

but I'm not SICK

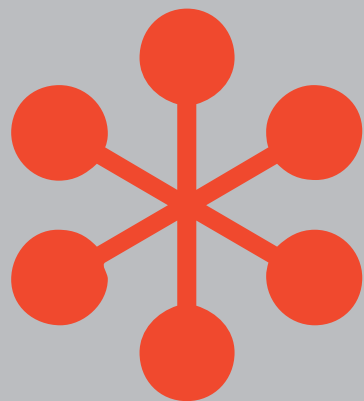
a teen's guide to health care

What teens
need to
know,
including:

- * Going to the doctor, even when you are healthy
- * Top 5 reasons teens don't go to the doctor
- * Finding teen-friendly health care

from WESTCHESTER CHILDREN'S ASSOCIATION and
AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS, NY CHAPTER 3

it's time
to take



care of
yourself



INTRODUCTION

This handbook was
written to help you

figure out why you
should get regular
health care, where you
can find it, and how to
make the most of your
visit to the doctor.

Remember,
now that
you're older,
it's time
to take
responsibility
for your own
health.

→ Planning
regular visits
to a doctor can help
you do just that.

What's
in it
for me?

In it, you will find

- **THE TOP FIVE REASONS** teens don't go to the doctor.
- **WHY** you should go to the doctor even if you're healthy.
- **HOW** to find a "medical home."
- **A LIST** of some health care providers friendly to teens.

REGULAR CHECKUPS



When you were younger, you were probably taken for regular check-ups, tests and shots, and the doctor gave advice about how to keep you safe and healthy. Adults should go for regular checkups and medical advice, too.

Going to the doctor even when you're not sick:

A GOOD PLAN AT ANY AGE



Now that you're older, **YOU are the one who should take responsibility for your own health and safety.** But don't forget - there are still many times when your parents and family can be helpful.

Here are some reasons why you need to get regular checkups:

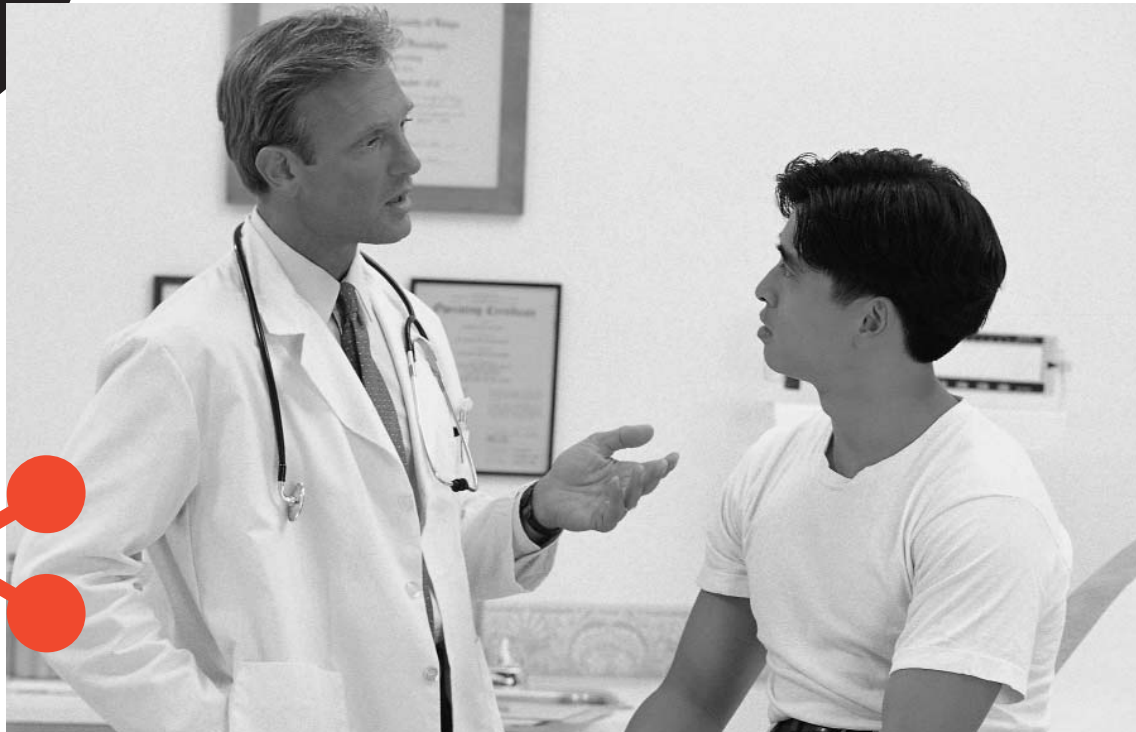
- * Your body is growing and changing.** The doctor can help you be sure that the changes you have been noticing are all okay.
- * Taking risks is part of being a teenager.** Your doctor can give you information about which risks can cause you serious harm, and help you learn how to protect yourself.
- * You can prevent some health problems before they happen.** Immunizations (vaccinations or shots) are great at doing this. Teenagers need "boosters" to the vaccines they got as babies, and may also need shots to prevent serious illnesses such as hepatitis, chicken pox or meningitis.
- * Your doctor can find health problems early when there is a better chance of treating and curing them.** Your doctor can also teach you to recognize problems yourself.

