



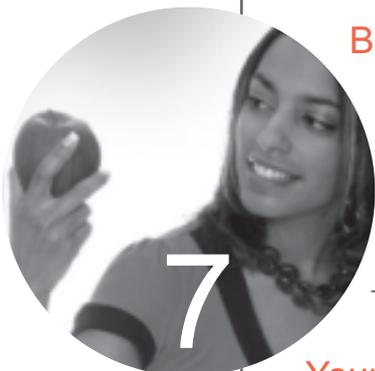
# What about me?

A girls' guide to health

written by Marianne Doran

THE  
**WOMEN'S FUND**  
*for Health Education and Research*

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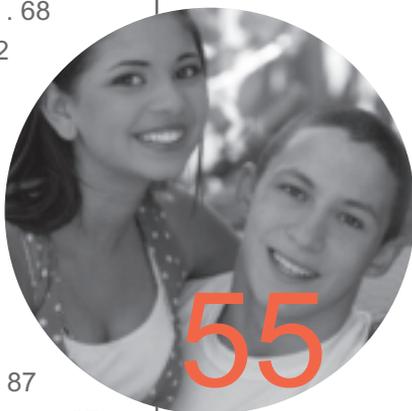
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## PREFACE

### *A Word from The Women's Fund*

Since 1979, The Women's Fund for Health Education and Research has funded medical research and provided health education for women. Our educational programs and health publications have reached hundreds of thousands of women and girls in the Houston area with free preventive health information in English and Spanish. In 1999, The Women's Fund realized that educating women was not enough and that the key to changing the future of women's health starts with educating girls.

With this thought in mind, we decided to provide a free resource for girls written in simple, fun language that would answer questions about their changing bodies and feelings. We talked to doctors, teachers, and other professionals who work with adolescent girls in Houston, and with input from several teen groups and our community advisory board, *What About Me? A Girls' Guide to Health*

