

# *Teen Survival Guide*

**Health Tips for On-the-go Girls**

**girlshealth.gov**



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Office on Women's Health



# Intro

## *Introduction*

**H**ave you ever had a question that you were too shy to ask? Maybe something like:

- “Does chocolate cause pimples?”
- “What do I do if the kids at school make fun of me?”
- “Can I get a sexually transmitted disease from kissing?”

Don’t worry—you’re not the only one! Every young woman has questions like these. Everyone can use some advice.

Having questions is a sign that you are growing up. It shows that you want to take care of yourself. Don’t be afraid to go to a parent or guardian, school nurse, or other trusted adult for honest and straight answers. They were young once, too!

You can also look to this guide for helpful information. It offers:

- teen tips
- activities
- fun quizzes
- a glossary of new words
- questions from young women

And, if you want to learn more, you can check out [www.girlshealth.gov](http://www.girlshealth.gov) or the other web sites listed here.

You can also share what you know by posting your thoughts on issues facing teens in the “Speak Up” section of [www.girlshealth.gov](http://www.girlshealth.gov).

Be informed so that you can make healthy choices!





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You are the Rhythm of the Universe! Mind, Body and Spirit!

# Taking care of your reproductive health



## YOUR BODY

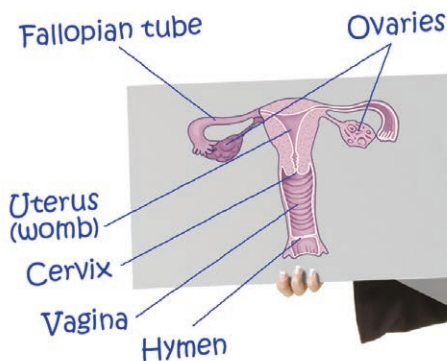
The way the female body is designed is really cool if you think about it. Check out these graphics to learn about the major reproductive organs. These are the parts of the body involved in making a baby.

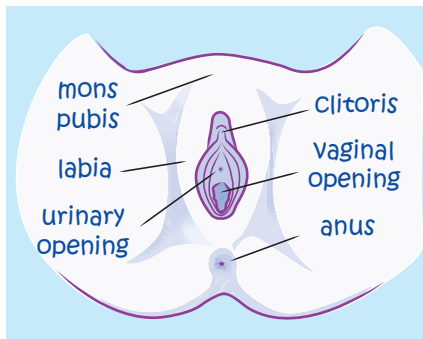
**Ovary**—Women have two ovaries, which have eggs (ova) and make female hormones. One of the

ovaries lets go of an egg about once each month as part of the menstrual cycle. This is called ovulation.

**Fallopian tube**—When an egg is released, it travels through the fallopian tube toward the uterus.

**Fertilization**—When a man's sperm and a woman's egg join together. This usually happens in the fallopian tube.





Outside of the body, the entrance to the vagina is covered by the **vulva**, which has five parts: **mons pubis**, **labia**, **clitoris**, urinary opening and vaginal opening.

**Uterus**—The uterus is a pear-shaped, hollow organ where a baby grows during pregnancy. The lining of the uterus is called the **endometrium**. This lining is shed during a woman's period. Eggs that are not fertilized are shed along with the lining of the uterus.

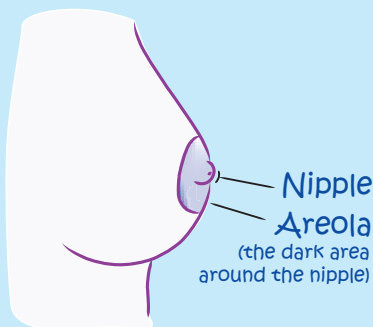
**Cervix**—The cervix is a slim entrance between the vagina and the uterus. The muscles of the cer-

vix are flexible so that it can expand to let a baby pass through during birth. (Very cool!)

**Hymen**—The hymen is a thin piece of tissue that covers the opening of the vagina. This tissue can be broken through with the first sexual intercourse.

**Vagina**—The vagina is a muscular passage that leads down from the cervix to the outside of the body.

## Know your Breasts



Every girl's breasts are different—in shape, size, and in color. You can get to know the way your breasts look and feel by doing a monthly breast self-exam. (Check out the web sites listed at the end of this section to learn how.) This way, you can ask your doctor about anything you are unsure about.



## Fun quiz

The ovaries begin to make more e \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ and other hormones during puberty.

\*Hint: You can find the answers in one of the web sites listed at the end of this section.

Answer: estrogen

**To:** girlshealth.gov

**From:** Cecelia (11), Corpus Christi, Texas

I hear people call parts of a woman's body names that I don't understand. How do I know the right terms to use?

You're right. There are many slang words people use for the parts of a woman's body. You may hear them used by kids at school and even on TV, in movies, or in some of your favorite songs. Some of these terms can be really negative and even make you feel ashamed about your body. You need to use the right names for sexual organs for two reasons: to be respectful of a woman's body and to be able to talk about any problems with your doctor. (See pages 4 and 5 for the right terms.)



# YOUR PERIOD

Your period doesn't have to keep you from doing the things you like to do. Nobody even needs to know you're having it but you!

## Tampons or pads? It's your choice

What you should know about tampons:

- \* Tampons are put inside of your vagina to soak up blood before it leaves your body. Instructions come with tampons to show you how to put them in.
- \* Some tampons have a plastic or cardboard covering—called the “applicator”—that makes it easier for you to put the tampon in. Do not leave the applicator inside your vagina.



- \* All tampons have a string at the end to help you take it out when it needs to be changed (at least every 4 to 8 hours).
- \* Tampons will not get lost in your vagina or “slip up.”
- \* You can wear tampons when you swim. Water does not enter your vagina.
- \* It is VERY important that you use the tampon with the lowest level of absorbency (the amount it can soak up) for your needs. Don't use a “super” tampon if you only need a “regular” tampon.



### Teen tip:

To clean menstrual blood from your underwear or clothes, soak the spot for

a few minutes in **COLD** water mixed with a little laundry detergent. Once the blood is washed out, wash with other clothes as usual.

- \* Using tampons that are too absorbent or not changing them often enough can put you at risk for **toxic shock syndrome (TSS)**, a rare yet dangerous infection.

Tell an adult and call a doctor if you are using tampons and have the following:

- High fever that comes on all of a sudden
- Muscle pains
- Dizziness or fainting
- A rash that looks like sunburn
- Bloodshot eyes

- Strange vaginal discharge (fluid) with an unusual scent, look, or feel
- Feeling of confusion

It is possible to tear your hymen by putting in a tampon, but this is rare. If it does tear, this does not mean you are no longer a virgin. You are a virgin until you have sexual intercourse.

What you should know about **pads**:

- \* Pads stick to the inside of your underwear and soak up the blood that leaves the vagina.
- \* Some pads are thin, for days when your period is light. Some are thick, for when you are bleeding more. You also can use thicker pads at night when you sleep.



- \* During the day, it is best to check your pad every couple of hours so that you can change it before it is soaked with blood.
- \* If you are worried about any smell, changing pads often and keeping up good hygiene will help control this. You do not need to use deodorant pads.
- \* You probably don't want to wear pads when you swim. They will soak up water and be bulky.

**To:** [girlshealth.gov](http://girlshealth.gov)

**From:** Nicole (age 12), Greeley, Colorado

**Do I need to **douche**?**

**Vaginal discharge** and having your period might feel messy to you at first. But rinsing or cleaning out the vagina with douche, (cleansing with a special product that is sold for this purpose), is not a good idea. "Douching" can make you more likely to get dangerous infections. To keep feeling fresh, wash your **vulva** with gentle, scent-free soap and try using panty liners when you're not having your period. Over time, you will get used to these feelings and may not notice them at all!

# PREMENSTRUAL SYNDROME (PMS)

Are you feeling grumpy, tense, tired or depressed? Maybe you cry a lot and crave certain foods, too. Or maybe you have felt changes in your body, like acne, a bloated stomach, breast aches or slight weight gain. If you feel this way and it's also a few days before your period, you might have **premenstrual syndrome** or **PMS**. Don't worry! PMS is a normal part of having a period, and you will feel better soon!

## If you get PMS, try...

- \* Eating more healthful foods and less sugar and fat.

## Teen tip:

To make menstrual cramps better, put a warm water bottle or heating pad on your lower back or lower belly. You may also try hugging a pillow. Don't ever take medicine without permission from a parent or guardian.



- \* Eating less salt the few days before your period, which can help stop bloating.
- \* Drinking less caffeine (found in soda, tea and coffee) to feel less crabby and help ease breast aches and cramps.
- \* Eating small meals often each day rather than big ones.
- \* Exercising for at least 30 minutes, four to six times a week. If you have cramps or aches and pains, don't exercise so hard—you can walk instead of jog.
- \* Sleeping at least 8 hours each night.



- \* Keeping a regular schedule for exercise, meals and bedtime.
- \* Talking to your doctor about your PMS symptoms. Your doctor may have you take a pain reliever that has ibuprofen or naproxen, which you can buy at a grocery store or drugstore without a doctor's orders.

**Make sure you have permission from a parent or guardian first.** Your doctor may give you other medicines if the symptoms are really bad.

## Fun quiz

No one knows for sure what causes PMS, but it seems to be linked to the changes in h \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ levels that happen during your menstrual cycle.

\*Hint: You can find the answer in one of the web sites listed at the end of this section.

Answer: hormone

**To:** girlshealth.gov

**From:** Traci (age 14), Anchorage, Alaska

**I feel really down before my period. Is this normal?**

The blues are a normal part of PMS. If your mood doesn't get better within a few days after starting your period, talk with your doctor or a parent or guardian. Also, check out the signs of depression on page 45.



# SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES (STDs)

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are on the rise among young people. STDs are caused by many different **viruses** and **bacteria** that spread through sexual contact. Some examples of STDs are chlamydia, crabs (pubic lice), genital herpes, gonorrhea, hepatitis B, HIV/AIDS, and syphilis. Even if you're not sexually active now, it's vital to know how to protect yourself later.

