
MAKING HEALTHY CHOICES

PARENTS & CAREGIVERS

Staying healthy will allow for your child to have more freedom in making their own choices as they get older, as well as prevent other health issues from developing. Your child's self-esteem is important in how they feel and how they act. Teaching your child healthy habits can help increase their self-esteem and improve their quality of life.

Helpful Tips

- **Exercise**
 - Role model the importance of exercise to your child. Exercise helps your whole body – not just your physical health. It causes the body to make chemicals that help us feel good, sleep better, and lowers the risk of some health problems.
- **Substance Use**
 - As your child gets older, it will be up to them to decide whether to use alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana. Take some time to talk to you child about peer pressure, the health effects and risks of substance use, and what to do in a situation where they may feel uncomfortable.
- **Self-Esteem**
 - Teach your child about the concept of self-esteem. People with high self-esteem know themselves well. They are realistic, allow themselves to make mistakes, and find friends that value them for who they are. Talk to your child about making positive choices about friends, relationships, and how to handle failure.
- **Nutrition**
 - Emphasize the importance of having a healthy and balanced diet. Teach your child to aim to eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables each day.
- **Sexual Health**
 - Although potentially uncomfortable, don't hesitate in discussing with your child about what healthy, consensual relationships look like.
 - Your child will likely go through puberty as they transition from pediatric to adult health care. Prepare your child for the changes they might be experiencing, and how to develop healthy habits regarding self-care and personal hygiene.
- **Sleep**
 - Ensure that your child stays active during the day to aid in their sleep.
 - Encourage your child to avoid alcohol and drugs, as they might disrupt sleep and increase their chance of waking up in the middle of the night.
 - Set boundaries with your child regarding night-time electronic use.