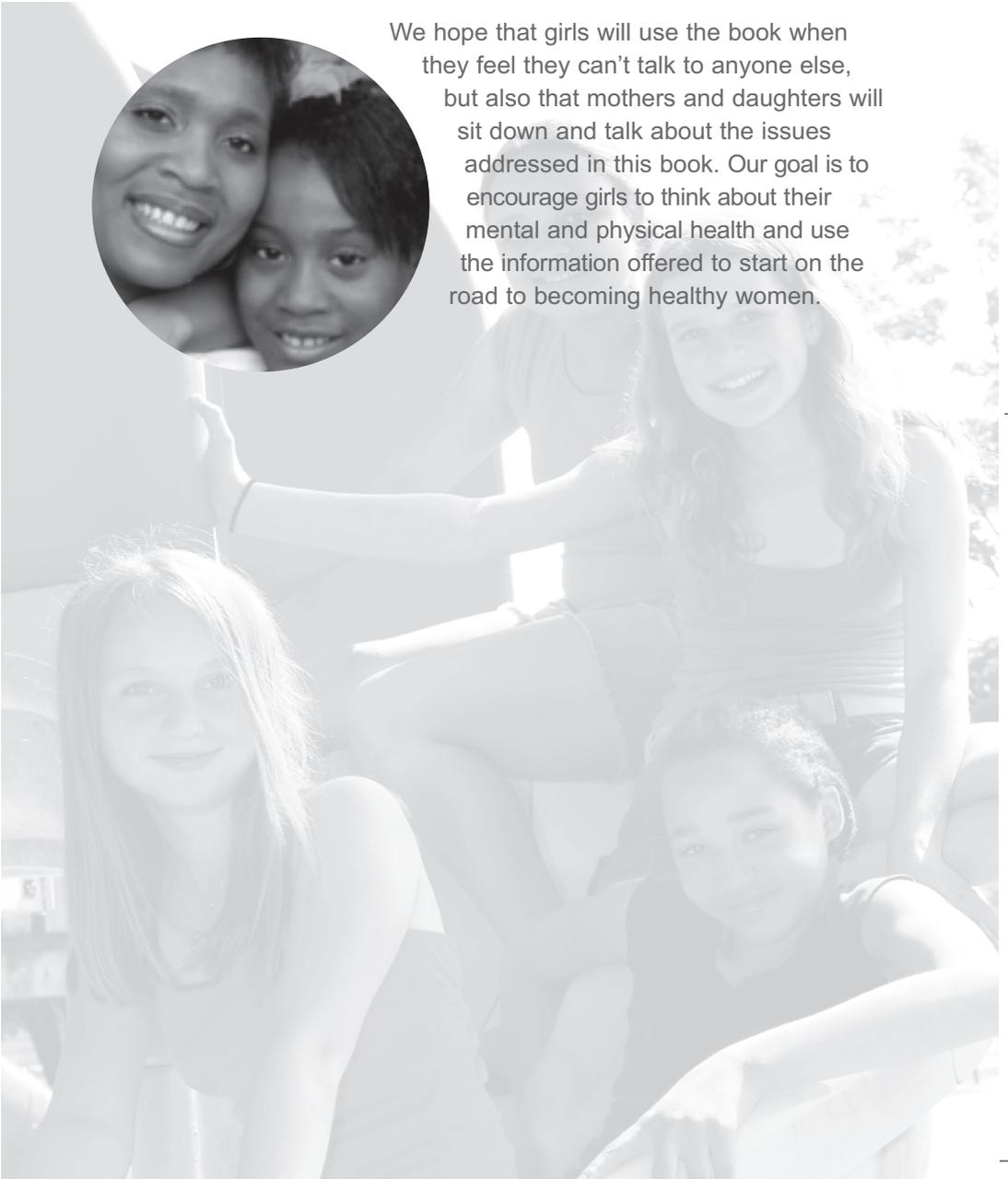


was “born.” This is the second edition of What About Me?

What About Me? is intended for girls ages 12 to 16 but may be appropriate for some girls as young as 10 or 11. It is meant to be a resource with accurate information and choices that girls can use to answer specific questions and refer to as needed. For more information go to [www.thewomensfund.org](http://www.thewomensfund.org).



We hope that girls will use the book when they feel they can't talk to anyone else, but also that mothers and daughters will sit down and talk about the issues addressed in this book. Our goal is to encourage girls to think about their mental and physical health and use the information offered to start on the road to becoming healthy women.



## *Acknowledgements*

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## INTRODUCTION

### What About Me? is for YOU

This book was written just for you. It's not for your mother (though you may want to share some of the information with her). It's not for your older sister. And it's definitely not for your little brother!

Your romantic feelings are different now.

Dating is so exciting, but it's also confusing.

Nothing, it seems, can give you higher highs – or lower lows.

There are other stresses, too. You may feel pressure to look and dress a certain way, like a toothpick-thin TV star, for instance, or like the most popular girl at your school. And you have tough choices to make about so many things. Sex. Alcohol. Drugs. Tattoos. Body piercing.

**This is an exciting – and very special – time of life for you. You're not a little kid anymore. Your body is changing in dramatic (and sometimes weird!) ways.**

You probably have questions about lots of different things, everything from the most embarrassing “body” issues to questions about how to get along better with family and friends. You may wonder: Is my body normal? Why do I cry so easily when it's time for my period? Do other girls worry about their breasts/stomach/thighs the way I do? Is everyone having sex but me? Can I say “No” and still be cool?

Some questions are just too embarrassing – or too private – to ask your parents or your friends. That's where this book can help.

We'll try to address the issues that concern you the most. We promise not to preach or to tell you what to do. We'll give you the facts and, when possible, offer some choices. We know that with the right information, you'll make the right decisions.

## *How to Use This Book*

This guidebook is arranged in chapters, with short topics in each. The chapters are Body Image, Your Body, Self-Image, Substance Abuse, Relationships, Sexuality, Guys, Safety, and Other Health Issues.

We've included checklists, quizzes, and lots of boxes with important information. Throughout the book you'll see boxes called "FAQs" (Frequently Asked Questions), "Did You Know?" (interesting or surprising facts), and "Myths." The glossary in the back defines frequently used terms, which will be shown in **COLORED TEXT** the first time they are used in the text. Additional Resources are included at the end. And don't forget to check the Hotline phone numbers listed in the back of the book!

We hope you'll learn some things about yourself in these pages – and have a little fun along the way!



## CHAPTER ONE • BODY IMAGE

### *How Do You See Yourself?*

Before we talk about body image, take just a minute to look at the exercise below entitled, “Three Women I Admire Most.” Think about the question and fill in your answers now. We’ll come back to them in a minute.

#### **Mirror, Mirror on the Wall...**

Your body image is the mental picture you have of yourself. This “mind picture” may be exactly the way others see you, too. If it is, that’s great. That means that you have a realistic – and healthy – body image.

But chances are, your mental picture of yourself is at least a little distorted. That’s true for most of us. We see ourselves as too tall, too short, too fat, too flat-chested. We look in the mirror and see noses that are too big (even when they’re really not), hair that’s too frizzy, and thighs that are too jiggy.

Our mental image of ourselves often has nothing to do with reality. Haven’t you known a beautiful girl who hates the way she looks, even though every other girl in school would give anything to look like she does? In extreme cases, as in the eating disorder **anorexia nervosa**, a tall girl who weighs only 85 pounds looks in the mirror and sees herself as disgustingly fat.

Your  
turn!

#### **Three Women I Admire Most...**

Close your eyes for a minute and think about the women (or girls) who have made a difference in your life or who have made an important contribution to the world. Your admirable women can be friends, relatives, neighbors, teachers, or more-famous people. Now write down three names in the spaces below.

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That's almost impossible to believe, but it's true – and it shows how powerful our “mind pictures” can be.

Fortunately, most of our body images aren't quite that far off. But even a little distortion can make you feel unhappy with yourself. That's why it's important to understand why we feel the way we do about our bodies and to take steps to be a little kinder to ourselves.

