

Different Stages, Different Ages

As children grow and become more independent, it's natural for parents to have mixed emotions. While you may feel pride in your preteen's progress and independence, your desire to help protect him or her still remains.

Here are some things you can do to help safeguard your preteen's health:

- Schedule regular well visits with his or her doctor or health care professional. It can help keep your preteen on a healthy track through adolescence and beyond.
- Become familiar with changes that may take place during the adolescent years.
- Learn more about serious diseases for which your preteen may be at increased risk. The information inside can help.

TIPS to help you support your preteen during the adolescent years¹:

- Learn all you can about adolescent development through books, pamphlets, parenting classes, or your preteen's doctor or health care professional.¹
- When you're with your preteen, try to listen more than you talk.¹
- Encourage other caring adults, including friends and relatives, to spend time with your preteen.¹
- Use positive reinforcement when possible.¹

Inside Information on how to help keep your preteen healthy

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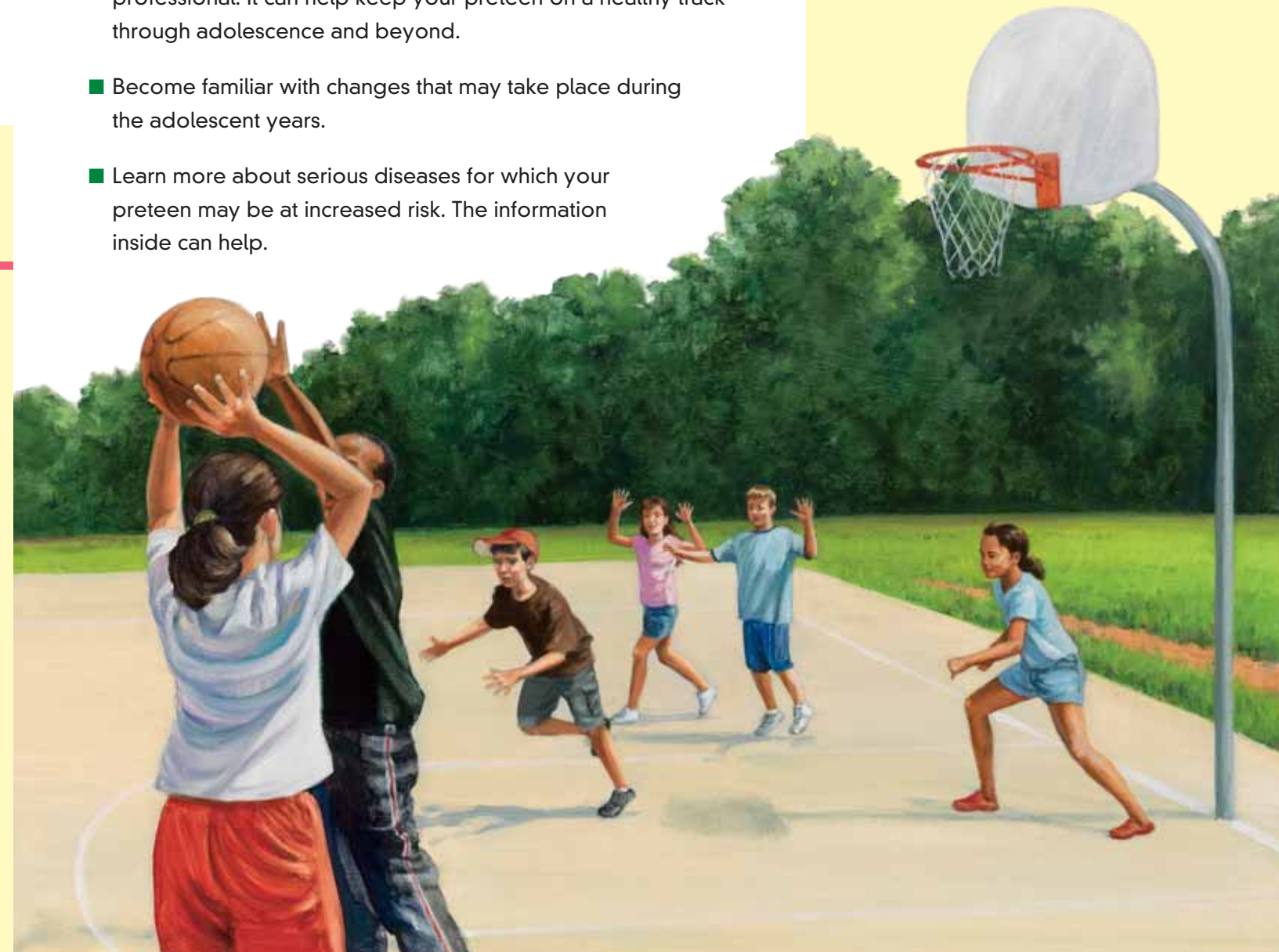
Schedule a well visit with your preteen's doctor or health care professional today and check his or her vaccination status.