## Four key things you need to know about STDs

1. STDs can affect anyone—women and men of all ages and racial and ethnic backgrounds. Teens and young adults get STDs more often than any other age group. About three million teens get STDs every year. That means about one in four sexually active teens gets an STD.
2. You can get an STD by having any kind of sex, including vaginal (penis is put into vagina), oral (sucking and/or licking of sex organs), and anal (penis is put into butt). You can also get an STD by having other close sexual contact with someone who already has an STD.
3. Often, STDs cause no symptoms at first. Even if you have no symptoms, you can still pass an infection on to another person. If you get symptoms, they can seem like other problems that aren't STDs, such as **yeast infections**.



4. While some STDs can be treated and will go away, others can't be cured. You can only try to make the symptoms better. If untreated, some STDs can lead to **pelvic inflammatory disease, infertility**, cancer of the cervix, or even death. If you think you have a problem, see your doctor right away. Your doctor will check your skin, throat and genital area. Your doctor may also test your blood, urine, or a sample of tissue or fluid from your body. If you have an STD, your doctor can start taking care of you right away. Even if your STD is cured with treatment, you can still get it again if you are sexually active and do not protect yourself.

### Protect yourself from STDs

- \* You can't get an STD if you do not have sex of any kind or close sexual contact with someone. The best way to protect your health is to wait until you are married to have sex.
- \* Condoms can't protect you from all STDs. But, if used correctly and used all the time, condoms will lower your chances of getting some STDs. Condoms will also lower your chances of getting pregnant.
- \* Talk to your parents or guardians, an older brother or sister, or another trusted adult about sex to help you make wise choices.

**Abstinence**—not having sex—is the only 100 percent sure way to not get an STD.

### How do I know if I have an STD?

You should see a doctor right away if you have lower stomach pain or have **vaginal discharge** (fluid) that is yellow, gray, or green with a strong smell. In between periods, it is normal to have a clear or whitish fluid (discharge) coming from your vagina.

**See your doctor if you have any of the other symptoms of common STDs that follow.**

STD	Symptoms
Chlamydia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Often no symptoms</li> <li>• Abnormal <b>vaginal discharge</b></li> <li>• Burning sensation when urinating (peeing)</li> </ul>
Genital herpes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Painful small red bumps, blisters, or open sores on or around your genital area or <b>rectum</b></li> <li>• Some infected people may never have sores</li> <li>• Fever, headache, or other muscle aches</li> <li>• Swollen <b>glands</b> in the genital area</li> <li>• Pain in legs, buttocks, or genital area</li> <li>• Abnormal vaginal discharge</li> <li>• Pain when urinating (peeing)</li> </ul>
Syphilis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early on: Painless sores in the genital area, on the lips, or in the mouth and swollen <b>lymph glands</b></li> <li>• Later: Skin rash on the palms and feet, fever, swollen <b>lymph glands</b>, sore throat, patchy hair loss, headaches, weight loss, and tiredness</li> <li>• Left untreated: Damage to the brain, nerves, eyes, heart, and blood vessels; can lead to death</li> </ul>
Crabs (pubic lice)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Itching in the <b>pubic</b> area</li> <li>• Often people have no symptoms</li> <li>• Sometimes rust colored spots on underwear from bleeding where you have been bitten</li> <li>• Mild fever and tiredness if you have been bitten by a large number of lice</li> </ul>



STD	Symptoms
<b>Gonorrhea</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most have no symptoms</li> <li>• Pain or burning sensation when urinating (peeing)</li> <li>• Yellowish and sometimes bloody <b>vaginal discharge</b></li> <li>• Vaginal bleeding between menstrual periods</li> <li>• Anal discharge, itching, and soreness if the <b>rectum</b> is infected</li> </ul>
<b>Hepatitis B</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yellow skin or yellowing of the whites of the eyes</li> <li>• Tiredness</li> <li>• Dark-colored urine</li> <li>• Lower stomach pain</li> <li>• Loss of appetite</li> <li>• Nausea and vomiting</li> <li>• Diarrhea</li> <li>• Joint pain</li> <li>• Some have no symptoms</li> </ul>
<b>HIV</b> (Human immuno-deficiency virus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extreme tiredness</li> <li>• Rapid weight loss</li> <li>• Swollen lymph nodes</li> <li>• Getting low fevers and night sweats often</li> <li>• Getting oral or vaginal <b>yeast infections</b> and other STDs often</li> <li>• Red, brown, or purplish marks on or under the skin or inside the mouth, nose, or eyelids</li> </ul>
<b>HPV</b> (Human papilloma-virus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most people have no symptoms and do not know they are infected</li> <li>• Some types of HPV can cause <b>warts</b>—some painful, some not—in the genital area</li> </ul>

## What about pregnancy?

Having a baby while you are a teen can be very hard.

1. Teen mothers are less likely to finish school and more likely to be single parents.
2. There are serious health risks for teen girls who have babies.
3. Teen pregnancy is closely linked to poverty and single parenthood.

Not having sex is the only 100 percent sure way to not get pregnant. If you do become pregnant, talk to a trusted adult such as a school counselor or parent or guardian. Also, see a doctor right

## Fun quiz

By the age of 21, almost \_\_\_\_ in 5 people in the U.S. will need to be treated for an STD.

\*Hint: You can find the answer in one of the web sites listed at the end of this section.

Answer: 1

away. It is important to get good prenatal care, which is special health care for pregnant women. If you have a friend who is pregnant, urge her to talk to an adult and see a doctor right away.

**To:** girlshealth.gov

**From:** Allyson (age 14), Portland, Maine

**Can I get an STD from kissing?**

Kissing is pretty safe. But, you can catch a common virus that causes cold sores if you kiss someone who has a cold sore at the time. This virus is called **herpes simplex virus** one or HSV-1. STDs are usually spread during risky acts like vaginal intercourse, oral sex, and skin-to-skin contact in the genital area.

# SEEING YOUR DOCTOR

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As you become a woman, it's important to have checkups once a year with a doctor or other health care provider. He or she will check out your general health and reproductive health.

## **Your doctor might ask you questions about:**

- \* your general health, allergies, medicines you are taking and your health concerns
- \* your mental health, depression, and stress level
- \* whether or not you feel safe
- \* your period, such as how long it lasts, how old you were when you first got it, and when the first day of your last period was
- \* when your breasts started to grow
- \* whether you have ever had sex or have been sexually abused

- \* your vagina, such as if you have had any unusual discharge, itching, or odor

Even if these questions make you feel a little embarrassed, it is important to be honest. Your doctor needs the right information about your health and body. This way, he or she can help you out if you have a problem. Keep in mind your doctor has heard these questions before.



**You should see a gynecologist or another doctor who specializes in women's reproductive health if any of these apply to you:**

- \* you have ever had sex (vaginal, oral, or anal) or intimate sexual contact
- \* you are 21 or older
- \* you have lower stomach pain, fever, and **vaginal discharge** that is yellow, gray, or green with a strong smell (these may be signs of **PID**)

\* you are having problems with your periods



**To:** girlshealth.gov

**From:** Jody (age 15), Rockaway, New Jersey

**Will my doctor tell my parents about anything I share during my visit?**

Most states have laws that allow teens to see a doctor for their **reproductive** health without getting a parent's okay. Your doctor will do his or her best to make sure your visit stays confidential (private), but you can always ask him or her what the rules are before your exam. If the doctor thinks that you may harm yourself or others, he or she may have to tell your parents, guardians, or others about the visit. Even though it's important to trust your doctor, talking to your parent or guardian about your health care is the smart way to go.



## More information on taking care of your reproductive health

### How to do a breast self-exam:

- \* [www.kidshealth.org/teen/sexual\\_health/girls/bse.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/teen/sexual_health/girls/bse.html)

### Your reproductive health:

- \* [www.girlshealth.gov/body/reproductive\\_health.htm](http://www.girlshealth.gov/body/reproductive_health.htm)
- \* [www.kidshealth.org/teen/sexual\\_health/changing\\_body/female\\_repro.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/teen/sexual_health/changing_body/female_repro.html)

### Your period:

- \* [www.girlshealth.gov/body/period.htm](http://www.girlshealth.gov/body/period.htm)
- \* [www.kidshealth.org/teen/sexual\\_health/girls/menstruation.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/teen/sexual_health/girls/menstruation.html)

### Different types of STDs and protecting yourself:

- \* [www.girlshealth.gov/body/reproductive\\_std.htm](http://www.girlshealth.gov/body/reproductive_std.htm)
- \* [www.iwannaknow.org](http://www.iwannaknow.org)

### General health and gynecological care:

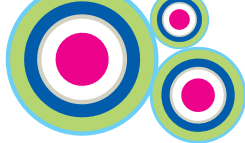
- \* [www.girlshealth.gov/body/reproductive\\_gynecologist.htm](http://www.girlshealth.gov/body/reproductive_gynecologist.htm)
- \* [www.kidshealth.org/teen/sexual\\_health/girls/obgyn.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/teen/sexual_health/girls/obgyn.html)

### Learn more about teenage pregnancy:

- \* [www.teenpregnancy.org](http://www.teenpregnancy.org)

## NOTES

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# *Taking care of a beautiful you, inside and out*

## HAIR AND SKIN CARE

Beauty magazines show tons of beautiful girls and women in ads for hair and skin products. But, don't be fooled into thinking you need these products to look your best. Instead, try these time-tested beauty basics, which will keep you looking naturally beautiful!

**This is the same girl!**



Don't compare yourself to models. They have a team of stylists as well as camera tricks to make them look so perfect.



### **Skin care 101**

- \* Wash your face regularly using a mild cleanser and warm water. Be gentle—don't scrub hard! Avoid **astringents**, which can dry out and irritate skin.
- \* Use only light, water-based moisturizers. Look for one that has **SPF 15** or a higher number sunscreen.
- \* For sensitive skin, try products that say "fragrance-free" or "without perfume."



- \* If you're allowed to wear makeup, use only water-based products that say “**noncomedogenic**” or “**nonacnegenic**” on the label. Make sure to take off your makeup before going to bed.
- \* To control acne, try over-the-counter products that you can buy without a doctor's order. These products come as gels, lotions, creams, and soaps. Your doctor can treat more serious acne problems.
- \* Drink plenty of water.

