



# HELPING YOUR TEEN NAVIGATE HEALTHCARE

*one-on-one time helps your teen take gradual responsibility for their healthcare*

## FAST FACTS

- Professional healthcare guidelines recommend that providers start having brief one-on-one conversations with teen patients who are 11 or older.
- Some teens may be more comfortable with these brief one-on-one conversations with a nurse or medical assistant in the room, too. Or with another person of the same gender. This is totally okay.

## THE FULL PICTURE

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that providers have brief one-on-one conversations with teen patients for two reasons:

- 1 Before you know it, your teen will be responsible for their own healthcare. Time alone now with their provider lets them practice. By 18, ideally, your teen will be comfortable making appointments, asking questions, developing a relationship with a health care provider, and expecting good care and information.
- 2 Providers need honest and complete information to give your teen the care and information they need to be healthy. Teens may feel more comfortable asking certain questions one-on-one.

## PARENTS: KEEP TALKING

**The adolescent healthcare team includes the provider, the teen, and you – the parent.** You already help your teen make healthy choices. The next step is helping them take gradual responsibility for their healthcare:

**Show older teens how** to schedule their next visit.

**Say**, “It can be helpful to think about your questions ahead of time. How are you getting ready for the appointment?”


**Signal that you are still a willing partner on their health care team but that you support them taking the lead.** Say, “I think it would be good to talk about \_\_\_\_\_ .

Would you rather ask about that, or can I?”

**Invite questions after your teen’s visit.** Ask, “What questions do you have from your appointment?” Or, “Is there anything that came up that would be useful to talk about with me?”

**This one can be the hardest: help your teen get what they need even if they don’t want to discuss it with you.** “Here is the number for the clinic and here is our insurance information. I’m always here to talk. But even if you can’t tell me something right now, I want you to be healthy.”

## GREAT RESOURCES

 Why time alone matters from the American Academy of Pediatrics:  
[aapublications.org/content/aapnews/33/5/24.6.full.pdf](http://aapublications.org/content/aapnews/33/5/24.6.full.pdf)

 How parents can support time alone from the Centers for Disease Control:  
[cdc.gov/healthyyouth/healthservices/pdf/oneononetimerefactsheet.pdf](http://cdc.gov/healthyyouth/healthservices/pdf/oneononetimerefactsheet.pdf)