

Healthy Teens

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Articles

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Protecting Your Teen's Teeth

By now your teen has most of their adult teeth so keeping them healthy is important. They do not get another chance with these jewels, but they can protect them with these easy tips:

- **Limit sugar intake.** Sweetened snacks and drinks can cause tooth decay, especially when the sugar stays in the mouth.
- **Choose healthy snacks.** Even when on the go, be sure to choose nutritious and tooth-friendly snacks like apples, carrot sticks and cheese.
- **Learn quick tricks.** Small efforts can go a long way to keeping teeth healthy.

Encourage your teen to:

- Keep a toothbrush in their locker or backpack and brush when they have time
 - Rinse with water after sugary treats
 - Chew sugarless gum with xylitol (a natural sweetener) after meals and snacks
 - Drink water to quench thirst
- **Avoid injury to teeth.** Mouth guards, seatbelts and face shields can help protect teeth. Dental piercings, using teeth to open items, and chewing on hard objects can cause injury and should be avoided.

Bacteria are becoming more resistant to the drugs we treat the disease with (antibiotics). Vaccination decreases the impact of this by preventing people from becoming infected with those resistant germs. Vaccination also means we don't have to treat people as often with antibiotics. For more information visit:

<http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/86/2/07-040089/en/>



Being Mentally Healthy

The terms mental health and mental illness are often used to mean the same thing, but in reality, they are different. Everyone has mental health; not everyone has a mental illness like depression. Having good mental health helps us manage our emotions, care about others and cope with problems. It's important for kids and adults alike.

The importance of learning social and emotional skills that help keep us mentally healthy are sometimes overlooked at school because of the emphasis on academic success. However, research shows a strong link between having social emotional skills, being resilient and having school success. Children who have developed social and emotional skills find it easier to manage themselves related to others, resolve conflict, do better in school and feel positive about themselves and the world around them. Family life is our first "classroom" for social and



emotional learning. As a parent, you can be a strong positive influence on your teen's social and emotional growth and you can reflect and build on your own skills, helping you and your teen in the process. Here are 5 areas you and your teen can learn more about and work to improve.

Self-awareness: Know your emotions and recognize their impact on your behaviour.

Self-management: Know how to control your emotions and behaviours in challenging times and how to set and work towards goals.

Social awareness: Understand, respect and have empathy for all people and their perspectives.

Relationship skills: Know how to establish healthy relationships with others by communicating clearly, listening, cooperating, managing conflict, resisting peer pressure and seeking and offering help.

Responsible decision making: Understand how your choices impact you and others.

Adapted from www.parenttoolkit.com and www.casel.org