\* Always wear “broad-spectrum” sunscreen, which protects against **UVA** and **UVB** rays. Wear sunscreen even on cloudy days. SPF alone does not protect against these two types of harmful rays. Follow the directions on the bottle to put more on after a while. Wear lipscreen with at least **SPF 15**. And, your skin needs more than just sunscreen.

- Wear long-sleeve shirts, pants, and a hat.
- Stay in the shade.
- Stay out of the sun in the middle of the day, when rays are strongest.

### Hair care 101

- \* Wash your hair regularly, but only as often as you need to. Washing too often can strip away the natural oils that give hair shine and body.



- \* If you see white flakes in your hair or on your shoulders, try a shampoo that treats dandruff. These shampoos are sold near other hair-care products.
- \* Use shampoo, conditioners, and styling products that are right for your hair type.
- \* Try different styles and looks. But beware of products that perm, relax, or color hair at home. They have chemicals that can damage your hair. Also, over styling with hairdryers or curling and flattening irons can cause your hair to dry out or break.

## Fun quiz

The sun's UV rays are strongest between \_\_\_\_ a.m. and \_\_\_\_ p.m.

\*Hint: You can find the answer in one of the web sites listed at the end of this section.

Answer: 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

## Teen tip:

Wear wrap-around sunglasses that provide 100 percent UV ray protection. They look cool and keep your eyes safe.



- \* Protect your hair and face from sun damage by wearing a hat or scarf that covers the back of your neck and face.
- \* Protect your hair from chlorine (found in pool water) by wearing a swim cap or rinsing out your hair right after swimming. Soaking your hair with regular water before you put on your swim cap can also help.



## Beauty Do's and Don'ts

- \* **DO** look your age. Heavy make-up hides your young, natural beauty—the beauty older women try so hard to get back!
- \* **DON'T** pop zits. This can cause infections and scars that are hard to get rid of.
- \* **DO** wear sunscreen. Protect your skin from the sun to help stop early wrinkles.
- \* **DON'T** be hard on yourself. Instead of thinking about what you don't like about your body, love the things that make you unique.

**To:** [girlshealth.gov](http://girlshealth.gov)

**From:** Lena (age 11), Emporia, Kansas

### Does eating chocolate cause pimples?

No way—and neither do dirt, fried foods, or sexual activity. Changes in your skin during puberty trigger acne. Stress, your period, picking at or popping your pimples, scrubbing your skin too hard, getting too much sun and using oil-based lotions, makeup, or hair gels can cause breakouts to get worse.

# SLEEP

Here's what some teen girls say about how their mornings go:

“My alarm goes off, but I hit the snooze button and go back to sleep until my mom shakes me awake.

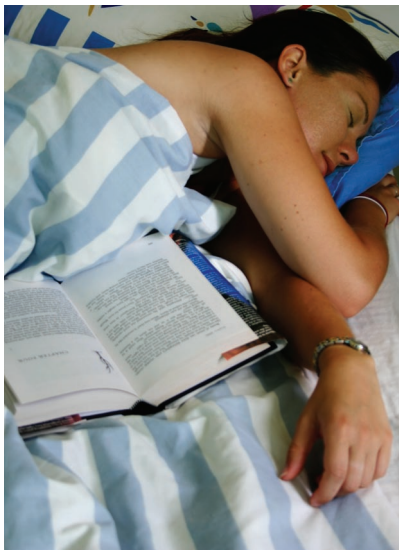
I skip breakfast a lot because I have to rush to get myself ready for school.

Sometimes I miss the bus, and my mom has to drive me to school. She gets really mad about that.

I don't wake up until my little sister screams at me, “Get up! You're going to be late!”

I get to school on time, but then I'm like a zombie in class.”

Can you relate? Likely yes, since some research shows only 20 percent of teens are getting enough sleep! Try these ideas to make sure you're not losing out on the sleep you need.



- \* Wake up at the same time each morning and go to bed at the same time each night.
- \* Relax before bedtime. A bath, a book or a little TV can mellow you out. But, don't watch TV in bed.
- \* Try a *small* snack with milk to bring on the zzzs. Pigging out before bed can make it harder to doze off.
- \* Make sure your room is dark, quiet, cool, and comfortable.

- \* Don't drink beverages with caffeine (like colas, coffee, and tea) from afternoon until bedtime.
- \* Do homework and study earlier in the evening. A good night's sleep is the best way to get ready for an important test or quiz.
- \* Finish exercising at least three hours before bedtime.

### Teen tip:

Most teens need 8.5 to 9 hours of sleep each night to be their best at school, at sports, and on the go.

**To:** [girlshealth.gov](http://girlshealth.gov)

**From:** Samantha (13), Fort Wayne, Indiana

I get so sleepy after lunch. I keep zoning out in class.  
What should I do?

Being part of class discussion can help perk you up. Or, try taking notes to keep alert. Also, ask your teacher if you can sit at the front of the class. And, try to cut back on sugary foods at lunch—these foods can make you sleepy.

# EXERCISE

You may know girls who complain about exercise—"It's boring," "It's too hard," or "It takes too much time." Sure, keeping fit can challenge your mind and body. Just keep in mind that exercise is key to good health. Exercise can:

- \* help you keep a healthy weight
- \* help prevent serious illness, like **heart disease**, certain **cancers**, **type 2 diabetes**, and **osteoporosis**
- \* boost your energy level and mood
- \* help you to feel good about yourself

Plus, it can be fun! So, don't make excuses—get active and keep moving!

## Keys to keeping active

- \* Just starting out? Begin with small goals you can reach. Over time, reach for higher goals. If you want to run, start by switching between running and walking. Build up your distance and speed over time.



- \* Find the right activity for you. Ask yourself: Will I enjoy it? Is it safe? Do I have time to do it? Do some of my friends want to try it with me? Stick with the things that you like, that you have time for, and that you can do safely.
- \* Protect yourself as needed by wearing a helmet, mouth guard, special eyewear or wrist, knee and elbow pads. Make sure your shoes are sturdy and fit well. Ask a coach or adult to help you pick out the proper footwear.

## Fun quiz

Not being active is called s \_\_\_\_\_. This kind of lifestyle can cause weight gain and even obesity (dangerously high weight). It can also put you at risk for certain diseases.

\*Hint: You can find the answer in one of the web sites listed at the end of this section.

Answer: sedentary



- \* Stretch your muscles for 5 minutes before and after working out so that you don't get hurt.
- \* Don't overdo it! A good way to know if you're working out too hard (or not hard enough) is the "talk-sing test." If you can talk while working out, you are moving at a pace that is good for you. If you are too breathless to talk, slow down. If you can sing, pick up the pace.
- \* Drink water before, during, and after your workout to keep your body from overheating or getting dehydrated. Dehydration

## Activity:

For one week, give up 30 minutes of TV watching every day to do something active. You could walk the dog, turn on some music and dance, or go roller-blading with a friend. When your week is up, write down here how keeping active has made you feel: \_\_\_\_\_

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happens when the body loses too much water and it is dangerous.

- \* Do not exercise outdoors if it is really hot and humid. Also, avoid outdoor exercise if air pollution levels are high.
- \* Don't overdo it! If working out is all you do or think about, talk with a parent or guardian, coach, or another trusted adult. Exercise is important, but too much exercise can be very bad for you.

For help getting started, check out your local community or recreation center or look into your activities at your school today!

### Teen tip:

Teenagers need to exercise about 60 minutes every day. The exercise you get in your gym class is probably not enough to add up to the total amount you need each week.

**To:** [girlshealth.gov](http://girlshealth.gov)

**From:** Julie (age 15), Fremont, Nebraska

**Why do people make such a big deal about heart disease?**

Heart disease is the number one killer of both men and women. When you are young, it's easy not to think about this kind of problem. But heart disease comes on over time, which is why it is so important to start having a heart-healthy lifestyle when you are young. You can lower your risk of getting heart disease by eating right and exercising regularly. This also will help protect your body from other health problems that are linked to eating habits and physical fitness.

# think-about-what-you-can-do



## Aerobic exercise

(burns fat, makes your heart stronger, and boost your energy level)

Fast walking 	Jogging	Swimming 
Dancing	Biking	Basketball
Jumping rope 	Hiking	Roller-blading 
Cross-country skiing	Tennis 	Kickboxing

## Anaerobic exercise

(tones muscles and works with aerobic exercise to burn fat)

Stomach crunches 	Push-ups	Lifting weights (or, use Canned foods as weights!)
Pull-ups	Yoga	Pilates 

\*Make sure to check with your doctor first if you have an injury or health concern.

# EATING WELL

Have you ever been asked, “Are you a healthy eater?” What does that even mean? Healthy eating means getting the right amount of calories, vitamins, and **nutrients** your body needs to be its best.

## How to be a healthy eater

\* Follow the MyPyramid guide to healthy eating. The colored sections stand for the food groups and how much you need from each group. Orange is much wider than yellow because you need plenty of grains each day, but should limit how much oil and fat you have. Choose foods from each food group every day—don’t forget about red just because you love purple foods!



## Fun quiz

Teens need roughly \_\_\_\_\_ calories a day.

\*Hint: You can find the answer in one of the web sites listed at the end of this section.

