

family health



Kern Family
Health Care
The Friendly Face
Of Kern Health Systems

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Things to Know Teens need checkups too!

Regular doctor visits are a good way to take charge of your health.

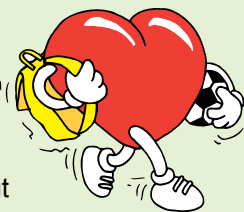
Even though you're a teen now, it's still important to see your doctor. Checkups are a good way to keep track of your health. Doctor visits:

- Let your doctor check to see how you're doing.
- Help you learn about how your body is changing.
- Give you a chance to ask questions you have about your health.

Also, your doctor is someone you can talk to if you feel sad or worried about something. It's OK to ask questions about sex, alcohol or drugs, or anything else you may be concerned about.

You can have a parent go with you, or you can see the doctor by yourself. It's up to you. Anything you talk about with your doctor will be kept private.

Your doctor can tell you how often to have checkups.



Source: American Academy of Pediatrics



Kids can get stressed too

You may not be the only one in your family who feels stressed out. Stress can also affect children.

As your child gets older, he or she will face more pressure—at school, from friends and at home. This can lead to stress, especially during the middle school and high school years.

Signs that your child may be under too much stress include:

- Headaches or stomach pains.
- Restlessness, irritability or fatigue.
- Loss of interest in favorite activities.

- Declining grades.
- Lying or stealing.

If you think your child is stressed, there are steps you can take to help. You can:

- Make sure you aren't pushing your child too hard.
- Be supportive of his or her interests.
- Talk about the child's problems and possible solutions.
- Be sure your child's schedule includes some time to relax and play.

If you need more help in dealing with your child's stress, talk to your child's doctor.

Si necesita esta información en español, llame al 800-391-2000.

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Moving forward

When you learn you have diabetes

If you just found out that you have diabetes, you might feel a bit overwhelmed.

That's to be expected. But try not to worry too much. You'll get the hang of it.

First, you'll need to know how to control your diabetes so you'll feel better and have a lower risk for serious health problems.

Learn all you can

You probably have lots of questions about your disease. What can I eat? What makes blood sugar rise or fall?

Your health care team can help you learn about diabetes and how you can manage it. Make sure to ask any questions you have.

Take control

Here are some steps you will need to take to manage diabetes and protect your health:

Eat well. Your doctor or a dietitian can help you plan healthy meals and choose the right portion sizes. Your favorite foods can fit into your plan.

Stay active. Walking and other exercise can help you control diabetes and stay healthy in other ways.

Track your blood sugar. Your doctor can tell you about when and how to check your

blood sugar. This helps you see how diet, exercise and other things affect your blood sugar—then you can make changes if needed.

Your doctor can also test your blood several times a year. This is called an A1C test. It helps show how well your diabetes plan is working over time.

Take your medicines as directed. If your doctor says you need diabetes pills, take them as prescribed.

These steps can also help you stay healthy:

- If you smoke, quit.
- Learn your blood pressure and cholesterol levels and how to keep them under control.
- Ask how often you need



checkups, which can help prevent problems.

If you take control of diabetes, you can make a difference in your health.

Sources: American Diabetes Association; National Institutes of Health

Watch for signs of diabetes

Could you have diabetes and not know it?

Definitely. In fact, millions of people do.

Some people don't notice any symptoms, or their symptoms don't seem all that bad. However, you should take any warning signs seriously.

Diabetes can cause very serious health problems. So if you have diabetes, it's best to find out sooner rather than later. Then you can start taking steps to control diabetes and help protect your health.

Be alert for these potential signs:

- Increased thirst or hunger.
- Feeling very tired.
- Urinating often.
- Losing weight without trying.
- Blurry vision.
- Sores that heal slowly.
- A lot of infections.
- Very dry, itchy skin.
- Tingling or loss of feeling in your feet.

If you have any of the signs, tell your doctor right away. He or she can test your blood to check for diabetes.

Sources: National Institutes of Health; U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



To learn more about diabetes, call the American Diabetes Association at 800-342-2383.



