

## ADOLESCENCE (11 to 18 YRS OLD)

### **NUTRITION**

Adolescent eating habits can be erratic at best. Encourage your teen to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables as part of a lower fat, high-fiber balanced diet. Water is a very good source of fluid. Milk and calcium continue to be important for strengthening growing bones.

### **SAFETY – EDUCATION**

Seat belts are a must (and also the law). Also discuss with your teen the dangers of riding with a driver who has been drinking. If you have firearms, store them locked and separate from ammunition. Helping your adolescent learn to properly deal with anger will enhance their safety, education and joy in life.

With early adolescence comes the ability to begin to think abstractly. Your teen may now think more in concepts and complex ideas. Just as it took time to walk, it may take time to think rationally with consistency. Keep lines of communication open by frequently discussing with your teen how he or she is responding to the many social, emotional, and sexual pressures of adolescence. Discuss with them the use of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs. Help your teen decide against substance use and sexual activity by discussing ways he/she can avoid or refuse them.

### **EXERCISE**

It is easy to fall into a sedentary lifestyle. Encourage your adolescent to find a form of exercise that is healthy and enjoyable, and actively support him or her in it. Don't depend on the school system to provide quality physical activity – your teen's P.E. class may have been traded for computers or driver's education.

### **IMMUNIZATIONS**

Immunizations protect us from diseases. Frequently, a tetanus booster is needed around age 11-15. If not already obtained, the Hepatitis B series is also highly recommended.

### **NEXT APPOINTMENT**

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that adolescents receive a physical each year.