Answer: 2,000

- \* Learn how to read food labels. If you know what’s in your food and how much, you can limit those **nutrients** that you want to cut back on and up the ones you want to eat more of. For example, you may want to eat less saturated fat, but more calcium.
- \* Be sure to check serving size. One cup of breakfast cereal or one slice of bread is a serving. A serving of meat, chicken, or fish is about the size of a deck of cards.
- \* Get regular exercise. Teens need about 60 minutes every day.
- \* Unless your doctor gives you the okay, do not diet to lose weight. Instead, change your habits to focus on healthy foods and exercise. Most teens are



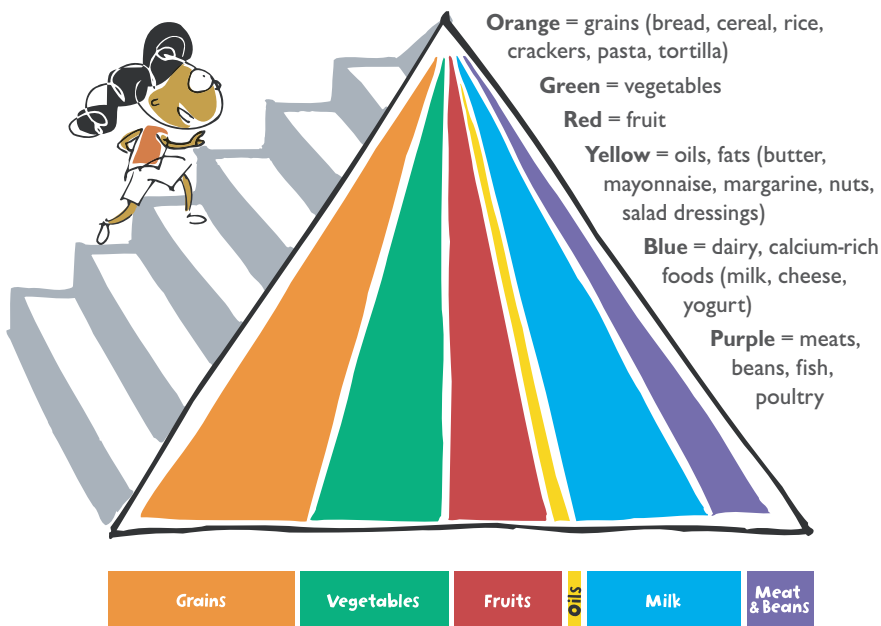
able to keep a healthy weight simply by being more active.

- \* Don't skip meals. Breakfast is especially important!
- \* Don't deprive yourself of foods you love.
- \* Avoid "emotional eating"—eating because you are bored, stressed, or feeling blue. Try writing in a journal, talking to someone you trust, working out, or volunteering in your community.

## Teen tip:

There are no shortcuts to eating right. Choose all kinds of healthful foods to get the calories, vitamins, and **nutrients** your body needs. Do not take any "dietary supplements" (like vitamins, herbs, or protein powders) before checking with your doctor.

- \* Don't forget to enjoy food and mealtimes with friends and family!



## Activity:

Make your own healthy eating plan online with MyPyramid Plan at [www.mypyramid.gov/mypyramid/index.aspx](http://www.mypyramid.gov/mypyramid/index.aspx). This tool will help you figure out how much you need to eat from each food group to be healthy. Next, print out your plan and keep a copy in your purse. You also might want to write down on your printout the foods that you like from each food group. That way, when you're in the lunch line or out with a group of friends, you can take a quick look at your plan to help you choose what to eat.

**To:** girlshealth.gov

**From:** Tina (age 14), Chula Vista, California

My friend eats fast food and junk food all the time, but she looks great. Does someone like her need to eat healthy?

Eating right does help you to look your best, but it's not just how you look on the outside that counts. The body needs certain vitamins and **nutrients** to build strong bones and teeth, carry oxygen around the body, power the brain, and lower your chances of getting certain diseases. Healthy food choices are packed with these kinds of vitamins and **nutrients**, while fast food and junk food are mainly "empty calories," which means they have little nutritional value. Eating poorly will catch up with you over time.

# FIGHTING GERMS

It doesn't sound nice, but there are germs everywhere. These germs are so small that they can hurt your body without you even knowing. Germs can cause infections such as a cold or the flu. They also can cause infections that can put your life in danger, such as HIV, the virus that causes **AIDS**.

## You can fight germs by ...

- \* Washing your hands often: after using the bathroom, after blowing your nose or coughing, after touching animals, after gardening, before and after spending time with someone who is sick,



and before and after handling food.

- \* Making sure your **immunizations** are up-to-date. **Immunizations** also are called vaccines. **Immunizations** protect you from diseases that are easily spread, such as the measles, chicken pox, and the flu. **Immunizations** are usually given as a shot. Ask your parents or guardian if your shots are up-to-date.
- \* Waiting until you are married to have sex. If you are sexually active, you can get a sexually

## Fun quiz

Wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least \_\_\_\_ seconds before and after you touch food.

\*Hint: You can find the answer in one of the web sites listed at the end of this section.

Answer: 20 seconds

transmitted disease or STD. When used right and all the time, condoms can help protect you from getting some STDs. Condoms do not protect against all STDs 100 percent of the time. See the section “Taking care of your reproductive health—STDs” for more information.

- \* Not sharing needles used for drugs, tattoos, or pierced ears. Sharing dirty needles (you can’t tell it is dirty by looking) can give you HIV or hepatitis, which can put your life in danger.
- \* Learning proper food handling and storage.

**To:** [girlshealth.gov](http://girlshealth.gov)

**From:** Casey (age 12), Fort Myers, Florida

**Are hand-cleaning gels just as good as soap and water at cleaning hands?**

Washing your hands with soap and clean running water for 20 seconds is best. But when soap and clean water are not handy, an alcohol-based hand rub is very good at lowering the number of germs on skin. Keep one handy in your purse or coat pocket. Make sure to rub the product all over your hands and fingers until your hands are dry.

# SMOKING

Did you know that most adult smokers began smoking as teens? Maybe they thought smoking would make them look cool, help them gain friends, or help them deal with problems. Maybe they thought they would try it only once, or that they could quit at any time. You're smart—do these sound like good reasons to you?

Before you light up, consider that ...

\* **Most teens don't smoke.** And most teens think using tobacco is gross and a turn-off. After all, smoking makes your clothes and hair stink, stains your teeth, and causes bad breath—yuck! It also causes **emphysema**, different types of **cancers**, and wrinkles.

\* **The damage begins with the first puff**—and gets worse as you keep smoking. That means

**SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING:**  
Smoking Causes Lung Cancer,  
Heart Disease, Emphysema, And  
May Complicate Pregnancy.



if you play sports, are a dancer, or sing or play an instrument, you will not be able to do any of these things very well.

\* **Social smoking is bad for you, too.** Smoking only at parties is still dangerous. People who only light up sometimes may be less likely to ever try to quit!

## Teen tip:

Many girls falsely think that smoking is a good way to lose weight. Eating healthy foods and exercising are the only ways to stay fit, healthy, and beautiful!

## Activity:

Gross yourself out. Visit [www.girlshealth.gov/substance/tobaccoquiz.htm](http://www.girlshealth.gov/substance/tobaccoquiz.htm) to find out what's inside a cigarette—like chemicals used to kill rats!

- \* **It's easier to never light up than it is to quit.** Most long-term smokers started in their teens.
- \* **Smoking costs big bucks!** It will cost you about \$1,000 a year if you smoke a pack of cigarettes each day. It will only continue to get even more costly. Think how many CDs or clothes you could buy for this money!
- \* **Tobacco companies do not care about you!** Their goal is to make their customers addicts so that they can stay in business. Don't get caught in their trap.

*P.S. If you are a smoker, you can make quitting tobacco easier by talking with your doctor, getting help from your parents and guardians, and hanging out with teens who don't smoke or who have quit.*

## Fun quiz

N \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ is the addictive ingredient found in all tobacco products.

\*Hint: You can find the answer in one of the web sites listed at the end of this section.

Answer: nicotine

**To:** girlshealth.gov

**From:** Deanna (age 12), Muskogee, Oklahoma

**Some girls at my school smoke "light" cigarettes. Are they safe?**

There is no such thing as a safe tobacco product. Even though cigarette companies say that light cigarettes have less nicotine and tar, they are just as dangerous as regular cigarettes. Cigars, cigarillos, and smokeless tobacco (dip, spit, chew and snuff) also are addictive. These products can also cause serious health problems like **cancer**.

# ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

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Want to know the real truth about drugs and alcohol?

- \* Drugs and alcohol change the way your brain and body work.
- \* Drugs and alcohol can cause life-long damage to your body.
- \* Alcohol and many drugs are addictive, which means it can be super hard to quit.
- \* Drugs and alcohol make it harder to make safe choices and protect yourself.
- \* Your body can have a bad reaction to alcohol and drugs—you can become really sick or even die. This happens to teens every day.
- \* It's against the law to drink alcohol before you are 21 years old. It's also against the law to have certain drugs, no matter what your age. If you are at a party with alcohol or illegal drugs—even if you are not using—you could be arrested.

Don't allow anyone to give you drugs without you knowing it.

## Teen tip:

Making weekend plans? Ask someone you trust, such as a friend or older sibling, to go along. Sticking together will keep both of you safe and make it easier to make smart choices.

- \* Don't accept drinks from people you do not know or just met.
- \* If possible, get drinks that are unopened and open them for yourself.
- \* Watch your drink and keep it with you at all times, even when you go to the bathroom. If you didn't watch it the whole time, get rid of it!

## Activity:

So you know that drugs and alcohol can cause awful problems. Now what? Practice so that you can be ready to tell your friends or anyone who offers you drugs or alcohol “NO.” Check out page 53 for tips on saying “no” and dealing with peer pressure.

- \* Don't share drinks with anyone.
- \* Don't drink from punch bowls or other large open containers. They may already have drugs in them.
- \* Don't drink anything that tastes, looks, or smells strange.



**To:** [girlshealth.gov](http://girlshealth.gov)

**From:** Danni (age 13), Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

### What are date rape drugs?

Date rape drugs, such as rohypnol and GHB, are used to force sexual contact with someone. Often, they have no color, smell, or taste, which makes them easy to add to a person's drink without anyone knowing. These drugs make victims helpless and unable to remember what happened. To protect yourself, open your own drink and keep it with you at all times. For more information on date rape, go to [www.girlshealth.gov/safety/relationships.htm#4](http://www.girlshealth.gov/safety/relationships.htm#4).



