

Scarano & Taylor Pediatrics

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To Our Teenage Patient:

Adolescence is a time of marked physical and emotional change. It is important that you give your mind and body the best opportunities for healthy growth and development. The following are health concerns that are especially important. Please discuss these issues with your parents.

Injuries: Accidents cause most serious injuries and death during the teenage years. Motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of injury and death. Alcohol and drug use commonly contribute to motor vehicle accidents and injury.

MOTOR VEHICLES:

- ALWAYS wear a seatbelt! Seatbelts save lives.
- NEVER drink alcohol and drive! Never ride with anyone who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Avoid motorcycles and motor scooters. If used, wear a helmet. When riding a bicycle, obey traffic regulations and wear a helmet. Avoid riding at dusk or in the dark. If you do, wear reflective gear and carry a light.
- Avoid all-terrain vehicles, they are particularly dangerous and unstable, especially three-wheeled vehicles. Injury often involves the neck and spine, with resulting paralysis.
- Take Driver's Education courses, obey traffic rules and drive defensively.

WATER SPORTS:

- Do not swim alone. Be cautious in unfamiliar waters.
- Do not dive into shallow or unfamiliar waters.
- Do not swim or operate a boat under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Sex: You may receive mixed messages regarding sexual intercourse. Sexual intercourse is necessary for the continuation of human life and is an important expression of intimacy between couples who are seriously committed to each other. Sexual intercourse carries significant responsibility and consequences. You should strongly consider waiting to have sex until you are mature, independent and prepared to accept the responsibility and consequences. It is **not true** that all teens have sexual intercourse.

Consequences of early, irresponsible and unprotected sex are:

- Interruption of future plans - career, high school, college, jobs, etc.
- Teenage pregnancy and the increased health problems suffered by infants born to teenage mothers.
- Sexually transmitted diseases, including herpes genitalis, gonorrhea, syphilis, genital warts, chlamydia, hepatitis and AIDS. These can be fatal, such as AIDS, or have serious health consequences such as sterility and cancer.

If you are, or plan to be sexually active, discuss this with your parent, minister, or physician.

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Drugs& Alcohol: Drug and alcohol use is common among teenagers, who often become dependent on them. Adverse effects of drug/alcohol use include:

- School dropout and interruption of career plans.
- Risk of serious injury or death from accidents, suicide and homicide.
- Increased risk of unprotected sex, teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.
- Most motor vehicle deaths are alcohol and drug related.

Remember, tobacco and alcohol are drugs. They shorten your life and are addictive. Once you start using them, you may not be able to stop.

Diet and Exercise: Proper rest, nutrition and exercise are essential in developing a healthy mind and body.

- Eat a balanced diet. Include cereals and grains, fruit, vegetables, dairy products and fish/poultry/meat daily.
- Calcium strengthens bones. Teenagers often do not meet their calcium requirements. Make a special effort to drink milk and juices fortified with calcium. Eat yogurt and leafy green vegetables.
- Your body needs plenty of water, especially in hot weather and during physical activity. Drink a gallon of water each day. Drink water before, during and after strenuous physical activity.
- Limit soda intake. Excess soda intake may cause dental cavities and is associated with weaker bones.
- Limit time spent watching television and playing video games. There is a direct relationship between television time and excess weight gain.
- Develop an exercise habit. Exercise with a friend to make it more fun. Set a goal to maintain thirty minutes of aerobic activity (walking, running, swimming, roller blading, biking, rowing, jumping rope, aerobics) at least three times weekly. Alternate activities to reduce boredom and overuse injury. Benefits of regular exercise include longer life, an enhanced sense of well-being, better sleep, avoidance of excess weight gain, stronger bones, and lessened risk of high blood pressure, unhealthy cholesterol levels, heart disease and stroke.

You have only one life. It is your responsibility to take care of yourself. You owe it to yourself.

We are available to assist you. Contact our office if you would like to talk with us! We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Drs. Florentina and Joe