Protect yourself against STDs

It's a fact of life. Having sex can put you at risk for getting a sexually transmitted disease (STD).

But there are steps you can take—besides not having sex—to protect yourself.

Keep a faithful relationship. Have sex with one person who also only has sex with you. Make sure, of course, that neither of you has an STD when you get together.

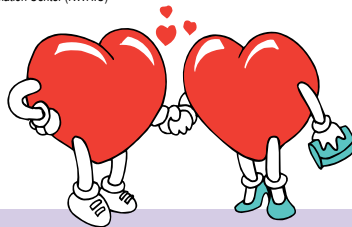
Be honest and open. Don't be afraid to talk about STDs with your partner—or your doctor.

Use condoms. Correct use of latex condoms during sex can help prevent STDs. Condoms can be especially important if you have more than one partner.

Get tested. Both you and your partner should be tested for STDs at least once a year. Ask your doctor about testing when you have an annual exam.

Talk to your doctor. Ask him or her to explain what does—and does not—help protect against STDs.

Sources: American Social Health Association; National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC)



Protect yourself from getting HPV

Did you know there's a sexually transmitted disease that can cause cancer?

It's called human papillomavirus (HPV). At least half of all people who have sex will get some form of HPV.

Some types of HPV don't cause problems. Others do. One of these problems is cervical cancer. Pap tests can find warning

Birth control: Learn more

Choosing to use birth control can be a tough decision. You may have a lot of questions. Which types are best? How do they work? Are there any risks?

Your doctor can answer these questions. He or she can also help you decide which method is best for you.

Here is a list of some types of birth control:

Barrier methods make it harder for the sperm and egg to meet. They include condoms, diaphragms and cervical caps.

Hormones can block a woman's eggs from being released. Hormones come in pills, patches and injections.

IUDs are tiny devices inserted and left in the uterus. They can keep an egg from attaching to the uterus.

Natural methods rely on not having sex when a woman is fertile. Your doctor can discuss ways to tell when eggs are released.

signs of cervical cancer.

Now a vaccine can protect women and girls from four types of HPV that cause cancer.

The vaccine works best when given prior to any HPV exposure. That's why many health experts advise giving it to preteen girls before they become sexually active.

Ask your doctor about its risks and benefits.

Source: U.S. Food and Drug Administration

Make your wishes known

Advance directives help answer the 'what ifs'

What if? It's a question many people think about when it comes to health. What if you get sick or injured and can't speak for yourself? Would you want to be kept on life support?

An advance directive is a way to deal with these questions. And it's a way to make sure your wishes are followed.

Types of directives include a:

Living will. This lets you detail which treatments you want and don't want if you can't



speak for yourself.

Durable power of attorney for health care. This lets you appoint a friend or relative to make medical decisions for you if you can't do that yourself.

Do-not-resuscitate order. This lets caregivers know you

don't want to receive CPR if your heart stops beating.

Writing a directive isn't hard. A doctor can provide forms you can fill out. And a doctor or lawyer can help make sure your directive meets all state laws.

Sources: American Academy of Family Physicians; American Hospital Association



For more information, go to www.putitinwriting.org.

We speak your language

When you're sick, it often helps to see a doctor. And the easier the doctor is to talk to, the better.

But talking with a doctor can be hard if he or she doesn't speak the language you know best.

Check your provider directory for information about the languages that our participating providers and their staff speak.

Our Member Services staff can help you find a health

care provider who speaks your language or who has a regular interpreter available.

It is important for you to know that you do not have to use family members or friends as interpreters. If you cannot find a health care provider who meets your language needs, we can help.

We offer:

- Staff members who are bilingual in English and Spanish.
- Over-the-phone language interpreters for more than 150 languages.



- Sign language interpreters.
- After-hours interpreting services provided by contracted emergency and urgent care providers.

By offering these services to you, we make sure the doctor knows what you're saying and you know what the doctor is saying. With an interpreter's help, you can get answers to all of your questions.

These services are FREE and easy to use. Just call our toll-free number, **800-391-2000**, day or night.