Optimum Internal Medicine & Pediatrics
Dr. Christopher Burress
Board certified Internal Medicine and Pediatrics

# Promoting healthy 15 to 18 year olds

Name_____ Weight_____ Height_____ Date_____

## Fitness and Nutrition

- Advise them to Eat from the five food groups on a daily basis:
  1. fruits and vegetables
  2. breads and cereals
  3. rice and pasta
  4. dairy (milk, cheese, yogurt)
  5. meat, chicken, fish, beans, and eggs

- Calcium is important for bone growth and strength. Good sources are dairy products, spinach, broccoli and calcium-fortified orange juice.
- Iron is important in order to prevent anemia. Good iron sources include red meats, dark green vegetables, and iron-fortified breads and cereals.
- Advise them to make physical activity part of your daily life. Benefits of physical activity include:
  1. increased cardiovascular fitness
  2. increased strength
  3. decreased tension
  4. improved mood

- Consider joining an organized sports program or activities with friends.

## Injury Prevention

- Violence and injuries account for 3 out of 4 adolescent deaths.
- Auto accidents account for 3 out of every 10 adolescent deaths; most of these involve alcohol or drug use.
- Do not ride in a car driven by someone who is drunk or high.
- Murder is the leading cause of death in black males. Guns were used in three-fourths of these killings.
- A gun in the home increases the likelihood of a successful suicide attempt.
- Head injuries account for 75% of bicycle deaths.
- We recommend you wear your seat belt and use your bike helmet.
- We recommend you avoid firearms.
- Seek nonviolent solutions to conflicts. We can show you how if your parents or guardians cannot.

## School

- Academic performance affects your future decisions.
- Persons without a high school diploma usually do very poorly in the job market.
- We recommend you discuss career and educational opportunities with your school counselor.
- School and public libraries have information on available scholarships.
- If you are having trouble in school, please ask for help.

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## Relationships

- Be assertive with friends and family. Let them know your needs while being sensitive to theirs.
- Use "I" messages. For example, "I feel upset when you are more concerned about whether I do my chores than how my day was," is more useful than "You always yell at me about my chores."
- When you are angry, take time to calm down before you respond.
- Examine your choices and make well thought out decisions. Do not allow others to pressure you.
- Some adolescents are sexually active; others are not. Be aware of the risks of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (like chlamydia and AIDS). Abstinence is the best protection against unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. If you chose to be sexually active, protect yourself with a condom and use birth control methods.

## Health Risks

- Fast foods tend to be high in fat and salt.
- Alcohol and drug use will impair your judgment.
- Date rapes are much more common when alcohol and drugs are being used.
- Cigarettes will stain your hands and teeth yellow, will make you smell like smoke, and will greatly increase your chances of heart disease and lung cancer.
- All tobacco is addictive. Once you are hooked, stopping can be very difficult.
- Untreated sexually transmitted diseases can lead to infertility and other illnesses, and, in the case of HIV infection, death.

## Managing Stress

Adolescents' lives can be very stressful at times. Stress can lead to illness, headaches and stomachaches. Here are some ways to reduce stress.

1. Relax where you are - close your eyes and imagine you are in a pleasant setting.
2. Take a break - get some exercise or fresh air.
3. Ask yourself whether it is worth getting upset over.
4. Accept what you cannot change.
5. Take time for yourself.
6. Manage your time. Don't wait until the last minute.
7. Anticipate stressful situations and prepare for them. Evaluate your choices.

## Recommended Reading

*Growing Up*, Meredith, Susan
*All Grown Up and No Place To Go*, Elkind, David
*Get Out of My Life, But First Could You Drive Me and Cheryl To The Mall*, Wolf, A.
*Adolescents at Risk*, Dryfoos, Joy
*How To Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk*, Faber & Mazlich