



Activate your Teen in the Great Outdoors

Spending time outdoors just feels good, doesn't it? Whether you are out enjoying community parks and pathways or adventuring on mountain trails, getting active outdoors is a great way to boost well-being.

New research confirms what many people have long suspected to be true: there's a clear link between spending time outside and our overall sense of well-being. Getting outside gives us a positive mental health boost – some people report feeling less

stressed or anxious, while others feel more energetic and happy. There's also evidence that spending time outdoors improves our levels of physical activity. We tend to take more steps when we're outside, and we're more likely to take part in 'heart-healthy' fitness activities—the kind that make us 'huff and puff', like running, cycling, cross-country skiing, or skipping rope.

Healthy Teens

October 2020 Parent Newsletter

We all have our reasons for heading outside, but one thing is certain—kids at all ages and stages benefit from time spent in green space.

Let's face it, older kids may need some encouragement to unplug from technology and get active outside. Age-appropriate games, semi-structured activities, and digital tools that connect us to nature may provide the spark they need to get them going. When physical distancing recommendations can be followed, it may help to include friends, peers, and mentors in outdoor activities—anyone who can help to motivate your teen. (Bonus: spending outside time together can provide unique opportunities for conversation and connection!)

Try these tips to activate your teen in nature:

- Join an outdoor boot camp or fitness class
- Snap photos of what inspires you in nature
- Get a bird or plant identification app, then track what you can find as a family
- Grab a ball and go outside with your cohort—try a pick-up game of soccer or basketball, or play catch
- Paint kindness rocks and hide them in your neighbourhood

- Ride road or mountain bikes, skateboards, scooters, or in-line skates
- Set a goal to walk, wheel, or run a certain distance in 10, 20 or 30 minutes (or just see how far you can get!)
- Try something new, like geocaching

There's no one-size-fits all when it comes to getting active outside! The best advice is often just to do what brings you joy, and be open to trying new activities with your kids, family, friends, and community.

Get outside and have some family fun! Your body and brain will thank you (and your teens might too...)

The [AHS Parent COVID Guide](#) can help you figure out what to do when your child feels unwell and/or if they've been notified by AHS as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19.