



Pediatrics

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What are they talking about in there? The Teen Visit

As a parent, the teen years can be a roller coaster - thrilling, fun, and sometimes scary. Our goal is to support you and your child through these exciting years. Adolescents tend to be healthy but they are going through huge changes physically, cognitively, emotionally and socially.

As teens develop into adults and take more responsibility for their health, we want more input from them and we will ask all parents to wait outside for part of the visit. When teens can speak to us in confidence, we can have conversations about risky behaviors and healthy habits. Our goal is to prevent and identify issues before they become serious. Private time during the visit allows our adolescent patients to gain more independence and take care of their own health. We always encourage teens to discuss important issues with their parents.

We let all teen patients know that our visits are confidential. One exception is if we are worried about something your teen brings up. If your teen is in danger or needs help, we will get them the help they need and help them talk to you.

Our providers will talk to your teen about the importance of choosing a healthy lifestyle. We discuss topics like home and school environment, nutrition, exercise, safety, physical growth, sexual development, relationships, mental health, and nicotine, alcohol and drug use.

Before the visit, your child will be asked to fill out a questionnaire about mood and feelings. This is an important way for us to 'break the ice' and let kids know that we are ready to talk about their feelings, especially if they are anxious, down or depressed. We use a validated screening tool called the PHQ-9. Insurance companies require us to bill this separately. Most insurance companies recognize the importance of this and cover this charge, though some may apply it to your coinsurance or deductible.

We also collect a urine specimen on all teens starting at age 16 for STI testing. This is sent to the lab for testing. You may receive a notice about this from the lab or your insurance company. We will contact your teen about the results.

We look forward to partnering with you to help your teen grow into a healthy adult. Please let us know if you have any questions.