




## Encourage & Support

There are many ways that you can help your teen start being responsible for his or her own health and health care. Explain that he or she should expect to:

-  Be informed about and make responsible decisions about sex, pregnancy, and parenting
-  Be treated with respect and courtesy
-  Be given accurate and appropriate services, advice, and care
-  Be told about when he or she can give consent for his or her own care
-  Be told about when care will or will not be confidential
-  Involve family, friends, and partners
-  Ask questions

## Resources

### Healthy Teen Network

[www.HealthyTeenNetwork.org](http://www.HealthyTeenNetwork.org)

### Center for Adolescent Health & the Law

[www.cahl.org](http://www.cahl.org)

### Overview of Minor Consent Laws

[www.Guttmacher.org/StateCenter/spibs/spib\\_MACS.pdf](http://www.Guttmacher.org/StateCenter/spibs/spib_MACS.pdf)

### Advocates for Youth

[www.advocatesforyouth.org/parents/index.htm](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/parents/index.htm)

### Campaign for our Children

[www.cfoc.org/ParentRes](http://www.cfoc.org/ParentRes)

### Planned Parenthood

[www.plannedparenthood.org](http://www.plannedparenthood.org)

### Sex Etc.

[www.sexetc.org](http://www.sexetc.org) or [sxetc.org](http://sxetc.org)

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## Healthy Teen Network

Healthy Teen Network (HTN) is a national membership organization that provides resources and services to professionals working in the field of adolescent reproductive health - specifically teen pregnancy prevention, teen pregnancy, and teen parenting.

## The Center for Adolescent Health & the Law

The Center for Adolescent Health & the Law (CAHL) is a national nonprofit legal and policy organization that promotes the health of adolescents and their access to comprehensive health care.

*Healthy Teen Network and the Center for Adolescent Health & the Law strongly believe youth can make responsible decisions about sexuality, pregnancy, and parenting when they have complete and accurate information, resources, and support that are culturally relevant and appropriate to their age, gender, and developmental stage. HTN and CAHL believe parents and other trusted adults can be a teen's greatest support and should be engaged in every aspect of their teen's health and well-being.*

Healthy Teen Network  
509 2nd Street NE  
Washington, DC 20002  
Phone: 202-547-8814  
Fax: 202-547-8815  
[Info@HealthyTeenNetwork.org](mailto:Info@HealthyTeenNetwork.org)  
[www.HealthyTeenNetwork.org](http://www.HealthyTeenNetwork.org)

Center for Adolescent Health & the Law  
310 Kildaire Road, St 100  
Chapel Hill, NC 27516  
Phone: 919-968-8850  
Fax: 919-968-8851  
[Info@cahl.org](mailto:Info@cahl.org), [www.cahl.org](http://www.cahl.org)

Making a Difference...

**Helping  
Your Teen  
Stay Healthy  
& Safe**

# Health Care, Birth Control & **CONFIDENTIAL** Services



## A guide for PARENTS



**TEENS** said parents influence their decisions about sex even more strongly than friends, religious leaders, and teachers.

## Helping Teens Stay Healthy & Safe

As a parent, you care about your child's health and safety. This is especially true as your child enters his or her teenage years and faces new challenges and pressures. Educate your teen about healthy relationships and sexual health and encourage your teen to take responsibility for his or her own health care. It is one of the most important ways you, as a parent, can help protect your teen's health and well-being.

## Raising Healthy Teens



Teens need routine care like sports physicals and annual checkups, but they also need care that's different from when they were younger. Teens are growing and changing in important ways that mean they are no longer "little kids" and not yet "full adults." Often they become involved in behaviors - some you know about, and some you don't - that mean

they need health care that's not the same as when they were toddlers or in grade school.

## Educating Yourself, Educating Your Teen

You are your teen's best teacher. Educate yourself about growth, development, and sexual health so you can give your teen informed answers and advice. Talk to your health care provider, visit Planned Parenthood, or explore the Web resources on the back of this brochure for more information. Provide your teen with age-appropriate books, videos, and pamphlets. Explore how to use "teachable moments" - remarks at school, a TV program, jokes or a relative's pregnancy - to talk about sex with your teen.

## Knowing Your Limits

Most teens will seek routine medical care and many other services with their parents' knowledge - but sometimes they don't. They may want to be able to get specific services like birth control or testing for a sexually transmitted disease on their own. Requiring parental consent or notification can affect teen decision-making and discourage them from seeking timely treatment. There are times when a teen may avoid sharing concerns, especially sexual health concerns, with a parent for fear of embarrassment, disapproval, or punishment. It is important to talk to your teen and make sure he or she understands that you are there to listen and be supportive, even at times when he or she might hesitate to talk with you.

## Making an Appointment

There are many places your teen can go for health care. You may want to encourage your teen to go to your family's regular doctor - a pediatrician or family doctor - or the clinic where you usually go for care. There are also other places where your teen can seek health care, such as Planned Parenthood, a school-based health or teen clinic, or a clinic run by the Health Department in your community. Remember to advise your teen on where to get the proper care, but let him or her be the one to make the appointment. Teach your teen the importance of getting involved in his or her own health and well-being.

- ❓ Call 1-800-230-PLAN or visit [www.PlannedParenthood.org](http://www.PlannedParenthood.org)
- ❓ Visit [www.NFPRHA.org/clinics](http://www.NFPRHA.org/clinics)
- ❓ Search online under "family planning" or "clinics"

## Talking to Your Teen

Parents are their teen's primary role models.

When asked, teens said parents influence their decisions about sex even more strongly than friends, religious leaders, and teachers. Use this to your advantage. Encourage your teen to involve you when they are making decisions that will affect their health and well-being.

*Requiring parental consent or notification can affect teen decision-making and discourage them from seeking timely treatment.*

## Respect, Value, & Listen

Your teen's health care needs and decisions should be part of a conversation you two have together. Your teen will not turn to you for advice unless she or he knows it's okay to trust you. Respect, value, and listen to your teen's opinions and beliefs. Let them know their choices matter.

## Trusting Your Health Care Provider

Don't be afraid to let your teen visit a health care provider alone. Health care providers are trained medical professionals who will give your teen the best care and advice regarding his or her health. It is very important to remember that health care providers need honest answers from your teen to make the right diagnosis and provide the best care. If your teen is intimidated or embarrassed with you in the room or worried about what you'll be told later, he or she may not give truthful answers, and thus not get the care he or she needs and deserves.

