

Cyberbullying Prevention

Questions Parents Should Ask Their Children About Technology

Sameer Hinduja, Ph.D. and Justin W. Patchin, Ph.D.



It is important to talk with youth about what they are doing and seeing online. Most of the time, they are using technology safely and responsibly, but sometimes they run into trouble. As a parent, you want to establish an open line of communication so that they are comfortable turning to you in times of crisis, whether perceived or actual and whether online or off.

Below we list several questions that you can use to get the proverbial ball rolling. Be strategic in how you approach your children with these queries: don't badger them with questions first thing in the morning or when they are stressed out about something at school. Find a time when they are open to your interest in these topics. Maybe it is during a longer car ride to an activity that they are really looking forward to. Or bring them up while you are eating ice cream on a hot summer afternoon. If you catch them at the right time, they will prove to be a treasure trove of information that can help you better understand what they are doing online.

GENERAL TECH USE

What is your favorite app? What do you do on it?

What apps or websites are your friends into these days?

Are you ever contacted by someone online that you don't know? If yes, what did they want? What did you do? How did you respond?

Have you ever received a text message from someone that made you upset? How did you respond?

How do you keep yourself safe online?

Do you get concerned that people will read what others have written about you online that is not true but think it's true?

Do you ever talk to anyone online that isn't in your school?

CYBERBULLYING

Do you ever argue or post hurtful updates on your Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, or another social media site? Why?



Have you ever had to delete a post or comment on your page that was written by someone else?

Does cyberbullying happen a lot? Would you feel comfortable telling me if you were being cyberbullied?

Do you think your school takes cyberbullying seriously?



Have you ever had to contact a teacher or someone else at school because of a cyber-threat? If so, did they do something about it and did it help?

Does your school have a way to anonymously report bullying and cyberbullying?

Do you feel like your friends would be supportive of you if you told them you were being cyberbullied?

Do you ever get verbally attacked during online games?

Have you ever had to leave an online game because someone was bothering you online?

Have rumors ever started about you in school, based on something said online?



Did you find out who started the rumor? What did you do when you found out?



Have you ever blocked somebody online because you felt harassed? If so, did that make it stop ?

SEXTING



Have you ever had anyone do or say anything sexually inappropriate to you online? How did you deal with it?

Has anyone ever asked any of your friends for an inappropriate photo or video? Has anyone ever asked you?

Do you know about the consequences that can result if you send inappropriate pictures (child pornography laws)?

How might sexting affect the reputation of those involved?

Is there a way to participate in sexting while still making sure that pictures or video sent in trust are never shared outside that relationship?

Has any adult at school ever talked with you about sexting?

What might participation in sexting say about your level of maturity, and your readiness to be in a healthy, mature romantic relationship?

Have you heard stories of other kids from your school (even those who may have graduated) or your community who have dealt with major fallout from sexting?

SAFE SOCIAL MEDIA USE



What social media apps do you use most frequently? How many friends or followers do you currently have on each? Are your accounts set to Public or Private?

What kind of people have you met on social media, outside of people you know at school? Do you feel like you can trust them? Do you ever worry that they might use your posts or content against you in *any* way?

Do you get a lot of friend or follow requests from strangers? If so, how are you handling that?

Do you use Twitter? What do you like or dislike about it? Who do you follow and who follows you?

Do you use Snapchat? Can you explain to me how it works? Do you think your sent and received snaps are really completely gone?

Do you know how to use the privacy settings on Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube, and Twitter? What about on the games and gaming networks you use?

Do you have them set so that only those you accept as friends can see what you post? Are you sure about this?

What kind of personal information are you posting or sharing online? Have you ever posted your full name? Age? School? Phone number? Current location?

Have you ever been tagged in a photo or video in a way that made you upset?

Do you know how to edit your privacy settings so that if somebody wants to tag you in a post or photo, you have to approve it?



Do you know how to untag yourself in pictures?

Do you feel like social media apps should be used to vent your frustrations? Do your friends vent on social media? Do people comment? What do they say?

What kind of videos are you watching on YouTube? Do you have your own channel? How often are you posting and what kind of reception are you getting from those who see your videos?

Have you ever reported inappropriate videos that you have seen on YouTube? Or any other site or app?

Does anyone else know your password or passcode for any site or social media app? What about for your laptop, or cell phone?

How do you feel about your level of FOMO (fear of missing out) right now? Do you feel like you can control it based on how much you use social media?

Do you ever feel like you're addicted to social media? Has that "addiction" ever messed with your emotions or brought you down or negatively affected other areas of your life?

What do you think you can do to maintain a healthy balance when it comes to social media use?

The Female Athlete Triad

Female athlete triad refers to the combination of 3 medical conditions—energy availability, menstrual problems, and weak bones—seen in competitive female athletes. Prevention of the female athlete triad is important because the triad can interfere with normal growth and development, cause injury, and result in loss of strength and endurance.

Here is information from the American Academy of Pediatrics about the 3 conditions and general guidance for prevention and treatment.

Energy availability

Energy availability issues (not having enough energy to fuel the body) occur when athletes eat fewer calories than their bodies need for growth, development, and exercise. Some athletes choose to limit their calories to improve performance or appearance. Other athletes are unaware that they aren't eating enough calories to meet the energy demands of their sport. An athlete may be eating enough for a nonathlete but not enough for an athlete.

For example, if an athlete only eats 2,000 calories per day but uses 3,200 calories, she is eating 1,200 calories less than her body needs. Not having enough calories (energy) can hurt performance, slow growth and development, and increase the risk of injury and illness. Eating disorders, such as anorexia or bulimia, are one cause of inadequate food intake.

Athletes of any sport may have low energy availability. However, athletes in sports that emphasize leanness, such as gymnastics, dance, diving, figure skating, long-distance running, and cross-country skiing, or sports that use weight classifications, such as wrestling, martial arts, and rowing, may be at greater risk of low energy availability.

Menstrual problems

Not eating enough calories can cause menstrual periods to become irregular (*oligomenorrhea*) or stop (*amenorrhea*). In young athletes who aren't eating enough calories, menstrual periods may not start when they should. *Primary amenorrhea* occurs when menstrual periods don't start before 15 years of age. *Secondary amenorrhea* occurs when regular menstrual periods stop for 3 months or more. *Oligomenorrhea* occurs when the time between menstrual periods is longer than 35 days. All types of amenorrhea can be caused by not eating enough calories for energy

expended; they are not caused by low body fat or the stress of exercise.

Preparticipation screening for the female athlete

During a sports preparticipation examination female athletes may be asked the following questions related to the female athlete triad. If components of the female athlete triad are suspected, the doctor may perform an expanded physical examination.

- At what age did you begin menstrual periods?
- How often do you have a menstrual period?
- How long do your periods last?
- When was your last menstrual period?
- Have you ever taken birth control pills? If yes, when?
- How many meals and snacks do you usually eat each day?
- List the foods and drinks you had yesterday.
- List the foods and drinks you try to avoid.
- Do you drink milk or calcium-fortified orange juice? Do you eat yogurt or cheese? How much each day?
- What has been your highest weight, and when?
- What has been your lowest weight in the past 2 years?
- Are you happy with your current weight?
- What do you feel your ideal weight would be?
- Have you ever tried to control your weight by dieting? Vomiting? Laxative use? Diuretics? Exercise?
- What sports do you participate in?
- How much time do you spend training for each sport each week?
- Do you do extra workouts, such as aerobic classes, in addition to your sports training? How much extra time do you spend?
- Have you ever had a stress fracture? When?

Weak bones

When a young athlete doesn't eat as many calories as her body needs and has menstrual problems, her bones do not develop the normal strength. When this happens, a 16-year-old girl can have bones as weak as those of a 60-year-old woman. She may more easily develop stress fractures or, if severe, even compression fractures of the spine. This decrease in bone strength will continue until

she has normal periods again, but, even though she can regain some bone strength, she may never catch up to where she should be normally.

Prevention

The female athlete triad can be prevented by eating enough calories, including fat, protein, and carbohydrates. Most female athletes need a minimum of 2,000 to 2,400 calories per day. Not only will this prevent menstrual problems and weak bones, it will help the athlete perform better! If an athlete develops menstrual problems, she needs to see a doctor. It is not normal to skip periods or stop having periods. If an athlete cuts out the fats in her diet, decreases the amount of food she eats, loses weight, or skips periods, she should tell her doctor. Finally, if an athlete feels she needs to lose weight, she should consult her doctor first.

Treatment

An athlete not having regular menstrual periods should tell her doctor. The doctor needs to make sure there are no other reasons, such as thyroid disease, for menstrual problems.

If a lack of enough calories is the cause of the menstrual problem, it is important that the athlete increase her food intake. She will need to eat all of the nutrients her body needs, which include carbohydrates, fats, and protein. She may find it helpful to see a registered dietitian for nutrition counseling. The athlete should gradually increase her food intake until her menstrual periods return.

If it is difficult for the athlete to increase her food intake, she may need to decrease her exercise and sports activity instead. Once menstrual periods return, the athlete can slowly increase her activity again while increasing her food intake to maintain menstrual periods.

If an athlete is not having regular menstrual periods, she needs to eat 5 servings of calcium per day. A serving would be 1 cup (8 ounces) of milk, yogurt, or calcium-fortified orange juice or 1 ounce of cheese. Vitamin D is also needed because it helps the body absorb and retain calcium. Adolescents who do not get 600 IU of vitamin D per day through foods should check with their doctor about taking a supplement.

If an athlete struggles with increasing her food intake, her doctor may refer her to a mental health professional, such as a psychologist, for additional counseling.

NOTES

The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

© 2012 American Academy of Pediatrics. Reviewed 7/2020. All rights reserved.

American Academy
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®

Puberty: Ready or Not, Expect Some Big Changes

Everyone goes through puberty but not always at the same time or in the same way. It is when your body starts changing from that of a child to that of an adult. At times, you may feel like your body is out of control.

Compared with your friends, you may feel too tall, too short, or awkward. You may feel self-conscious about these changes, but many of your friends probably do too. In general, here's what you can expect. (When the word *girls* is mentioned, it's information for what you can expect if you were born female. When the word *boys* is mentioned, it's information for what you can expect if you were born male.)

When Does Puberty Begin?

There's no "right" time for puberty to begin. But puberty for girls starts a little earlier than for boys, usually between ages 8 and 13 years. Puberty for boys usually starts at about ages 11 to 14 years.

What Changes Can I Expect?

Chemicals called *hormones* will cause many changes in your body.

Hair, Everywhere

Soft hair starts to grow in the pubic area (the area between the legs and around the genitals [the vagina or penis]). This hair becomes thick and very curly. It is not necessary to shave your pubic hair. You may also notice hair under your arms and on your legs. Boys start to get hair on their face or chest. Some girls notice that the hair on their legs has become darker. You may choose to shave or trim unwanted hair.

Acne

During puberty, your skin gets oilier. This oil can cause acne (also called *pimples* or *zits*). Acne is not caused by dirt or certain foods, and you can't catch acne from another person or give it to them. Talk with your doctor or other health care provider about how to treat and control acne. Here are a few skin care tips.

- Do wash your face twice a day. In general, milder soaps and cleansers are better for your skin.
- Do use an oil-free moisturizer on your face after washing.
- Don't pop or pinch your zits. All this does is break open the lining of the oil ducts and make them redder and more swollen. This can also cause scars.
- Don't scrub your skin too hard. This irritates the skin.

Body Odor

You may begin to sweat more. Most people use a deodorant or an antiperspirant to control underarm odor and wetness.

Other Changes (Girls)

Breasts. In most girls, the first sign of puberty is breast development (small, tender lumps under one or both nipples). There may be soreness, which goes away as your breasts grow. Don't worry if one breast grows a little faster than the other. By the time your breasts are fully developed, they usually end up being the same size. When your breasts get larger, you may want to start wearing a tank top or bra under clothing. Some girls are excited about this. Other girls may feel embarrassed, especially if they are the first of their friends to have

breasts. Talk with a parent or another trusted adult to work through your feelings and get advice on tank tops and bras.

Shape. As you go through puberty, you get taller, your hips get wider, and your body begins to build up fat in your belly, hips, thighs, buttocks, and legs. It is normal for girls to develop different body shapes.

Periods. Your menstrual cycle, or “period,” starts during puberty. Most girls get their periods 2 to 2½ years after their breasts start to grow (between 10 and 15 years old). After the first period, it can take up to 2 years for periods to occur every month. When you start having periods, you are able to get pregnant—even if you don’t have a period every month.

During puberty, your ovaries begin to release eggs. A baby may develop in your uterus if an egg connects with sperm during sexual intercourse. To help your body prepare for this, a thick layer of tissue and blood cells builds up in your uterus. If the egg doesn’t connect with sperm, your body does not need these tissues and cells. They turn into a bloodlike fluid and flow out of your vagina. Your period is the monthly discharge of this fluid out of your body.

During your period, wearing a menstrual pad, menstrual cup, or tampon or wearing menstrual underwear protects your clothes. These can be used together and need to be changed every few hours. Most periods last from 3 to 7 days. You may find it helpful to track your periods on a calendar or smartphone app.

Having your period does not mean you have to avoid physical activities like swimming, running, or physical education class. Exercise can even help get rid of cramps and other discomforts you may feel during your period.

Other Changes (Boys)

Height. Around 13 to 15 years old, you will have a *growth spurt*, meaning a large growth in height and shoe size. During this time, you may feel hungrier and eat more. Because you are growing quickly, you won’t be very muscular until the growth spurt stops.

Muscles. As you go through puberty, you get taller, your shoulders get broader, and, as your muscles get bigger, your weight increases. These changes usually occur later in puberty, around 15 to 18 years old.

Penis and testes. During puberty, the penis and testes get larger. There’s also an increase in sex hormones. You may notice that you get erections (when the penis gets stiff and hard) more often than before. This is normal. Even though you may feel embarrassed, try to remember that unless you draw attention to your erection, most people won’t notice it. Also, everyone’s penis is different, so if the size of yours differs from that of another person’s, it doesn’t mean there is anything wrong with you.

Wet dreams. During puberty, your testes begin to produce sperm. So during an erection, you may also ejaculate. Ejaculation is when semen (made up of sperm and other fluids) is released through the penis. This could happen while you are sleeping. You might wake up to find that your sheets or clothes are wet. This is called a *nocturnal emission*, or “wet dream.” This is normal and stops as you get older. Once this starts happening, it is possible to get someone pregnant if you have sex.

Voice cracking. Your voice gets deeper, but it doesn’t happen all at once. It usually starts with your voice cracking. As you keep growing, the cracking stops and your voice stays at the lower range.

Breasts? You may have swelling under your nipples. If this happens to you, you may worry that you're growing breasts. Don't worry, you're not. This swelling is very common and only temporary. Most common ages for male breasts are 11 to 16 years. But if you're worried, talk with your doctor.

New Feelings

Along with physical changes during puberty, there are many emotional changes. For example,

- You may care more about what people think of you because you want to be accepted and liked.
- Your relationships with others may begin to change. Some may become more important and some less so. You'll start to separate more from your parents and identify with others your age.
- You may not like the attention of your parents and other adults at times. Keep in mind that they are also trying to adjust to the changes you're going through. Many teens feel that their parents don't understand them. This is normal. It's usually best to let them know (politely) how you feel and then talk things out together.
- You may lose your temper more easily and may feel that nobody cares about you.
- You may begin to make decisions that could affect the rest of your life.

Talk about your feelings with your parents, another trusted adult, or your doctor or other health care provider. You may be surprised by how much better you feel.

Sex and Sexuality

During this time, many teens also become more aware of their romantic feelings. A look, a touch, or just thinking about someone may make your heart beat faster and may produce a warm, tingling feeling all over. You may not be sure who you like. That's OK and you shouldn't feel worried about these changes. You may ask yourself . . .

