen's Well Visit**

COME PREPARED

A helpful hint for your teen's well visit: bring a list of questions that you want answered



Preparing for your child's well care visit will help both you and your child get more out of your visits with your child's doctor.

Gather important information: If your child's doctor is new to both of you, take any medical records you have to the appointment, including a record of shots your child has received. Make a list of any important changes in your child's life since the last visit, such as a separation or divorce; a new school or a move to a new neighborhood; or a serious illness or death in the family.

Help your child get more involved in the visit: Once your child starts puberty, the doctor will usually ask you to leave the room during your child's physical exam. This is an important step in teaching your child to take control of his or her health care. It also lets your child develop a relationship with the doctor or nurse and ask questions in private. You can also allow your child to help by having him or her call to schedule an appointment, fill out their own medical forms and come prepared with questions for the doctor or nurse.

Make a list of questions for the doctor: This visit is a great time to ask the doctor or nurse any questions about a medical condition your child has, like an allergy; changes in behavior or mood; or sudden lack of interest in favorite activities. Here are some important questions to ask:

- How can I make sure my child is getting enough physical activity?
- Is my child at a healthy weight?
- Is my child up to date on shots?
- How can I talk to my child about sex?

Need help with questions to ask? Visit healthfinder.gov.

Know what to expect from the visit: During each well-child visit, the doctor will do a physical exam and may ask the following questions to determine if there are any health concerns in these areas:

- Behavior: Does your child have trouble following directions at home or at school?
- Health: Does your child often complain of headaches or other pain?
- Safety: Does anyone in your home have a gun? If so, is it unloaded and locked in a place where your child can't get it?
- School: Does your child look forward to going to school?
- Activities: What does your child like to do after school?
- Eating habits: What does your child eat on a normal day?
- Family: Have there been any changes in your family since your last visit?

Meningococcal Disease — Know the Symptoms

Meningococcal disease is a bacterial infection that commonly results in meningococcal meningitis. Unlike viral meningitis, which is also serious, meningococcal meningitis can be fatal. If your child shows signs of these symptoms, don't wait. Seek care right away.

- Sudden onset of fever
- Headache
- Stiff neck
- Nausea/vomiting
- Sensitivity to light
- Confusion

The good news? Meningococcal disease is preventable with the meningococcal vaccine, MCV4. Visit mywha.org/shots to learn about other recommended immunizations for adolescents.

DEPRESSION IN TEENS

Depression is a serious mood disorder marked especially by sadness, inactivity, difficulty in thinking and concentration, and feelings of dejection. Depression is different from normal moodiness caused by life's ups and downs in that it overwhelms daily activities, making it difficult to function and enjoy life.

Fortunately, no matter how sad depressed teens feel, they can get better. With help and support, they can overcome depression and get their life back on track. Understanding the signs is the first step to overcoming the problem.

Signs of Depression in Teens

- Sadness or hopelessness
- Irritability, anger or hostility
- Tearfulness or frequent crying
- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Loss of interest in daily activities
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Restlessness and agitation
- Low self-esteem
- Lack of enthusiasm and motivation
- Fatigue or lack of energy
- Difficulty concentrating
- Unexplained aches and pains
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Thoughts of death or suicide (seek help immediately)
- Poor school performance

Consider how long the symptoms have been present, how severe they are, and if the behavior is different than usual. The more symptoms there are, the stronger they are, and the longer they've lasted, the more likely it is that depression is the cause.

How You Can Help

- Trust your instincts
- Offer unconditional support
- Be gentle but persistent if your teenager shuts you out
- Listen without judging or lecturing
- Validate feelings
- Be understanding
- Encourage exercising
- Encourage socializing with friends
- Learn about depression

Getting Help

The first step to getting appropriate treatment for depression is to talk to your child's doctor, who can tell you about the different treatment options. You can also contact a behavioral health specialist directly by calling the phone number on the back of your WHA ID card. To learn more about your behavioral or mental health services, visit mywha.org/BH.



8 Healthy Habits for Healthy Families

You play an important role as guide and coach for your child when they make choices about eating, exercise and screen time. To be successful requires you to lead by example. The choices parents make ultimately impact the decisions their teens make when it comes to healthy habits. Here are eight healthy habits to get your family started on the road to a healthy lifestyle:

1. **Set limits for screen time.** Decide on the amount of time your teen is allowed to spend on their phone, watching TV or playing computer or video games. Parents should limit their own screen time as well.
2. **Exercise together.** Go for a walk or bike ride as a family.
3. **Eat three healthy meals a day.** Include at least four servings of fruits, five servings of vegetables and four servings of dairy products. Prepare school lunches and dinners together.
4. **Drink plenty of fluids before, during and after any exercise.** This will help replace what is lost from sweating. Water is best. Avoid flavored sports drinks and soft drinks that are loaded with sugar.
5. **Eat less junk food and fast foods.** They are often full of fat, cholesterol, salt and sugar.
6. **Get adequate sleep.** Teens should get 9 to 10 hours of sleep every night.
7. **Have a hard conversation.** Talk to your teen about the health risks related to smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol or doing drugs, and sexual activity.
8. **Make a meal together.** This helps encourage teens to make healthier choices while spending important time together. The bonus: They learn how to prepare their own meals!