## More information on taking care of a beautiful you, inside and out

### **Taking care of your hair and skin:**

- \* [www.girlshealth.gov/body](http://www.girlshealth.gov/body)
- \* [www.aad.org/public/ParentsKids/KidsConnection/KCSunSafety101.htm](http://www.aad.org/public/ParentsKids/KidsConnection/KCSunSafety101.htm)
- \* [www.cdc.gov/cancer/nscpep](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/nscpep)
- \* [www.cdc.gov/chooseyourcover](http://www.cdc.gov/chooseyourcover)

### **Your body's sleep needs:**

- \* [www.girlshealth.gov/body/quiz.sleep.cfm](http://www.girlshealth.gov/body/quiz.sleep.cfm)
- \* [www.sleepfoundation.org](http://www.sleepfoundation.org)

### **Staying physically fit:**

- \* [www.girlshealth.gov/fitness](http://www.girlshealth.gov/fitness)
- \* [www.presidentschallenge.org/home\\_teens.aspx](http://www.presidentschallenge.org/home_teens.aspx)

### **Nutrition and eating right:**

- \* [www.girlshealth.gov/nutrition](http://www.girlshealth.gov/nutrition)
- \* [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)

### **Fighting germs and immunizations:**

- \* [www.girlshealth.gov/body/germs.htm](http://www.girlshealth.gov/body/germs.htm)

### **Staying tobacco free:**

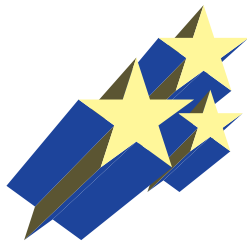
- \* [www.girlshealth.gov/substance/tobacco.htm](http://www.girlshealth.gov/substance/tobacco.htm)
- \* [www.cdc.gov/tobacco](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco)

### **Alcohol and drugs:**

- \* [www.girlshealth.gov/substance](http://www.girlshealth.gov/substance)
- \* [www.teens.drugabuse.gov](http://www.teens.drugabuse.gov)
- \* [www.freevibe.com](http://www.freevibe.com)

## NOTES

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# Feeling good about yourself



- \* Think positively about yourself and the things you can do. When you start to put yourself down, STOP THAT THOUGHT! Remind yourself about the things that make you special.
- \* Do things that you like, rather than what others say you should do.
- \* Give yourself the chance to do well. Do something hard, but within your reach, like speaking

## SELF ESTEEM

“Self-esteem” means how you feel about yourself. Many young women have low self-esteem—even the prettiest, smartest, nicest, most popular girl in school can feel “not good enough.” It’s normal for teens to feel this way some of the time, but you can boost your own self-esteem. You don’t have to wait for someone else to do or say something to make you feel good about yourself.

## Fun quiz

Low self-esteem can put you at risk for serious problems, like d \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ , drug and alcohol use and e \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ disorders.

\*Hint: You can find the answer in one of the web sites listed at the end of this section.

Answer: depression, eating

up in class or trying out for the school play.

- \* Allow yourself to fail. It's okay not to be the best at everything. No one is perfect!
- \* Stop thinking about you, you, you! Help out by doing chores around the house and volunteering in your community.
- \* If you are angry, try talking it over with a friend or adult you trust.
- \* If you feel down about yourself, share your feelings with a family member or friend.

## Activity:

Visit the Just4Me log at [www.girlshealth.gov/mind/just4me.htm](http://www.girlshealth.gov/mind/just4me.htm) to track special information just about you. You can print out this log and keep a copy in your locker, your notebook, or your bedroom to remind you of all the good things that make you the great person you are.

**To:** girlshealth.gov

**From:** Rachel (age 11), Oakland, California

The kids in my school call me a geek just because I get good grades. I wish that what they say didn't bother me, but it does. Sometimes, I wish I were just average.

Being singled out can make anyone feel unsure and upset. Still, you will never be happy with yourself if you don't let the good things about you shine through. Stick with people who like you for who you are. This will make it easier to cope with name-calling and labels. And be proud of your success!

# BODY IMAGE

Do you ever think that there is something wrong with the way you look—like you're too short or too tall, too heavy, or too skinny? These feelings about how you look are called body image. Body image can affect how you feel about yourself in general. To build a strong body image, keep these do's-and-don'ts in mind:

\* **DON'T** think of the images of girls and women you see in magazines, in the movies, and on TV as “normal.” They are not!



- \* **DO** make the most of your unique shape by wearing clothes that you feel good in.
- \* **DON'T** compare yourself to others, including your friends. Body types come in all different sizes, shapes, and colors.
- \* **DO** look your best by eating healthy foods, exercising, and taking care of your hair and skin.

- \* **DON'T** judge yourself on looks alone. The secret to being beautiful is feeling beautiful, using your mind.
- \* **DO** walk with your shoulders back and head high. Good posture says "I like me!"

### Are you at risk for an eating disorder?

Take the Quiz at [www.anred.com/slf\\_tst.html](http://www.anred.com/slf_tst.html) to find out.

## Fun quiz

People who try to become thinner and thinner by not eating have a \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ nervosa.

\*Hint: You can find the answer in one of the web sites listed at the end of this section.

Answer: anorexia

**To:** girlshealth.gov

**From:** Kim (age 12), Suwanee, Georgia

**A friend of mine throws up in the restroom after lunch. What can I do to help her?**

Try telling her: "I am worried about you because I hear you throwing up after lunch. I think you should talk to your mom about this. I'd like to be there for you if that's okay." Your friend may get mad or deny it, or even ask you to keep it a secret. Being a good friend also might mean you need to tell her parents, your parents, or another adult who can get your friend the help she needs. The school nurse is also a good person for you to talk to about your friend.



## WHEN YOU'RE NOT HAPPY

Does your mood sometimes change from one minute to the next? This roller coaster of emotions is normal when you're a teen. But some feelings—like strong sadness, anger, loneliness, and fear—can keep you from enjoying life. Ask yourself these questions:

### Are you depressed?

It's okay to have the blues sometimes. But depression is a serious illness that needs treatment. See your doctor or school counselor if:

you have **five or more** of the following symptoms of depression for **at least two weeks**, **OR** any one of these symptoms gets in the way of school or family life.

- \* sadness or crying that you can't explain
- \* major changes in the way you eat, such as not eating or over-eating
- \* being crabby, angry, worried, or nervous
- \* feeling negative or not caring about anything
- \* feeling guilty or worthless
- \* thinking about death or suicide
- \* sleeping more or having trouble sleeping

### Activity:

On a piece of paper, write down the things you are grateful for. List the people who care about you. Write about your hopes for the future. Keep what you have written in a safe place. Whenever you are hurting or feeling mixed up, read what you have written to remind yourself that your life is **IMPORTANT!**

- \* not being able to focus or make choices
- \* not being able to enjoy the things you normally like
- \* not wanting to spend time with your friends
- \* feeling restless or tired most of the time

### Do you hurt yourself?

Teens who hurt themselves on purpose—called “self-injury”—often keep painful or confusing feelings bottled up inside. Teens that self-injure say that it helps them to feel better. But self-injury is VERY dangerous. It can lead to infections, scars, hospital stays, and even death. If you cut yourself, burn yourself, pull out your hair, or hurt your body in other ways, GET

## Fun quiz

\_\_\_ in 100 people hurts himself or herself on purpose.

\*Hint: You can find the answer in one of the web sites listed at the end of this section.

Answer: 1

## Teen tip:

Try these pick-me-ups when you're feeling down:

**Relax!** Take a shower, watch a funny movie, or listen to some feel-good music.

**Talk!** Your friends, parents, teachers, or other trusted adult can help you sort through your feelings.

**Work out!** Your body makes mood-boosting chemicals called endorphins when you exercise.

**Get a good night's sleep.** It's hard to cope with strong feelings when you're tired.

**HELP RIGHT AWAY!** Talk to a parent or guardian, counselor, or other trusted adult. You can learn—with help—healthy ways to cope with the things that bother you.

### Do you think about suicide?

If you are thinking about hurting yourself or suicide, talk to an adult right away. Call **911** or **1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433)**, or check in your phone book for the number of a suicide crisis center.



The centers offer experts who can help callers talk through their problems. The hotlines also can tell you where to go for more help in person. Don't wait—there are ways to help you deal with your pain and work on feeling better in the future.

**To:** [girlshealth.gov](http://girlshealth.gov)

**From:** Jamie (age 15), Greenville, South Carolina

**My friend talks about suicide, but I know she's never tried it. Should I take her seriously?**

YES! The first thing you should do is tell an adult you trust right away. You may wonder if your friend will be mad at you, but telling an adult is the right thing to do. This can be someone in your family, a coach, a school nurse, a school counselor, or a teacher. You can't help your friend alone. **If your friend is ever in danger of hurting herself, do not leave her alone. You may need to call 911.**



## More information on feeling good about yourself

### Self-esteem:

- \* [www.girlshealth.gov/mind/feelinggood.htm](http://www.girlshealth.gov/mind/feelinggood.htm)
- \* [www.self-esteem-nase.org](http://www.self-esteem-nase.org)

### Body image:

- \* [www.girlshealth.gov/mind/bodyimage.htm](http://www.girlshealth.gov/mind/bodyimage.htm)

- \* [www.girlpower.gov/girlarea/bodywise/bodyimage](http://www.girlpower.gov/girlarea/bodywise/bodyimage)

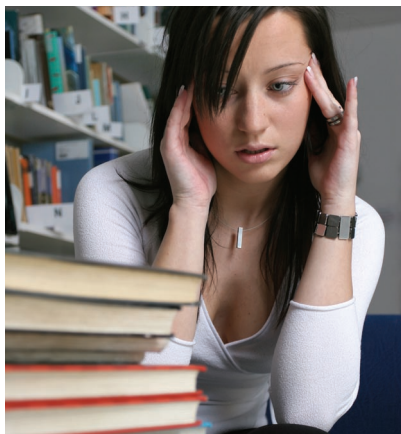
### Dealing with emotional ups and downs:

- \* [www.girlshealth.gov/mind](http://www.girlshealth.gov/mind)
- \* [www.save.org](http://www.save.org)

NOTES

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# *Taking charge of your world*



- \* **Work it out.** Playing sports, fast walking, or dancing can lower your stress level.
- \* **Write it out.** Express your feelings in a journal, or through music or art. To make your own journal go to [www.girlshealth.gov/mind/journal\\_create.cfm](http://www.girlshealth.gov/mind/journal_create.cfm).
- \* **Play it out.** Have fun doing something you love.

## STRESS AND HOW TO DEAL

Being a teen is stressful! You might feel pressure to get good grades, fit in with a group, or make a sports team. Or maybe your home life stresses you out. Everybody has some stress. But too much stress, or allowing stress to build up, is unhealthy.

- \* **Talk it out.** Vent to a friend or a trusted adult to blow off steam.