- When should I start dating?
- When is it OK to kiss?
- How far should I go sexually?
- When will I be ready to have sexual intercourse?
- Will having sex help my relationship?
- Do I have to have sex?
- How do I know who I like? How do I know if I'm gay, lesbian, or bisexual?
- What is oral sex? Is oral sex really sex?
- Is it OK to masturbate (touching your genitals for sexual pleasure)? Masturbation is a normal private activity that won't harm you. Some people masturbate and some don't.

Remember, talking with your parents or doctor is a good way to get information and to help you think about how these changes affect you.

Decisions About Sex

Deciding to become sexually active can be very confusing. On the one hand, you'll receive many warnings and dangers about having sex. Yet movies, TV, social media, and lyrics in songs will all seem to be telling you that having sex is OK.

It's normal for teens to be curious about sex, but deciding to have sex is a big step. There's nothing wrong if you decide to wait to have sex. Not everyone is having sex. Half of all teens in the United States have never

had sex. Many teens believe that waiting until they are ready to have sex is important. The right time is different for each person.

No one should be forced or pressured to have sex! If you ever are, it's important to never blame yourself and to tell an adult you trust as soon as possible. Medical and counseling supports are available to help someone who has been forced or pressured to have sex.

Deciding to Wait

If you decide to wait, plan how you are going to say no so you are clearly understood. Stay away from situations that can lead to sex. For example, avoid being alone with someone who has been pressuring you to have sex. Or avoid using drugs or alcohol or going to party where people are using drugs or alcohol. Remember, a person who doesn't support your decision to wait may not be the right person for you.

Making Health Decisions About Sex

If you decide to have sex, it's important that you know the facts about birth control, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and emotions. Sex increases your chances of becoming pregnant, becoming a teen parent, and getting an STI, and it may affect how you feel about yourself or how others feel about you. These are important decisions and are worth talking about with adults who care about you, including your doctor.

Taking Care of Yourself

As you get older, you will need to make many decisions to ensure that you stay healthy.

- Eating right, exercising, and getting enough rest are important during puberty because your body is going through many changes.
- It's also important to feel good about yourself and the decisions you make.
- Whenever you have questions about your health or your feelings, don't be afraid to share them with your parents and doctor or other health care provider.

Visit [HealthyChildren.org](https://www.HealthyChildren.org) for more information.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is an organization of 67,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of all infants, children, adolescents, and young adults.

In all aspects of its publishing program (writing, review, and production), the AAP is committed to promoting principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



healthychildren.org

Powered by pediatricians. Trusted by parents.
from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Tips for Parents of Adolescents: Common Concerns

Adolescence is the time between childhood and adulthood that children go through many physical and emotional changes. Here is information from the American Academy of Pediatrics about common concerns during adolescence. Teen is used in this publication to refer to adolescents, teenagers, preteens, and tweens.

Dieting and Body Image

Many teens try extreme diets or exercise programs because they want their bodies to look like those of the models, singers, actors, or athletes they see in the media, or they have a misguided understanding of what is “healthy.” Be aware of any diet or exercise program your teen is following. Many diets are unhealthy for teens because they do not have the nutritional value that bodies need during puberty.

If you have questions about your teen’s nutritional needs, ask their doctor. If you are concerned about rapid weight loss or suspect your teen has an eating disorder, contact your teen’s doctor right away. Eating disorders like anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa can be very dangerous, and treating them promptly is critical for recovery.

If your teen wants to train with weights, they should check with their doctor, as well as a trainer, coach, or physical education teacher. Also, help create a positive self-image by praising teens for their strengths and not focusing on their appearance. Set a good example by making eating right and exercising a part of your daily routine. Avoid negative self-talk or dieting. At home, stock up on healthy snacks like fruit, raw vegetables, whole-grain crackers, and yogurt, and limit unhealthy snacks like candy, cookies, chips, and soda pop.

