



# DESERT GROVE

## Family Medical

Specializing in the HEALTH of Your Family!

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### 15-17 Year Check

#### **GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT:**

Most teenagers by this age look grown-up and have outgrown the clumsy stage. Most girls have almost reached their full height. Boys will continue to grow for a few more years. How girls and boys look is very important to them. Boys are concerned with building their muscles. The growth of body hair and a deepened voice in teenage boy will make feel like a man. Girls will spend many hours in front of the mirror trying new hairstyles, make-up and clothes.

#### **SOCIAL AND INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT:**

Teenagers at this stage are often quiet and withdrawn. Their search for "who they are" can cause periods of confusion, depression, and discouragement. Tell them often about their good traits, strengths, and support them in the new things they want to do and try.

Emotions are better controlled at this age than they were earlier. Teenagers can handle problems more calmly and think them through at this age. They may be subject to depression. It is important that you recognize signs of depression. A teenager will become moody, withdrawn and have trouble setting goals. They may be unable to sleep or they will sleep too much. They worry about their future and seem to have no hope; talk about wanting to die. Listen and tell them you understand what they are telling you. Problems that seem small to you can be the end of the world for them. Always be willing to talk to your child and listen to what they are telling you. If your child is depressed, talk to your doctor.

To gain the respect and trust of your teenager you must respect their privacy and show an honest and sincere interest in what he/she believes.

#### **SAFETY:**

The influence of friends can be the greatest threat to a teenager's safety. They want to impress their friends and will try dangerous things. A teenager often feels that nothing will happen to him/her and will take unnecessary risks. Car accidents, drowning, burns, poisoning and suicide are the most common accidents that occur at this age.

Getting their driver's license is one of the biggest events for a teenager. A teenager needs an adult to give driving lessons. There are driving courses offered through the school. Safety belts should be used always by passengers in the car. The dangers of driving after drinking alcohol or taking drugs cannot be stressed enough. Car accidents involving drunk driving, is the leading cause of death under the age of 21.

#### **SELF-ESTEEM:**

Tell your teenager about the things they do right. Say "Thank you" when your child does something for you. Let them know how important they are to you. Give the child positive support. Believing in oneself is gained by doing, taking action and getting involved. Children need to feel loved and capable. Children that are raised by parents who show their love, warmth, support, understanding, thoughts and discipline, will nurture a child who has more self-confidence and is more likely to lead a normal and healthy life. Teenagers at this age do better in school, handle stresses better, and are less likely to try alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs.

The most important thing to a teenager is what a friend thinks about him/her. Your teenager will dress, wear makeup, and style the hair according to his/her friend's group. The language, music, and dance a teenager likes is very different from what a parent would choose. Trying to understand the teenager usually leads to frustration and confusion for parents.

**SEX EDUCATION:**

Boys tend to have more urgent sexual feelings than girls at this age and will sometimes seek release through masturbation or find themselves having "wet dreams" Girls tend to think of sex as romantic.

Many teenagers are thinking and feeling anxious about sex. They are making decisions about limits and values. Whether parents like it, many teenagers are sexually active at this age. For some, necking and petting are the standard limits. Others have already tried intercourse. Often, sexual activity happens because of feelings of insecurity and/or pressures from one's partner. Parents should discuss these feelings with the teenagers and make sure that the teenager has the correct information about reproduction, pregnancy, birth control and sexually transmitted diseases. It is important that they know the choices they make now can affect them for the rest of their lives.

**AIDS AND SEXUAL TRANSMITTED DISEASE:**

Sexual transmitted disease should be discussed with your children. Educate your child on the risks of being sexually active. Tell them how to protect themselves and that abstinence from sex (not having sex) is best way to protect him/herself from these diseases. If a teenager is sexually active, the next best way to protect them from AIDS and sexually transmitted disease is by using a condom. Don't use drugs! People who use drugs are more likely to trade sex for drugs or money, or share needles or syringes.

**DRUGS, ALCOHOL, AND SMOKING:**

The use of drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes among teenagers is a serious problem. It is a way of "testing the waters" of adulthood, relieving stress and boredom, and being part of the crowd. Parents should make their feelings clear about the use of drugs, alcohol and smoking. Listen to your child so they will feel free to come to you. Teenagers need to be prepared for the pressure their friends will put on them to try drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.

**ORAL HYGIENE:**

Tell you child to keep his/her smile beautiful to brush and floss at least twice a day and schedule yearly dental check-ups and cleaning.

**IMMUNIZAITON AND TESTS:**

Your child is now due to have a TB test and you maybe need a tetanus booster.