



Teenagers: Your Yearly Doctor Visit is Important

If you are a teenager, you may think you don't have to go to the doctor unless you are sick. But seeing your doctor on a regular basis can make sure you stay healthy.

1. See your doctor at least once a year for a check-up.
2. See your dentist at least once a year to make sure your teeth are clean and strong and you fix any problems early.

Yearly visits to your doctor may:

- Find out your risk for certain health problems
- Teach you ways to avoid risks to your health such as smoking or taking drugs
- Make sure your height, weight, cholesterol levels and blood pressure are on track
- Give you shots to reduce your risk of getting common illnesses such as mumps and tetanus

What happens at a yearly checkup for teens?

- You will check in at the front desk. You will probably have to fill out some forms.
- Someone will check your pulse, blood pressure, height and weight. You may be asked to give a urine sample to see how your kidneys are working. This is not a drug test.
- Your parents or guardian may go in with you to the exam room for the first part of the visit. The doctor will talk about your health history and the family health history.
- After this, the doctor will probably ask your parents to leave the room. Your doctor will ask you more questions about family and friends, school and activities, safety, cigarettes, alcohol and drug use and sexual activity. Try to be honest with him or her. **The doctor will not tell anyone, including your parents, what you talked about during your visit.**
- The doctor will examine your eyes, ears, mouth, neck, heart, lungs, stomach, spine, skin, joints, muscles, and genitals.
- The doctor will answer any questions that you have.

Remember, this visit is confidential: that means the doctor cannot tell anyone what was talked about during the visit.

To learn more about your health, ask your primary care doctor, or access these websites:

www.kidshealth.org/teen/
www.familydoctor.org

Sources: "Health Care for Teenager", American Academy of Pediatrics, www.familydoctor.org
"Annual Check-Up: A Guide for Teens": YoungMensHealthSite.org, www.youngmenshealthsite.org