



Pediatric
Health Care Associates P.C.
From Birth To Twenty-One

Dear Parents and Patients:

As your child enters adolescence, it becomes important to discuss an entirely new set of health-related questions, ranging from substance abuse to sexuality. We hope you have already begun the process of talking to your child about these issues, and have shown that you are always open to discussing them further. In order to provide your child with the best possible care, the providers at PHCA will begin to discuss these issues annually with your child in a confidential manner. In keeping with the recommendations set by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Society for Adolescent Medicine, we will address issues about personal safety, sexuality, and substance use starting at your child's 13 year-old physical. You will be asked to leave the room at some point during that visit, so that we might speak with your child one-on-one about their health concerns.

As pediatricians, we understand that this time of transition can be difficult. We know that failure to provide confidential services may prevent some adolescents from seeking treatment and counseling for serious health concerns. These might include sexual abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, depression, suicidal thoughts, or substance abuse. It is therefore our goal to protect and serve all our patients by keeping these conversations confidential.

It is important, however, to know that your child's confidentiality has limits. If your child is in serious danger, a parent will always be notified. We also encourage your child to include you every step of the way. If necessary, we can help you locate additional assistance for your child, such as a counselor or other health service provider.

Please look over the questionnaire your child will receive at every physical from ages 13 to 18. Feel free to discuss it with us, and let us know if you feel your child is developmentally not ready for it. Please discuss it with your teenager as well; it may be a useful beginning to some important conversations.

Sincerely,

The pediatricians and nurse practitioners of Pediatric Health Care Associates