Dating and Sex

Teens are naturally curious about sex. This is completely normal and healthy. However, teens may be pressured into having sex too soon by their peers or the media. Talk with your teen to understand their feelings and views about sex. Start early, and provide them with access to accurate and appropriate information.

Talking With Your Teen About Sex

Making healthy decisions about sex is important. Before your teen becomes sexually active, make sure you discuss

- **Medical and physical risks.** Risks include unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) like gonorrhea, chlamydia, hepatitis B, syphilis, herpes, HIV (the virus that can cause AIDS), and HPV (human papillomavirus—the virus that can cause cancers of the mouth and throat, cervix, and genitals).
- **Emotional risks.** Teens who have sex before they are emotionally ready may regret the decision when they are older or may feel guilty, frightened, or ashamed from the experience. Your teen should ask themselves “Am I ready to have sex?” or “What will happen after I have sex?”
- **Promoting safer sex.** Anyone who is sexually active needs to be aware of how to prevent unplanned pregnancy as well as how to protect against STIs. Condoms should always be used along with a second method of contraception to prevent pregnancy and reduce the risk for STIs.
- **Setting limits.** Make sure your teen has thought about what their sexual limits are before dating begins. Help them understand the concept of consent and that they control whether they engage in sexual activity. Most importantly, let your teen know they can talk with you and their doctor about dating and relationships. Offer your guidance throughout this important stage in your teen’s life.
- **Sex positivity.** Talking about sex only in negative terms is not realistic or healthy. At best, it can cause a teen to tune out, and at worst, it can lead to shame and guilt about sex and may discourage your teen from coming to you with questions or concerns. When discussing risks, it is important to acknowledge that sex can be a positive part of a healthy relationship, when the relationship is mature, respectful, safe, and monogamous. Think about how to discuss sex in a positive way, while upholding your personal and family values.

Drug Use

Teens may try or use tobacco like vaping devices, e-cigarettes, or chewing tobacco, and alcohol, or other drugs, out of curiosity or to deal with peer pressure.

Help build self-confidence or self-esteem in your teen. Ask your teen about any concerns and problems they are facing, and help them learn how to deal with strong emotions and cope with stress in healthy ways. If you suspect your teen is using drugs, talk with your teen's doctor.

Note: If you or someone else in the household smokes, now is a good time to quit. Watching a parent struggle through quitting can be a powerful message for a teen who is thinking about starting. It also shows you care about your health as well as your teen's.

Alcohol Use

Alcohol is not only the most socially accepted drug in our society but also one of the most abused and destructive. Even small amounts of alcohol can impair judgment, provoke risky and violent behavior, and slow down reaction time. An intoxicated teen (or anyone else) behind the wheel of a car makes it a lethal weapon. Alcohol-related car crashes are the leading cause of death for teens and young adults aged 15 to 24 years.

Although it's illegal for people younger than 21 years to drink, we all know most teens are not strangers to alcohol. Many of them witness alcohol use throughout their childhood, and many begin alcohol use as teens. If you choose to use alcohol in your home, be aware of the example you are setting.

- Having a drink should never be shown as a way to cope with problems.
- Don't drink in unsafe conditions—for example, while driving the car, mowing the lawn, or using the stove.
- Don't encourage your teen to drink or to join you in drinking.
- Don't allow your children to drink alcohol before they reach the legal age, and teach them never ever to drink and drive.
- Never make jokes about getting drunk. Make sure your children understand that it is neither funny nor acceptable.
- Show your children there are many ways to have fun without alcohol. Happy occasions and special events don't have to include drinking.

Remember

Well-child visits (annual health supervision visits) are especially important during adolescence. Your teen's doctor will make sure your teen is on a healthy track and suggest necessary changes to get on track and how to stay on track.

For More Information

American Academy of Pediatrics
www.aap.org and www.HealthyChildren.org

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is an organization of 67,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of all infants, children, adolescents, and young adults.

In all aspects of its publishing program (writing, review, and production), the AAP is committed to promoting principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN® 

 **healthychildren.org**
Powered by pediatricians. Trusted by parents.
from the American Academy of Pediatrics