



18-20 year check up

You have reached the age of adulthood. You are ending your dependence on your parents, both emotionally and financially. You are probably asking yourself many questions about life. One question could be, what do I want to do the rest of my life? You can exercise your citizenship by getting involved in the community. You will now be held accountable for your choices, actions and behavior. Listed below you will find some common concerns.

ACCIDENTS:

Automobile and motorcycle accidents are the leading causes of adolescent deaths or injuries at your age. Alcohol is the underlying factor for most of the accidents along with not using your safety belt or helmets. Sports injuries and drowning are also factors. There is a tendency to think that nothing can happen to you. Remember, it can happen to you, think before you take a risk; think about yourself, your family and friends.

Prevention is the key word in reducing the rise of deaths due to automobiles and motorcycle accidents. Don't Drink and Drive—If you are drinking, please have a designated driver or call someone to pick you up. Buckle-up your seat belt! Wear a helmet when driving a motorcycle, bike or skateboarding. Water sports are fun, but again do not drink while boating and be aware of the depth of the water when diving. Don't take chances that could disable or kill you.

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASE:

Examples of STDs are herpes, gonorrhea, Chlamydia, HIV, Hepatitis, syphilis, trichomonas, human papilloma virus. Recommend that you are screened annually for STDs and that you have every new partner screened too. The more sexual partners that you have, the more at risk you are to contract a STD. Very frequently, many people are not aware that they have contracted an STD before screening. So, get screened regularly!

DRUGS, ALCOHOL, AND SMOKING:

Typically, a man can metabolize 1 drink an hour whereas a woman only 1 drink per 1 ½ hours. Binge drinking is considered drinking more than 4 drinks/day for a man and more than 3 drinks/day for a woman on an occasional basis. So if you binge drink, you may become intoxicated and at risk for alcohol poisoning which is deadly. Any person who has passed out from drinking too much is considered an emergency, so call 911 for medical evaluation. If a person drinks on a daily basis, a man should not drink more than 2 drinks a day and a woman not more than 1 drink a day. Any more alcohol ingested may lead to liver disease. Alcohol is a poison that kills brain cells and destroys your liver. The more you drink the more brain and liver cells you lose.

Smoking destroys lung tissue, heart tissue, and your arterial vessels. It can also cause high blood pressure, heart disease (heart attack), stroke, cancer, and/or emphysema. Once you have these illnesses, there is no turning back. Be smart, be cool and think before you try something. Some of the consequences are disease, death and destroyed relationships with the people you love.

PREGNANCY PREVENTION:

Before you become sexually active or if you are sexually active, do not take the risk of becoming pregnant or of getting someone pregnant. Think and be aware of the consequences. A baby is at least an 18-year commitment on your part: to feed, clothe, guide, support, and care for until that child is your age now. There are contraceptives available to you if you choose. Talk to your physician.

HEALTH SCREENS:

- A monthly self-breast exam and a yearly breast exam.
- Monthly testicular self-exam.
- Ask your physicians for instructions on the self-exams.

SELF-ESTEEM:

People who like themselves and think they are OK have higher self-esteem and do better in life. To increase your self-esteem try to think of things you're proud of or the things you do well: the special talents you have, good grades, a sense of humor, a time you helped someone out. Look at the positive things in life. Set goals for your self; short ones that can be reached in a short period of time. Set long term goals: finishing school, getting a job, going to college. Self-esteem is about giving and getting respect. Live up to your word, don't put yourself down, treat others with respect and you will get respect in return. Feel good about who you are. Try new tasks, skills or new experiences. Look forward to doing well. Make good choices and get along with others.

PSYCHO/SOCIAL:

It is important to recognize depression. Are you feeling sad, tired, eat too much, no appetite, lonely or lost? Do you have negative feelings about your future? Do you feel there is no hope? Talk to someone. Share your feelings and you will find you are not alone. Everyone has those feelings at one time or another. If those feelings don't go away, call your physician.

ORAL HYGIENE:

Regular dental check-ups and cleaning are still very important, since you are still prone to cavities. Smile beautiful. Brush and floss at least two times a day.

IMMUNIZATIONS AND TESTS:

If you have not already had TB testing and tetanus shot you may be due, check with your physician.