



HEALTH LETTER

Summer
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Board Certified
Internal Medicine

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Teen Talk

Summer Sun

One of the most difficult aspects of raising teenage children is trying to provide for their health and well-being while fostering their desires to develop a sense of independence. Automobile accidents, suicide and homicide, alcohol, drug abuse, and obesity remain the leading causes of adolescent injury and death. The challenge for both parents and healthcare providers alike is to effectively engage teenagers in discussions in efforts to reduce exposure to riskier behaviors. Periodic evaluations with their physician for routine preventive services may help reduce these risks.

Immunizations such as the influenza, pertussis, meningococcal, and HPV vaccines (for both males and females) should be part of the exam. There is evidence that screening and counseling for risk-taking behaviors can help to prevent unintentional accidents and violence. Children should be warned to not allow drivers to drink and drive, or to text and drive. Recent studies have shown that the risk of accidents and fatalities from texting and driving is just as high as those who drink and drive. Please make sure your children are aware that they can call you at any time of day or night to pick them up if they're not comfortable with the capabilities of the driver who has your children in their car.

Discussions concerning the risk factors for future heart disease such as smoking and obesity should be engaged by both parents and physicians. Your health care provider may also be a reliable resource on topics such as alcohol, drug abuse, and risks of sexual activities. In addition, evaluation for high blood pressure and cholesterol is indicated as part of the routine adolescent health exam. Topics such as dental health, hearing, and vision testing are also advised for teens.

If you have an adolescent who you feel may be at risk for injury or illness, please address these issues with them in a caring, nonthreatening fashion. If your child is not up-to-date with immunizations, or if there are still concerns of high-risk behavior, you may encourage your child to make a preventive care visit with this office.

As the summer months have arrived, many people will spend increasing time outdoors. It is important to remember that the summer sun can have damaging effects on the skin if appropriate precautions are not taken. First the sun is generally the most damaging to the skin between the hours of 11 AM and 3 PM -caution should be taken to limit direct exposure during this time. If you do plan to be outdoors for periods of time over a half hour, please use some protection barriers such as hats, clothing, and/or creams and lotions with protection factors, SPF of 30 or greater to cover areas of the face, scalp, neck, and arms. While the use of sprays may be more convenient than creams or lotions, studies have shown that the sprays are not as effective in providing protection against skin damage as lotions. If you plan to take small children out for over ½ hour in the sun, please provide adequate shade and generous use of suntan lotions for all exposed areas. The risk of melanoma (the most serious kind of skin cancer) later on in life is much higher when children less than 10 years old get a severe blistering sunburn.

The warning signs of the skin cancer melanoma include enlarging or non-healing darker areas of the skin, moles that appear to have irregularities or different colors, and bleeding lesions of the skin that do not heal up after 2 to 3 weeks. If you are concerned any non-healing skin lesion, please contact your physician for evaluation.

Lower Lab Fees

While the cost of medical care seems to be rising on an annual basis, Abington Health has recently reduced the charges for their outpatient laboratory testing. If you have been going elsewhere to other commercial labs over concerns over higher lab test charges, you will be pleasantly surprised to see that that Abington's new fee schedule is competitive with other lab drawing centers in the area.

OFFICE HOURS	M	T	W	Th	F	
Morning hours	9-12	9-12	9-12	9-12	9-12	
PM hours	1-5	1-6	1-5	1-5		
Evening hours	6-8			6-7		

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