

Youth, 9-11 years old

# Staying Healthy California

**Your Doctor** would like to share this tip sheet with you. Helping your preteen practice these tips will help your preteen stay healthy. Let your doctor or nurse know if you take your preteen to see a traditional healer (like an acupuncturist, herbalist, or curandero). Tell your doctor if your preteen is taking any herbs or teas.



## Smile Care

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- Take your preteen to the dentist at least once a year. Ask about fluoride, sealants, braces, and mouth guards for sports.
- Teach your preteen to brush after each meal and floss once a day.
- Limit sweets to prevent cavities.



## Nutrition

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- Encourage your preteen to eat 3 meals and 3 light snacks daily. Give him or her a variety of foods every day, like:
  - 5-9 fruits and vegetables
  - 7-11 pieces of bread, or handfuls of cereal or grain
  - 3 cups of nonfat, or 1% milk, cheese, or yogurt
  - 3 portions of protein foods, like lean meats, poultry, fish, eggs, or dried beans
- Start the day with a healthy breakfast, like cereal, milk, and fruit. Drink about 8 glasses of water a day. Limit fried foods and sweets like french fries, candy, and potato chips.



## Exercise and Weight

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- Encourage your preteen to join outdoor activities like basketball, swimming, and soccer.
- Agree on the amount of time spent watching television and playing video games.

- If you are worried about your preteen's weight, talk to your doctor. Encourage your preteen to become more active in something they like to do.
- Talk about puberty and the changes it brings. Encourage realistic goals for body weight.



## Mental Health

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Depression is more than the occasional blues. It usually lasts more than two weeks. Note changes in your preteen, like:

- Significant weight loss or weight gain
- Loss of interest in activities he or she used to enjoy
- Not being able to sleep or concentrate
- Declining grades
- Skipping school
- Changes in mood or behavior

Report these changes to your preteen's doctor as soon as possible.

For more information, call:  
**California Youth Crisis Line**  
**1-800-843-5200**



## General Safety

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- Use a seat belt for every ride.

- Have your preteen wear a helmet, knee, wrist, and elbow guards when using skates, bikes, or skateboards. Make sure your preteen's helmet fits well and covers the forehead.
- Supervise use of electrical tools. Keep poisons and matches locked away.



## Gun Safety

If you keep a gun in your home, unload and lock it up. Keep the safety on. Treat all guns, even pellet guns, as if they are loaded.

Tell your preteen about the risk of injury or death if they carry a weapon. Get to know your preteen's friends. Encourage your son or daughter not to hang out with people who carry weapons. Teach them to tell an adult if other students bring guns to school.

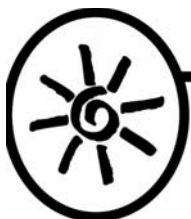


## Tobacco

- Talk to your preteen about the dangers of smoking. Tell them that smoking is addicting. Have the talk now, before he or she thinks about trying to smoke.
- Keep your preteen away from second hand smoke. Second hand smoke is the smoke that is inhaled by nonsmokers from people who smoke around them. Tell smokers to smoke outside or away from young people.

For more information, call:

**American Cancer Society** 1-800-ACS-2345  
**California Smokers Helpline** 1-800-NO-BUTTS (English)  
1-800-45-NO-FUME (Spanish)  
1-800-778-8440 (Vietnamese)



## Sun Protection

- Protect your preteen from the sun with clothing, a hat, other covering, or sunscreen. Make sure the sunscreen has SPF (sun protection factor) of 15 or higher. Reapply after swimming.
- Avoid using baby oil, mineral oil or tanning oil. These can increase the chances of sunburn.
- Too much sun can cause skin cancer, freckling and early wrinkling.



## Alcohol/Drug Abuse

- Talk to your preteen about not using alcohol, drugs, and tobacco.
- Talk to your preteen about not giving in to peer pressure.
- Alcohol abuse can be any amount of drinking that results in accidents or harm

to you and others.

- If you suspect your preteen is experimenting with drugs, get help for him or her as soon as possible.
- Even someone else's drug problem can affect you or your preteen's life.

For more information call:  
**California Youth Crisis Line**  
1-800-843-5200



## Dating/Sexual Health

- Talk to your preteen about their relationships.
- Tell your preteen that it is alright to wait before having sex.
- If your preteen is sexually active, get your preteen confidential counseling to prevent sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, and HIV.
- Don't be afraid to talk to your preteen about sex, sexuality, and birth control. It is better that they hear it from you than their friends.



## Violence and Abuse

- If your preteen has been abused by anyone, tell your doctor, police, or Child Protective Services right away.
- Avoid physical discipline. Don't take your anger out on your preteen.
- Tell your preteen that violence is not a healthy solution.
- To prevent sexual abuse, teach your preteen the differences between "good" and "bad" touches. Teach your preteen how to say "no" to bad touches and to tell you.

For more information, look in the community resource section of your telephone book for the number to **Child Protective Services**, or call:

**Prevent Child Abuse California**  
1-800-244-5373

NOTES FROM YOUR DOCTOR: