

INFORMATION SHEET FOR 18-21 YEAR-OLDS

VACCINES:

- * Tdap Booster - prevents tetanus (“Lock-jaw”), diphtheria and pertussis (“Whooping Cough”). Booster doses are given every 10 years, sometimes sooner. Most young adults are due for a booster around 21-22 years of age.
- * Meningococcal Conjugate Vaccine (MCV4), 1st dose – prevents severe infections like meningitis. If not already done, it will be given to young adults through 21 years of age. If a first dose was given before age 16 years, a second dose is needed.
- * Human Papillomavirus (HPV), 1st dose – this series of three doses prevents infection with HPV, a virus that causes cervical cancer (in females), throat cancer, genital warts and rarely penile cancer. It may be given up to age 26 years. You should return for a nursing visit in two months to get the second dose.
- * Flu vaccine may be offered during the months of October – March.
- * Most young adults do not get serious side effects from the vaccines. If side effects occur, they are usually mild. Fever and discomfort at the injection site are common. Acetaminophen (Tylenol and other brands) can help.

SCREENING TESTS:

- * Complete Blood Counts (CBC) or Hemoglobin (Hgb) – a test for anemia, or low red blood cell counts. In this age range, we only test those who are at high risk.
- * Cholesterol test, or Lipid Panel – a test for high cholesterol levels. If not already done during adolescence, it should be done once in this age range, usually at 18 years.
- * Tuberculosis skin test (for “TB” – also called the “PPD test”) – This is only done for patients who are at high risk of TB infection. You should return to the clinic in 2-3 days to document the results. Young adults may be eligible to have TB testing done as a blood test instead of the PPD.
- * Vision Test – is done to check for vision problems. During adolescence, it is done routinely every 2 – 3 years and when there is a concern about the patient’s vision.
- * Hearing Test – is done to check for hearing problems. It is done routinely at 18 years of age and at other ages only if there is concern about your hearing or language development.

ENTERING ADULTHOOD

- * At the age of 18, adulthood legally begins. One can vote and join the military. Many are thinking of college, work, and/or starting families. Physical development is usually complete or close to complete. The brain, however, keeps developing for another ten years.

SCHOOL, WORK, and FRIENDS:

- * Be sure that you take your responsibilities for school and work very seriously. This means getting up on time and completing your work.
- * Managing a busy schedule can be a challenge. Take responsibility for being organized enough to succeed in work or school. If you are not keeping up with your schoolwork or frequently missing work, you may need to cut back on something.
- * Find new activities you enjoy.
 - Consider volunteering and helping others in the community or working on an issue that interests or concerns you.
 - Form healthy friendships and find fun, safe things to do with friends.
- * As you get older, making and keeping friends is important. You may find that you drift away from some of your old friends—that's normal. Evaluate your friendships and keep those that are healthy.
- * It is still important to stay connected with your family.

HEALTHY BEHAVIORS

The most dangerous risks to one's health at this age are from driving, sexual exposures, and substance use.

- * Always wear a seatbelt.
- * Don't text and drive.
- * Don't drink or use drugs and drive.
- * Don't get in a car with a driver who has been drinking or using drugs. If you feel unsafe driving or riding with someone, call someone you trust to drive you.
- * Wear a helmet when riding a bike, snowboard, rollerblades, or skateboard.

If you have questions about drugs, alcohol or sexual activity, we can provide a lot of helpful information.

- * Support friends who choose not to use drugs, alcohol, tobacco, steroids, or diet pills.

- * If you use drugs or alcohol, you can talk to us about it. We can help you with quitting or cutting down on your use.
 - o Smokers should check out www.trytostop.org.

We understand sexuality is an important part of your development. If you have any questions or concerns, we are here for you.

- * Make healthy decisions about your sexual behavior.
- * If you are sexually active, always practice safe sex.
 - o Always use condoms to prevent infections and pregnancy.
- * All sexual activity should be something you want. No one should ever force or try to convince you.
- * Remember that healthy dating relationships are built on respect and that saying “no” is OK.
- * Here are some websites that we think are helpful:
 - o www.youngwomenshealth.org
 - o www.youngmenshealthsite.org

In addition:

- * Make sure to wear hearing protection when exposed to loud noises.
- * Brush and floss your teeth at least two times per day and see the dentist at least once a year.
- * Be sure you are getting enough sleep. Try not to have completely different sleep patterns during the week and on weekends.
 - o If possible, try to get 8 hours of sleep each night.
- * Eat three healthy meals a day. Don't skip breakfast!
- * Drink plenty of water.
- * Make sure to get enough calcium.
 - o Have 3 or more servings (32 ounces) of low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk and other low-fat dairy products each day.
 - o If you cannot drink milk, please talk with us about how to get adequate vitamin D and calcium in your diet.
- * Limit the amount of soda and fatty foods you eat and drink.
- * Stay physically active – at least one hour of exercise per day.
- * Figure out healthy ways to deal with stress.
 - o Try your best to solve problems and make decisions on your own.
 - o Most people have daily ups and downs, but if you are feeling too sad, depressed, nervous, irritable, hopeless, or angry, talk with us or another health professional.
- * Never allow physical harm to yourself or others at home or school.
- * Always deal with conflict using non-violence.
 - o Fighting and carrying weapons can be dangerous.

TRANSITIONING TO AN ADULT MEDICINE PRACTICE:

Now that you are an adult, you may need to start thinking about changing your doctor. If you currently see a pediatrician who only sees children and teens, usually by age 22 years you will need to transition to a new doctor. If your current provider is an adolescent medicine specialist, family medicine doctor, or sees both adults and children, he/she can continue to care for you. Also, it is common for people your age to move away from home to different towns or states. In that case, you may prefer to start going to a medical practice closer to your new home.

If you are going to change doctors, your current doctor can provide you with a list of doctors to choose from and provide your next doctor with a summary of your current health problems. Be sure to let us know where you plan to go.

MANAGING YOUR HEALTH CARE:

- * You now need to sign consents for your own health care. Be aware that we can no longer give your parents information regarding you or your health without your permission.
- * Talk with us about designating a “proxy” who can make health care decisions for you if you ever are incapacitated and can’t make them for yourself.
- * Sign up for MyCHArt! This is our on-line patient portal which enables you to communicate with us by email and have access to some of your medical records.
- * Know the basics of your health care: any chronic diagnoses, your medication names and doses, and any allergies you may have.
- * Carry your own insurance card.
- * Schedule your own appointments and call for your own refills on medications.

NEXT VISIT: once per year for check-ups/physicals during ages 18 – 21 years and as needed for other problems, illnesses or injuries

The internet can be an excellent source of information on young adult health. Be sure that the websites you visit are reputable! If you have questions, please ask us.

Find more information and tools on our CHA website page for on-line resources at:

<http://www.challiance.org/Services/PediatricsResourcesforParents.aspx>

Find us on Facebook at:

<https://www.facebook.com/CHAPediatrics>

Revised January 2014