Finally, your doctor or other health care provider is someone you can talk to privately about things that are on your mind. He or she can assist you in getting any special help you might need.

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR VISITS TO THE DOCTOR



WHAT IS A "MEDICAL HOME" AND WHY SHOULD YOU HAVE ONE?



One of the best ways to get the most out of your visits to the doctor is to get your health care at the same place and from the same provider each time. This is called a medical home. The place can be a private doctor's office, a health center or a clinic. It can be the same place your family has been using since you were little, or one you find for yourself as a teenager.

The important thing is that you will see a doctor who gets to know you over time, when you are sick and when you are not sick. The doctor can do a better job of taking care of you. You will get to know the doctor better and be comfortable asking questions and discussing problems.

TOP 5 REASONS

WHY TEENS DON'T GO TO THE DOCTOR



NUMBER

1

I thought the problem would go away...

This is the number one reason that teens give for not going to the doctor. Sometimes physical “symptoms” are not physical “problems” and are part of the natural changes teens’ bodies go through. Other times, they are not.

The only way to know if a symptom is a serious problem (and what to do about it) is to see a health care professional.

After you see a doctor, you can learn how preventive care can reduce future fears.

NUMBER

2

I’m concerned about protecting my privacy...

Laws about health care are designed to protect the privacy of teenagers. Generally, when a minor (a person under eighteen years old) goes to the doctor for reasons listed below, the doctor must keep information about the visit private.

This means, for instance, that the doctor cannot tell your parents about the visit—except with your consent, or in order to save your life or the life of someone else.

Having the right to see a doctor on your own is also known as the right to consent to treatment. In New York, minors who understand the risks and benefits of treatment can consent on their own to:

- Emergency health care
- Certain mental health services
- Certain alcohol and drug abuse services
- Reproductive health care, including birth control, abortion, and pregnancy-related care
- Testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections
- HIV testing

For other services, you usually need your parents’ consent if you are not yet 18.

However, if you are

- pregnant
- an emancipated minor
- a parent
- married

you can consent to most or all of your health care.

Keep in mind, however, that even though your health-care provider is required to keep your visits and treatments confidential (private), if your parents have health insurance, the insurance company may send a detailed statement of the treatment you received to your home. If you really need to keep your visit strictly private, the best solution is to pay with cash. That way,

no insurance companies are involved and no paper work will be sent home to your parents.

NUMBER 3 I'm afraid of what my doctor will say or do...
When you were younger, your parents or other adults took responsibility for your health care. You may not know what a doctor would say or do if you visit the office on your own. Many teens are afraid that a doctor will judge them. **Fortunately, the medical system has rules to make sure that teens are treated with respect and courtesy.** Professional organizations like the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American Medical Association (AMA) have developed guidelines that help doctors and nurses understand and take care of teens' unique health care needs. Your doctor should listen to your concerns, and address them appropriately and without judgment.

NUMBER 4 I don't have a way to pay for a doctor's visit...
There are many alternatives if your family does not have health insurance. Child Health Plus A (formerly Medicaid) is a free health insurance program for qualifying children and teens. Child Health Plus B is a free or low-cost health insurance program for children and teens under 19, living in New York State, regardless of family income or immigration

free services are offered at a number of adolescent clinics and community health centers



status, who do not qualify for Medicaid and do not have private insurance. In addition, a number of adolescent clinics and community health centers offer free services or sliding scale payment and accept cash, checks or credit cards. There are many ways to pay for health care if your family does not have private insurance.