### Teen tip:

To blow off steam:

1. Close your eyes.
2. Take a deep breath through your nose, slowly and quietly.
3. Hold it for a few seconds.
4. Let it out, quickly and noisily through your mouth. Imagine that you are blowing away a worry or problem that you have.
5. Do this several times.

- \* **Laugh it out.** Watch a funny movie or read cartoons.
- \* **Chill it out.** Kick back and relax, catch up on sleep, or read.

**Is your stress out of control?**  
**Check any of these that describe you.**

- ☐ I feel down, edgy, guilty, and/or tired.
- ☐ I have headaches and/or stomachaches.
- ☐ I have trouble sleeping.
- ☐ I worry about my body and how it's changing.

- ☐ I laugh out loud and/or cry for no reason.
- ☐ I want to be alone all the time.
- ☐ I am not able to see the positive side of things.
- ☐ I don't enjoy doing the things that I used to enjoy.
- ☐ I have too many things to do, but not enough time to get things done.

*If these feelings do not go away after trying the tips above, talk to your parent or guardian, a school counselor, or another trusted adult.*

**To:** [girlshealth.gov](http://girlshealth.gov)

**From:** Terri (age 11), Fairmont, Minnesota

**Is stress always bad for you?**

No. A little bit of stress can push you to do your best or get your work done. Take time each day to let go of any built-up stress to allow the “good” things that stress you out to kick in.

# HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Healthy relationships are fun and make you feel good about yourself. You can have a healthy relationship with anyone in your life—family members, friends, and the people you date. If you are unsure about a relationship in your life, check it out here by circling agree or disagree.

- \* This person makes me feel bad about myself. **Agree/disagree**
- \* This person makes most of the choices in our relationship. **Agree/disagree**
- \* This person pressures me to do things I don't want to do. **Agree/disagree**

## Teen tip:

If you have a fight with a friend, don't shout, blame or use fists. Try putting yourself in your friend's shoes. It's a lot easier to work things out when you can see where the other person is coming from.



- \* This person isn't willing to work through conflicts. **Agree/disagree**
- \* This person bosses me around. **Agree/disagree**
- \* This person loses her/his temper a lot and always blames me for things. **Agree/disagree**
- \* This person says bad things about me and embarrasses me in front of other people. **Agree/disagree**

\* This person tries to keep me from spending time with my friends and family.

Agree/disagree

\* This person uses drugs and alcohol and wants me to try.

Agree/disagree

\* This person has pushed, grabbed, or touched me in a way that hurt or I didn't like.

Agree/disagree

\* This person does things that make me feel afraid.

Agree/disagree

Agreeing with any of these points is a warning sign that you might be in an unhealthy—or even unsafe—relationship. Be willing to end the relationship if it can't get better or doesn't make you happy. Talk to a trusted adult if you feel afraid to leave the relationship.

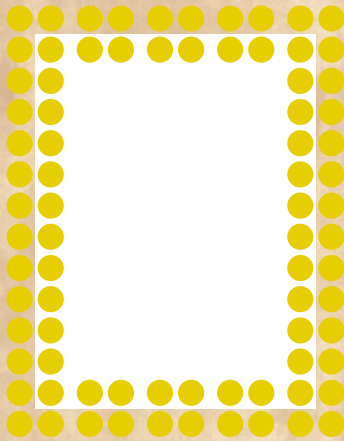
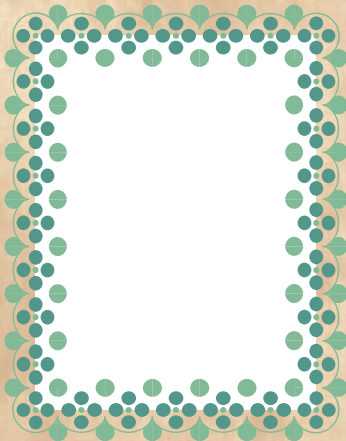
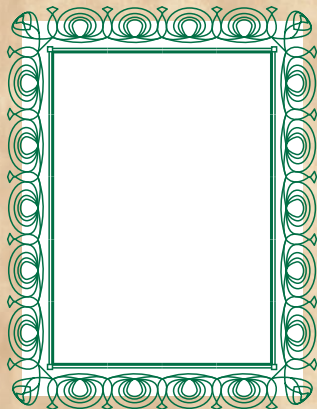
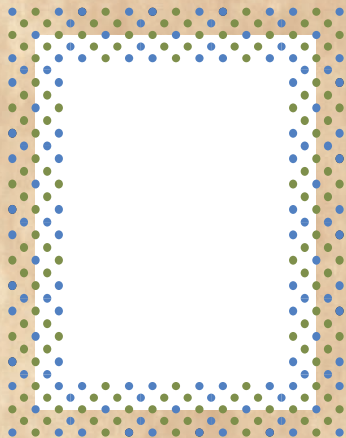
**To:** girlshealth.gov

**From:** Maria (age 14), Providence, Rhode Island

My friends are talking about skipping school. I don't want to, but I'm afraid they won't like me anymore if I don't go along.

You should never be afraid of losing a friend because you say “no.” Good friends should not give you a hard time for saying no. Also, if this group of friends is doing things that you don't feel right about, start hanging out with people you like and who also make smart choices.

**Who can you count on to listen,  
support you, and keep the things that you share private?**



[Attach pictures of those people here!]



## PEER PRESSURE AND HOW TO SAY NO

Have your friends ever asked you to do something that you really didn't want to do—like maybe cheating on your homework, cutting class, or making fun of someone? Or maybe they've asked you to try cigarettes, drugs, or alcohol? Some friends might even push you to be closer than you want to be. Good friends can handle it when you say, "No." But some people will pressure you to go along.

**Be ready to handle peer pressure. Try these ideas when you're put on the spot:**

- \* Just say, "No thanks." Stand up straight and make eye contact.

This sends the message, "I really mean it. Don't ask me again!"

- \* Find an excuse to leave. "My parents said I have to be home by 9:30" or "I have to baby sit my brother this afternoon."

- \* Stand up to peer pressure. Try one of these lines:

"I feel really weird about this."

"This makes me feel uncomfortable."

"I don't think we should do this."

"Are you guys crazy?"

"My parents will kill me if they find out."

You may be surprised by how many of your friends feel the same way you do.

### Teen tip:

Think ahead! Don't put yourself in an unsafe or hard situation. You are less likely to have to say no if you hang out with friends who don't smoke, drink, or do drugs, and make other good choices.

## Flashback!

Think back to a time when you gave into peer pressure (c'mon, admit it!)

Why did you go along? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How did you feel? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Use the tips listed here to come up with a better way you could have handled the pressure.

\_\_\_\_\_

- \* Ask for help from friends or an adult if someone keeps pressuring you.
- \* Have a code that you can use when calling your parents or guardians to pick you up if you ever feel uneasy somewhere.



**To:** girlshealth.gov

**From:** Bethany (age 12), Shreveport, Louisiana

It seems like everyone I know is using makeup. But I don't want to. Why do I feel like I have to wear eye shadow and lipstick to fit in?

When you feel like you have to act or dress a certain way because everyone else is doing it, that's called "unspoken pressure." It's okay to follow a trend, but being yourself is also cool.





## DEALING WITH BULLIES

Do you know a girl in your school or by your home who does any of these things? If you can think of someone, check the box.

- ☐ She leaves someone out of group activities on purpose.
- ☐ She uses people to get something she wants, like making friends with someone who is smart just so she can do her homework for her.
- ☐ She uses the Internet, instant messenger, and/or e-mail to

embarrass, threaten, or scare others.

- ☐ She gossips and spreads rumors.
- ☐ She makes fun of others for being different.
- ☐ She pressures others to do things they don't want to do.

Did more than one girl cross your mind? Maybe you even thought of yourself? Well, all of these actions are forms of bullying. Bullying is when one person or a group of people hurts someone else over and over. For young women, bullying is often more hurting someone's feelings than physical

### Activity:

I, \_\_\_\_\_,  
pledge not to bully and to help  
others who are bullied.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(sign here)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

hurting. If someone does hit you, though, it is best to walk away. You don't want to get in trouble or get hurt worse by fighting back.

What can you do if you are being bullied?

- \* Tell an adult.
- \* Stand up for yourself if it feels safe.
- \* Tell the bully to stop. Then calmly walk away.

- \* Do not fight back!
- \* Don't blame yourself.
- \* Make new friends and get involved in activities.
- \* Be strong and believe in yourself.

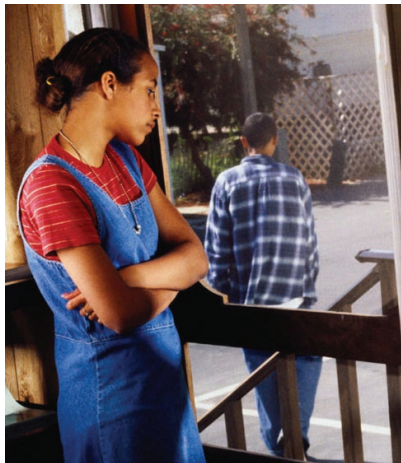
Remember, it's okay if you don't like everyone you meet. But, it is important to be nice to everyone you meet.

**To:** girlshealth.gov

**From:** Amy (age 11), Memphis, Tennessee

I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings, but I don't want to include just anyone in my circle of friends. Is that bullying?

Having a close group of friends, or clique, is not bad. But, leaving out others from your group on purpose IS bullying. Be willing to get to know other girls, even if you think you know about them already. And, let other girls get to know you. Some girls won't have things in common with your friends, but they will figure this out for themselves and try to find people who are more like them. But, by being okay with a bigger circle of friends, you won't miss out on meeting a really cool girl.



## STAYING SAFE

Now that you are doing more on your own, you need to take charge of your safety. Check out the tips below. Then, think through the “what-if” scenes that follow and how you would deal.

### At home

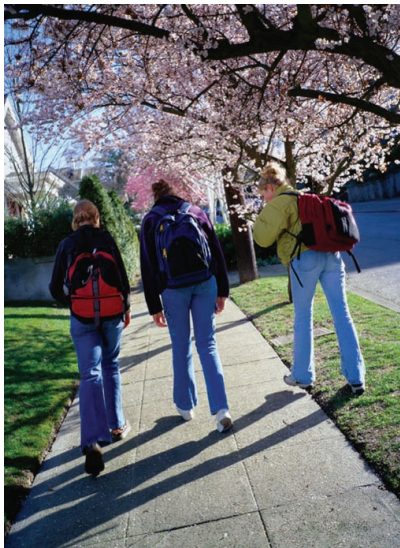
- \* Always know who is at the door before opening it. Ask for ID if you are unsure.
- \* If you're home by yourself, don't let others know.
- \* If someone has gotten into the house, get out right away! Call 911 from a neighbor's.

