



OUR GUIDE TO THE ADOLESCENT WELL VISIT

Adolescence is a crucial time for yearly well checks. Although adolescents tend to be very healthy patients; they are undergoing huge changes physically, cognitively, emotionally, and socially.

At the start of the visit, your Clinician's nurse will bring your adolescent to the exam room where the vital signs, (height, weight, blood pressure, vision), appropriate age screening tests will be performed. These screening tests may include developmental, depression (PHQ-9), suicide (ASQ), alcohol and drug related risk screen (CRAFT) assessment. A copy of these screening tests can be found on our website under "Screening Tools." Once your adolescent is ready for the Clinician, you will be invited into the exam room.

Your Clinician will start the visit by talking to you and your teen together to address any mutual concerns. We have learned over the years that adolescents often have subjects they wish to discuss with their Clinician in private. We believe that it is important for the teenager to have some private time to ask questions or discuss concerns that might be hard to talk about in front of others. It is also true that many adolescents, because of their stage of physical development, are uncomfortable being examined and prefer the exam be performed with only the Clinician in the room. If this is the case, you may ask you to leave the room for the physical portion of the visit. We have also found this is often the best time to discuss important and personal issues with your adolescent. For the adolescent, assurance of confidentiality is crucial to the success of this discussion.

Some adults have concerns about this private time, imagining that this time is being used to divulge secrets of the teen's sexuality or drug use. In our experience, both the adolescent and the adult appreciate that we take the time to address all issues your adolescent may wish to discuss. It is also an important time for teenagers to begin developing their own relationship and rapport with their healthcare Clinician that is separate from the relationship that may exist with their caretaker.

Topics that will be discussed include personal safety, mental health, smoking, alcohol, drug use, sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases, contraception, nutrition, exercise, sports, making good choices, and social issues. You will be advised of these confidential issues if your adolescent gives us permission to include you in the discussion. Please be assured, if there is a risk to your adolescent by what is disclosed, the Clinician will be honest about the need to break confidentiality and include you in the discussion, no matter the issue.

Laboratory tests will also be performed which may include a Complete Blood Count, a Urinalysis and Urine screen for Chlamydia. We test for Chlamydia because it is the most common and curable sexually transmitted infection. Caused by the bacterium *Chlamydia Trachomatis*, it is considered a “silent” STD as infected individuals often are not even aware that they have chlamydia because there are no symptoms in 8 out of 10 people. If the infection remains undetected and untreated, the result is a serious permanent damage to a woman’s reproductive system. According to the CDC, there are approximately 2.86 million chlamydia infections reported annually, making it the most frequently reported bacterial STD in the United States and the prevalence is highest among adolescents and young adults below age 25 years.

Because many Adolescents are often very private about sexual activity, as a group we have made the decision to test ALL adolescent patients, male and female, 15 years and older for Chlamydia on their annual physical exams to ensure we prevent or treat a disease that can cause serious, permanent damage to a woman’s reproductive system.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to care for your adolescent. It is our goal to provide the best and most complete healthcare possible and we know that you share the same goal. We appreciate the trust you place upon us and we will never take that responsibility lightly. Our most important job is to help you in the medical and psychological development of your child so that he or she grows into a mature, well-rounded, physically healthy, and happy adult.