NUMBER 5 It would be really difficult to schedule an appointment and go alone...
There are a number of things to consider when you schedule an appointment. You have to be sure that how you pay is acceptable, that office hours work with your schedule, and that you choose a doctor with whom you feel comfortable.

When you make an appointment, feel free to ask as many questions of the receptionist as you need. For example:

- What buses run nearby?
- What kind of payment do you accept?
Can I pay with check or cash?
- Can I choose to see a male (or female) doctor?
- Can I see a doctor who specializes in treating teenagers?

Of course, there may always be times when you want the company or support of your parents or family.

✿
Taking the lead in scheduling your doctor's appointment is the first step to getting health care that fits your lifestyle and needs.



DOCTORS

DOCTORS CLINICS

Now you know there are really no good reasons for not getting the health care you need and deserve. We hope this handbook helps you take charge of your own health care.

MOUNT VERNON
Mount Vernon Neighborhood
Health Center
107 West Fourth Street
914-699-7200

OSSINING
Ossining Open Door Family
Medical Group
165 Main Street
914-941-1263

PEEKSKILL
Hudson River Health Care
1037 Main Street
914-734-8950

RYE BROOK
Rye Brook Open Door
Family Health Center
90 South Ridge Street
914-937-8899

VALHALLA
Adolescent Medical Clinic
at The Children's Center
Westchester Medical Center,
Cedarwood Hall
914-493-7569

WHITE PLAINS
Greenburgh Neighborhood
Health Center
330 Tarrytown Road
914-285-4970

St. Agnes Hospital
Adolescent Medicine Clinic
311 North Street
914-681-4681

YONKERS
St. Joseph's Family
Health Center
127 South Broadway
914-966-8014

Valentine Lane Family Practice
St. John's Riverside
503 South Broadway
914-965-9771

MOUNT KISCO
280 North Bedford Road
914-666-6025

MOUNT VERNON
14 South Second Avenue
914-668-7927

NEW ROCHELLE
247-249 North Avenue
914-632-4442

WHITE PLAINS
175 Tarrytown Road
914-761-6566

YONKERS
53 South Broadway
914-965-1912

HEALTH INSURANCE

CLINICS

HEALTH INSURANCE

The resources listed below can help you find a "medical home" and a health care provider you can trust to help you become a healthier you.

NYS Child Health Plus Hotline 800-698-4543
NYS Growing Up Healthy Hotline 800-522-5006
Westchester County Healthcare Enrollment Information Line 914-637-2454

These sites offer help in signing up for insurance. Appointments are available when you are.

Child Care Council of Westchester
470 Mamaroneck Ave., White Plains 914-761-3456 (ext. 136)

CLUSTER
20 South Broadway, Yonkers 914-963-6440 (ext. 254)

WestCOP
2269 Saw Mill River Road, Elmsford 914-592-5600 (ext. 148)

Westchester Hispanic Coalition
46 Waller Ave., White Plains 914-948-8466 (ext. 13)

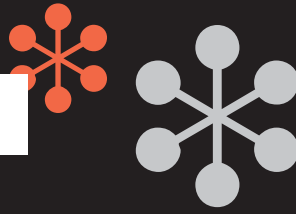
Affinity Health Plan 800-599-2920
Community Choice Health Plans 800-929-9656
Empire Blue Cross/Blue Shield 800-431-1914
Fidelis Care New York 888-343-3547
Health Insurance Plan of Greater New York (HIP) 800-447-1350
HealthSource/Hudson Health Plan 800-339-4557

Phones for these hotlines are staffed by teens and young adults who offer information on health recreation, employment, and many other services

FIRST Health Connection 914-949-6789
Teen FYI 1-866-TEEN-FYI



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Remember,
 now that
 you’re older,
 it’s time
 to take
 responsibility 
 for your own
 health.

 Start planning
 regular visits
 to a doctor now.

this booklet was brought to you by



**YOUR SOURCE FOR
GREAT HEALTH CARE**
call: 1.800.339.4557

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Founded in 1914, Westchester Children's Association is a non-profit organization providing an independent voice for the children and teens of Westchester. Many of the programs and services that have benefited generations of Westchester's children are a result of the indefatigable efforts of WCA.

WCA works to identify the unmet needs of children, to inform the public and policy-makers about them, to advocate for innovative solutions, to keep children's issues high on the public agenda, and to encourage community involvement and collaboration to improve children's lives today and in the future.