**What-if:** A stranger says he needs help and wants to use your phone.

**You can:** Say no, don't open the door, and then call a neighbor, parent or guardian, or the police and let them know what happened.

### In Relationships

- \* If you think that you are in a relationship that is unhealthy, talk to a parent or guardian, friend, counselor, doctor, teacher, coach, or other trusted person. See pages 50-51 for the list of warning signs to help you explain what's happening to an adult.
- \* If you are the victim of violence or abuse, it is not your fault! You are **NOT** the reason for the violence. Violence is **NEVER** okay!
- \* With help, you can get out of an unhealthy relationship. Sometimes, leaving an abusive relationship can be dangerous, so it is very important for you to make a safety plan.
  - Stay away from the person.
  - Spend time with your other friends, and don't walk alone.



- Think of safe places to go in case of an emergency, like a police station or a public place like a restaurant or mall.
- \* There are free hotlines that you can call 24 hours a day for help leaving an unhealthy relationship:
  - The National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
  - The Youth Crisis Hotline: 1-800-HIT-HOME (448-4663)

- The National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

*What-if:* Your boyfriend tells you that he will hurt you if you try to break up with him.

*You can:* Tell your parents or guardian, or another trusted adult, right away. If you are afraid to do so, call one of the hotlines listed above for help right away.

### On the go

- \* Tell your parents and friends where you are going, who you will be with, and when you will be back.
- \* Carry money, a phone card, or cell phone for emergency calls.
- \* With your family, decide on a code word that you can use on the phone when you need their help or need to be picked up right away.

### Teen tip:

Check out pages 57-58 for tips on relationship safety and pages 58-59 for tips on staying safe at parties.

- \* Walk in areas you know, on main streets that are well-lit.

*What-if:* Your friend says she wants you to leave a party with some people you just met.

*You can:* Say “No, thank you” and urge her not to go either. If she is your ride and leaves, call a parent or guardian, or other trusted adult for a safe ride home.

## At the wheel

- \* Always wear your seatbelt.
- \* Never get into a car with someone (even an adult) who has been drinking or using drugs.
- \* If you find yourself in the car with someone driving without care, get out of the car as soon as possible after it has stopped.



*What-if:* You ride with a friend who just got her license. She’s busy talking and doesn’t seem to be watching the road.

*You can:* Tell her you want to hear what she has to say, but to wait until after you get to where you’re headed. Tell her you aren’t good at talking and driving at the same time either!

## At work

- \* Follow all safety rules.
- \* Use safety equipment and protective clothing when needed.
- \* Look out for coworkers.
- \* Keep work areas clean and neat.
- \* Know what to do in an emergency.
- \* Report any health and safety hazards to your boss.

*What-if:* A coworker asks you to “watch the shop” by yourself, while she runs out.

*You can:* Ask the coworker to stay, explaining that you don’t feel okay alone. If he or she leaves anyway, call the manager, if you can.

## On the Internet

- \* Ask a parent or guardian before going into a chat room.
- \* Don't tell anyone your Internet or e-mail passwords.
- \* Never share your name, address, phone number, or other information about yourself.
- \* Don't share other information that can identify you, such as where you go to school and where you hung out last night.
- \* Don't post information about yourself on your blog. Anyone can read what you write!
- \* Don't agree to meet strangers you chat with online in person. This is very unsafe!



- \* If a stranger keeps trying to contact you or meet you in person, or sends you anything that makes you uneasy, report it at [www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com) or 1-800-843-5678.

*What-if:* Someone you meet online suggests you meet for coffee.

*You can:* Say no! It's never safe to meet someone you have met online in person.

**To:** [girlshealth.gov](http://girlshealth.gov)

**From:** Deedra (age 11), Rochester, New York

**My stepfather hits my mom and sometimes he hits me. Is there anything I can do?**

No matter what, parents and caregivers are supposed to protect and care for their children. Talk to an adult you trust or call the 24-hour National Domestic Violence Hotline (1-800-799-SAFE).

# IF YOUR PARENT USES DRUGS OR ALCOHOL

If your parent or guardian drinks too much alcohol or uses drugs, a lot of things in your life might seem out of your control. **But you can make things better for yourself.** Here's how:

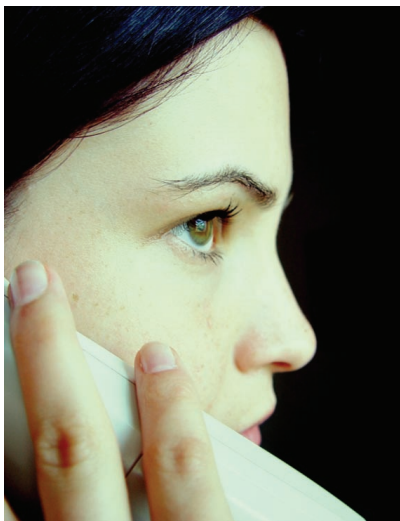
- \* **DO** talk with an adult you trust. Sharing your feelings with this person is not tattling on your parent.
- \* **DO** join a support group. Ala-teen is a group for teens who have parents who abuse drugs and alcohol. You will find that

## Fun quiz

About \_\_\_\_ million children in our country are growing up with at least one alcoholic parent. You're not alone!

\*Hint: You can find the answer in one of the web sites listed at the end of this section.

Answer: 11



many teens are struggling with the same problems. It holds meetings, like a club. Call Ala-teen toll-free at 1-888-425-2666 to find out where to go. Ask a caring adult if you need help getting there.

- \* **DO** get involved in activities at school or in your town. You can learn new things about yourself and about how other people live their lives drug- and alcohol-free.
- \* **DO** remember to have fun! Hang out with friends, go to the movies, or play sports. Do what makes you happy.

## Teen tip:

You can never become an addict if you choose not to drink or do drugs.

- \* **DON'T** ride in a car when the driver has been drinking or doing drugs. Walk or try to get a ride with a safe adult. If you are forced to ride with a parent who has been drinking, sit in the back seat in the middle. Lock your door. Put on your safety belt. Try to stay calm.
- \* **DON'T** think that because your parent is addicted to drugs or alcohol, that you will be too one day. Most children of

addicts don't become addicts themselves.

- \* **DON'T** pour out or water down your parent's alcohol or get rid of your parent's drugs. The plain fact is that it won't work. You have no control over your parent's drinking or drug use. **Addiction** is a disease. You didn't cause it and you can't make it stop.

## Activity:

Write down the names and phone numbers of three people whom you can call for help or if you feel like talking. Keep this list in a safe place in your room and also in your wallet.

**To:** girlshealth.gov

**From:** Kara (age 12) Suffolk, Virginia

I want to take care of my mom, but I hate the way she is when she is drunk.

It's normal to hate the disease of **alcoholism** or **drug addiction** and at the same time love your addicted parent. Talking about these feelings with someone you trust or through a support group like Alateen will help you to feel less alone and afraid.



## More information on taking charge of your world

### Handling stress:

- \* [www.girlshealth.gov/mind/stress.htm](http://www.girlshealth.gov/mind/stress.htm)
- \* [www.bam.gov/sub\\_yourlife](http://www.bam.gov/sub_yourlife)

### Healthy relationships:

- \* [www.girlshealth.gov/relationships](http://www.girlshealth.gov/relationships)
- \* [www.safeyouth.org/scripts/teens/dating.asp](http://www.safeyouth.org/scripts/teens/dating.asp)

### Resisting peer pressure:

- \* [www.girlshealth.gov/relationships/friendships.htm](http://www.girlshealth.gov/relationships/friendships.htm)
- \* [www.thecoolspot.gov](http://www.thecoolspot.gov)

### Dealing with bullies:

- \* [www.girlshealth.gov/bullying](http://www.girlshealth.gov/bullying)

### To learn how to handle the “what-if” situations in this section:

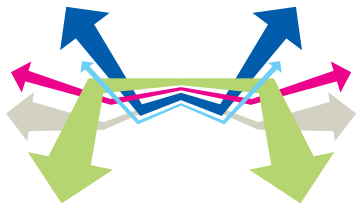
- \* [www.girlshealth.gov/safety](http://www.girlshealth.gov/safety)
- \* [www.kidshealth.org/teen/safety](http://www.kidshealth.org/teen/safety)
- \* [www.ndvh.org/educate](http://www.ndvh.org/educate)

### Living with a user:

- \* [www.ncadi.samhsa.gov/features/kidsarea](http://www.ncadi.samhsa.gov/features/kidsarea)
- \* [www.nacoa.org](http://www.nacoa.org)
- \* [www.al-anon.org/alateen.html](http://www.al-anon.org/alateen.html)

## NOTES

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## *Planning your future*



thinking about your likes, dislikes, interests, and values. Try this exercise to find out what you enjoy, what you are good at, and what's important to you. Once you know these things, you can start setting goals and going after them.

My favorite subjects in school are:

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## DISCOVERING YOUR INTERESTS AND TALENTS

It's good to have fun, but it's also important to have goals for your future. You may not know that you can look ahead just by

When I have time for myself, I like to:

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People tell me that I am good at:

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If I could change something about my community or the world, I would:

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I think some of my special skills and talents are:

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I would like to learn more about:

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### Activity:

Once you find out what you would like to do or learn more about, the next step is to find ways to try it out. Check out [www.girlshealth.gov/future/passion.htm](http://www.girlshealth.gov/future/passion.htm) to get ideas on how to do this.

**To:** girlshealth.gov

**From:** Kendra (age 15), Flagstaff, Arizona

Between after-school activities and hanging out with my friends, I barely have time to do my homework. What should I do?

When you are in school, your job is to get good grades, so finding time for your homework should be the first thing on your to-do list. You can try to better plan out your time by using a calendar to keep track of homework assignments, practices, and meetings. Also, make a “to-do” list each day and check off important tasks as they get done. Make sure you get the most important things on your list done first, and then move on to things like hanging out with friends or watching TV. If these ideas don’t work, you might have to cut out an activity.