References: 1. National Clearinghouse on Families & Youth. Supporting your adolescent: Tips for parents. Available at: www.ncfy.com/publications/tips/tips.htm. Accessed June 14, 2006. 2. American Medical Association. Guidelines for Adolescent Preventive Services (GAPS). Available at: www.ama-assn.org/ama/upload/mm/39/gapsmono.pdf. Accessed June 14, 2006. 3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Vaccine-preventable childhood diseases. Available at: www.cdc.gov/nip/diseases/child-vpd.htm. Accessed June 14, 2006. 4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Genital HPV infection fact sheet. Available at: www.cdc.gov/std/HPV/STDFact-HPV.htm. Accessed June 14, 2006. 5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Meningococcal disease. Available at: www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/meningococcal_g.htm. Accessed June 14, 2006. 6. American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry. Teens: Alcohol and other drugs. Available at: www.aacap.org/publications/factsfam/teendrug.htm. Accessed June 14, 2006.

Some Resources for Parents and Preteens

American Academy of Family Physicians
1-800-274-2237
www.familydoctor.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1-800-311-3435
www.cdc.gov



Help Protect Your Preteen with Regular Checkups

Regular well visits during the preteen years are not just a good idea, they're also recommended by physicians and leading medical organizations.²

During the checkup, a doctor or health care professional may²:

- Review your preteen's medical history²
- Measure physical growth²
- Check blood pressure, vision, and hearing²
- Assess overall development²

The checkup is also a good time to ask questions about diseases you should know about:

Chickenpox (Varicella) is easily spread from person to person through coughing and sneezing. It causes a blister-like rash on the body. May sometimes lead to skin infections, swelling of the brain, and pneumonia.³

Diphtheria is caused by a germ that may affect the breathing system. Symptoms may include sore throat and fever. May sometimes lead to difficulty breathing and coma.³

Hepatitis A is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus. It's usually caused by putting objects contaminated with hepatitis A virus in the mouth or by having infected food or water. Symptoms may include yellow skin or eyes, tiredness, stomachache, loss of appetite, or nausea.³

Hepatitis B is an illness that affects the liver. It is spread through infected blood and other body fluids. Symptoms may include yellow skin or eyes, tiredness, stomachache, loss of appetite, nausea, or joint pain. May sometimes lead to ongoing liver illness, including liver cancer.³

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is a common virus. Most types of HPV are harmless, like the ones that cause common warts on the hands and feet. For most people the body's own defense system will clear the virus. However, certain types of HPV may sometimes cause cervical cancer and abnormal cervical cells. Other types may sometimes cause genital warts. HPV often has no signs or symptoms.⁴

Measles is caused by a virus. Symptoms may include rash, high fever, coughing, runny nose, and watery eyes. May sometimes lead to ear infections, pneumonia, swelling of the brain, and seizures.³

Meningococcal Disease is caused by a germ that may be spread from person to person by close contact. Symptoms may include fever, rash, headache, or stiff neck. May sometimes lead to shock and inflammation around the brain.⁵

Mumps is a virus that mainly affects the glands near the jaw. Symptoms may include fever, headache, muscle ache, and swelling around the jaw. May sometimes lead to inflammation around the brain, pancreas, testicles or ovaries, and hearing loss.³

Pertussis (Whooping Cough) is a bacterial infection that causes violent coughing and difficulty breathing. Coughing may be so violent that it leads to difficulty eating or drinking. May sometimes lead to pneumonia, swelling of the brain, and occasionally, death.³

Rubella (German Measles) is a virus that causes rash and fever. It is spread by coughing and sneezing. Especially a concern for pregnant women.³

Tetanus (Lockjaw) is a disease of the nervous system caused by a germ. Tetanus enters the body through a cut or wound. Symptoms are painful muscle spasms, lockjaw, and difficulty swallowing. May sometimes lead to death.³

*These recommendations were developed by the American Medical Association with contributions from a Scientific Advisory Panel, comprised of national experts, as well as representatives of primary care medical organizations and the health insurance industry.²

Tips for Parents

Understanding changes and challenges in the preteen years

Adolescence can be tough. Preteens need to cope with physical changes and peer pressure, not to mention the stress of academic or social expectations placed on them by parents and teachers.

You can help make the transition from adolescence to adulthood successful. It just takes some understanding and knowing where to turn for help if it is needed.¹

When help may be needed

Sometimes young people fall victim to behaviors that place themselves and others at risk. They can turn to drugs, alcohol, or other destructive behaviors. Here are some signs to look for that may signal your preteen might need help⁶:

- Large amounts of time spent alone; isolation from family and friends⁶
- Sudden changes in academic performance⁶
- Lack of interest in hobbies and activities⁶

Be honest about the changes you notice, not confrontational. Try to listen, let your child talk through problems, then let your child know you're there for him or her.¹

Remember — call your preteen's doctor or health care professional to schedule a checkup today.