## THINKING ABOUT A CAREER

What do you want to be when you grow up? Whatever it is, you will learn that there are many paths to a career. Even though you are young, it's not too early to start working toward school and career goals. Here's how:

1. Learn your interests and talents by doing the exercise on pages 64-65.

2. Find out what careers there are for people who like what you like. Check out [www.bls.gov/k12/](http://www.bls.gov/k12/) for ideas. Write a career idea that interests you here:

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3. Find out what kind of training or education you will need to do this job.
4. Figure out what you can do now to get ready for a job you might like. A parent or guardian, guidance counselor, or teacher can help you to think through what you can do.

Classes I can take: \_\_\_\_\_

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School clubs/activities I can try: \_\_\_\_\_

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---

---

Community organizations I can volunteer with: \_\_\_\_\_

---

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People I can talk to: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Places I can go to learn more: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

You can repeat this exercise with new interests as they come up. Also, you can take on a job to gain experience once you are old enough and ready to work.

## What about college?

After high school, you can choose to begin a career right away or continue school by going to college. A college education is needed to do many jobs. And, you have to have some training after high school for almost all jobs. Many people are able to work and take college classes at the same time. If college is a goal, talk to your guidance counselor to find out what you can do now to get ready.



**To:** girlshealth.gov

**From:** Melissa (age 14), Cincinnati, Ohio

There's so much pressure for me to get good grades.  
How can I explain to my parents that I am doing my best?

Parents want the best for their children, which is why it might seem like they are being hard on you. Talk to your parents about how they make you feel. Also, tell them what you are doing to keep up with your schoolwork and offer to keep them updated on how you are doing.

### More information on planning your future

#### Deciding your future:

- \* [www.girlshealth.gov/future/discover.htm](http://www.girlshealth.gov/future/discover.htm)

#### Career and college planning:

- \* [www.girlshealth.gov/future/career.htm](http://www.girlshealth.gov/future/career.htm)
- \* [www.students.gov](http://www.students.gov)

## NOTES

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**Abstinence** – not having sex of any kind.

**Addiction** – needing physical things, such as drugs or alcohol, or an activity, such as stealing or lying, to the point that stopping it is very hard. Stopping can also cause bad physical and mental reactions. Addiction can be treated with counseling, which means talking to an expert. In some cases, medicine is needed.

**Aerobic** – exercise that burns fat, gets your heart rate going, and makes your heart muscle stronger. It helps your blood carry more needed oxygen to blood vessels throughout your body.

**AIDS** – a disease that hurts the immune system, the body's way of protecting itself. Having AIDS makes it easy to get certain infections and cancers. It is caused by the HIV infection.

**Alcoholism** – drinking a lot of alcohol and needing alcohol. Also called alcohol abuse, this disease

can lead to injury, liver disease, and problems with the people around you.

**Anaerobic** – exercise that builds muscle strength in different parts of your body. This type of exercise goes along well with **aerobic** exercise. Stronger muscles help you to burn more calories.

**Astringents** – a product that cleans the skin and tightens the pores.

**Cancer** – when cells that are not normal grow and can spread. There are at least 200 different kinds of cancers, which can grow in almost any organ of the body.

**Cervix** – the narrow entry between the **vagina** and the **uterus**. The muscles of the cervix are flexible so that it can expand to let a baby pass through during birth.

**Clitoris** – a sensitive female sexual organ that can become erect. The clitoris is part of the **vulva**.





**Douche/douching** – rinsing or cleaning out the **vagina**, usually with a fluid mix you can buy. The liquid is held in a bottle and squirted into the **vagina** through tubing and a nozzle. Doctors do not suggest douching to clean the vagina. It changes the chemical balance in the vagina, which can make you more likely to get infections.

**Emphysema** – a disease that damages the air sacs in the lungs. The air sacs have trouble deflating once filled with air, so they are unable to fill up again with the fresh air you need. Cigarette smoking is the most common cause of emphysema.

**Endometrium** – the lining of the **uterus**.

**Fallopian tube** – organs that connect the **ovaries** to the **uterus**. There is a fallopian tube on each side of the uterus. When one of the **ovaries** lets go of an egg, it travels through the fallopian tube toward the **uterus**. Fertilization (when a man's sperm and a woman's egg join together) usually happens in the fallopian tube.

**Heart disease** – coronary artery disease, the most common type of

heart disease, happens when the heart doesn't get enough blood. Other types of heart disease involve the heart muscle and blood vessels.

**Herpes simplex virus** – a common virus that has two types: type 1 (HSV-1) and type 2 (HSV-2). Herpes on the mouth shows up as cold sores or fever blisters. This type is mostly caused by HSV-1. Herpes in the genital area is mostly caused by HSV-2, also causing sores. But, both types can affect either the genital area or the mouth.

**Hymen** – a piece of tissue that covers all or part of the entrance to the **vagina**. This tissue can be broken the first time a woman has sexual intercourse.

**Immunizations** – these keep people from getting sick by protecting the body against certain diseases. Also called vaccines, they have parts or products of infectious germs that have been changed or killed. A vaccine gets the body's immune system ready to fight off that germ. Most immunizations that stop you from catching diseases like measles, whooping



cough, and chicken pox are given by a shot.

**Infertility** – when a couple has problems getting pregnant after one year of regular sexual intercourse without using any types of birth control. Infertility can be caused by a problem with the man or the woman, or both.

**Labia** – the folds of tissue that make up part of the outside female genital area. There are both inner and outer labia.

**Lymph glands** – a group of cells that make and send out other cells that fight infection throughout the body. These cells help filter out bacteria. Lymph glands are also called lymph nodes.

**Mons pubis** – the fatty tissue that covers the pubic area in women. During puberty, hair grows on this area.

**Nonacnegenic** – makeup or skin products that should not cause acne.

**Noncomedogenic** – makeup or skin products that should not clog pores.

**Nutrient** – a source of energy, mainly a part of food.

**Osteoporosis** – a disease that causes bones to become thinner and weaker. This disease causes bones to break easily.

**Ovary/ovaries** – two small organs on each side of the **uterus**, in the pelvis of a female. The ovaries have eggs (ova) and make female hormones. When one of the ovaries lets go of an egg about once each month as part of the menstrual cycle, it is called ovulation.

**Pads** – sanitary products that stick to the inside of underwear and soak up the blood that leaves the vagina during a menstrual period.

**Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)** – a general term for infection of the lining of the **uterus**, **fallopian tubes**, or the **ovaries**. PID is mostly caused by bacteria that causes STDs, such as chlamydia and gonorrhea. The most common symptoms include abnormal **vaginal discharge** (fluid), lower stomach pain, and sometimes fever.

**Premenstrual syndrome (PMS)** – a group of symptoms that start around 7 to 14 days before the period begins. There are



many symptoms, including tender breasts and mood swings. Women may have none, some, or many PMS symptoms. Some months may be worse than others.

**Pubic** – the area on and around the genitals.

**Rectum** – the last part of the digestive tract, from the colon to the anus. This is where feces is stored before leaving the body.

**Reproductive** – this body system is in charge of making a baby. In women, the body parts involved are the uterus, ovaries, fallopian tubes, and vagina.

**SPF** – stands for sun protection factor rating system. SPF 15 or higher sunscreen should be worn every day.

**Tampons** – these go inside the vagina to soak up blood before it leaves the vagina during a menstrual period. Instructions come with tampon products to show how to use them.

**Toxic shock syndrome (TSS)** – a very rare but dangerous illness that affects the whole body. TSS is caused by bacteria that make toxins (poisons) in the body.

Tampon use can make it easier for bacteria to enter the body. Signs include high fever that comes on suddenly, dizziness, rash, and feeling confused.

**Type 2 diabetes** – people with diabetes have problems changing food into energy. The body makes insulin to help change glucose (sugar) into energy. Type 2 diabetes usually starts with the muscle, liver, and fat cells not using insulin in the right way. The body tries to make more insulin to meet the demand, but in time, it isn't able to make enough.

**Uterus** – a pear-shaped, hollow organ in a female's pelvis where a baby grows during pregnancy. It is also called a womb. The uterus is made up of muscle with an inside lining called the **endometrium**. This lining builds up and thickens during the menstrual cycle to get ready for a possible pregnancy each month. If no pregnancy happens, the extra tissue and blood are shed during menstruation.

**UVA** – a type of ultraviolet light which that can harm the skin. UVA rays can reach deep into the skin and cause damage. Broad-

spectrum sunscreens can block both UVA and UVB rays.

**UVB** – a type of ultraviolet light which can harm the skin. UVB rays are most often the cause of sunburns you can see. Broad-spectrum sunscreens can block both UVA and UVB rays.

**Vagina** – a muscular passage that leads down from the **cervix**, the lower part of the uterus, to the outside of a female's body. During menstruation, menstrual blood flows from the uterus through the cervix and out of the body through the vagina. The vagina is also called the birth canal.

**Vaginal discharge** – this fluid cleans the **vagina** and keeps it moist to help fight infections. The color, amount, and the way it feels will vary during the menstrual cycle. The fluids should be clear, white, or off-white. Discharge that has a foul odor, a change in color, or a change in how it feels should be checked out by a doctor or at a clinic.

**Vulva** – this covers the entrance to the **vagina** and has five parts: **mons pubis**, **labia**, **clitoris**, urinary tract opening, and vaginal opening.

**Warts** – genital warts in women are found near or on the **vulva**, **vagina**, **cervix**, or anus. They look like bumps or growths that can be flat or raised, alone or in groups, and big or small. These warts are caused by HPV or human papillomavirus, which is passed by sexual contact.

**Yeast infections** – a common infection in women caused by an overgrowth of the fungus *Candida*. It is normal to have some yeast in the **vagina**, but sometimes it can overgrow during pregnancy or because of taking certain medicines, such as antibiotics. Symptoms include itching, burning, and irritation of the **vagina**. There may also be pain when urinating and vaginal discharge that looks like cottage cheese.









**girlshealth.gov**

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Office on Women's Health  
200 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 712E  
Washington, DC 20201