### Who Says You're Not OK?

Body image problems and obsessions with weight loss, hard bodies, and breast implants are a new thing. Our great-grandmothers had it so much easier. They didn't have TV, movies, magazines, or gymnastics coaches telling them how they should look or what they should weigh. They also didn't have to walk around in gym shorts and bikinis with their bodies exposed for the entire world to see.

**Today, it's tough to be happy with yourself when everywhere you look you see picture-perfect models and movie stars smiling back at you. But let's get one thing straight: These are not typical girls and women.**



In order to get to a size 4 (or – oh my gosh! – even a size 0), most models and movie stars lead very strange lives. They eat only tiny amounts of food (which doesn't sound like much fun!) and then spend several hours exercising each day. Many have had multiple operations to enlarge their breasts, smooth their thighs, and fix any other “imperfections.” And if that weren't enough, most of the photos we see in magazines have been touched up to hide any remaining flaws.

So much of what we see in the magazines and movies isn't real at all. And if that's what we compare ourselves to, we'll always be depressed about the way we look. Instead of comparing yourself to other people, you may want to get to know yourself a little better. Take a minute now to do the body image exercise called "Say 'Hello' to the REAL You" on page 6. We think you'll like what you see!

Did you fill in all the blanks? Now that you've discovered five things you like about your appearance, why not go for 10, or even 20? The more you find to like about yourself, the happier and more self-confident you'll be.

So what about those things you're NOT so crazy about? Ask yourself two questions: "Is it really that important?" If so, "Can I do something about it?" If your not-so-great trait is really important to you and it's something you can change, then go for it. If not, forget about it and concentrate on more important things.



The key to looking your best is to emphasize your good points and take steps to improve the areas of your appearance that need a little work. We'll talk about how to do that in the sections that follow: Eating Right, Staying Active, and Slimming Down.

Now, it's time to look back at your answers in "Three Women I Admire Most." Here are some questions to ponder:

How many of the women you chose wear a size 2? (Or even a size 4 or size 6?) Which ones have buns-of-steel or breasts out to HERE? Count the ones who have perfect turned-up noses or flawless skin. How many did you come up with? Not many, we'd guess – and probably not any. Chances are that your "most admired" list is full of average-looking women, with comfortable bodies and pleasant – but not perfect – faces.

The point is that these are all women who have accomplished great things or who have been important in your life – and they didn't do it with flat stomachs or flawless thighs. They're REAL women, just like you!

## Say "Hello" to the REAL You!

Your  
turn!

Here's a little body image exercise to try: First, find a mirror. Take a long, calm look at yourself (no screaming or making faces). Be kind to yourself. Don't immediately focus on the things you don't like. Instead, treat yourself the way you would treat a good friend. Try to see yourself objectively, the way a stranger on the street sees you. Squint your eyes if you need to, or pretend you are someone being introduced to you for the first time. Take your time, think carefully, and fill in the blanks:

### Five things I like about the way I look (and why):

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### Three things I'd like to improve (and how I could):

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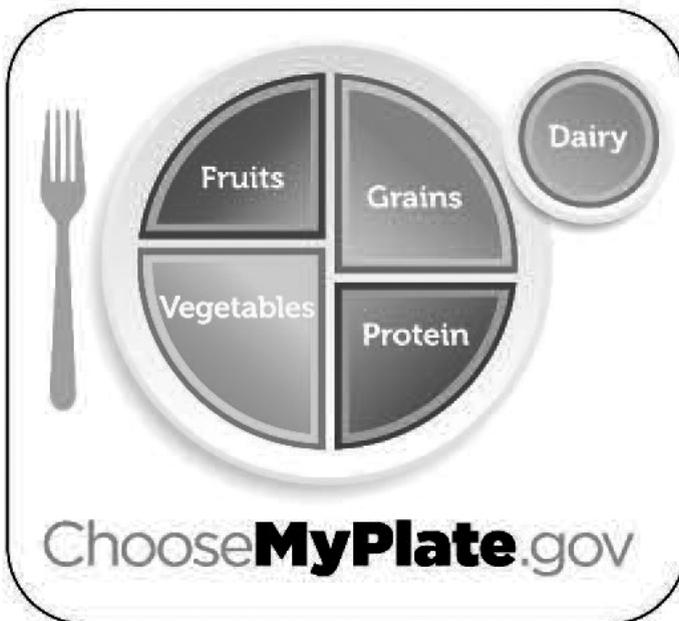
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## *Eating Right to Look and Feel Your Best*

Did you know that the type of foods you eat affects how you look, how you feel, and even your mood? To get all the **nutrients** you need each day, you need to eat a variety of foods from each of these five major food groups:

- **vegetables**
- **fruits**
- **bread, cereals, rice, and pasta**
- **milk, yogurt, and cheese**
- **meat, poultry, fish, legumes (beans and peas), eggs, and nuts**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has developed a new food guideline called ChooseMyPlate (see illustration below) to show the types of food you need each day to stay healthy. The different food groups are represented on the plate as the amounts that we should eat. Larger sections (such as grains and vegetables) indicate that you need more of these foods. Smaller sections represent foods that we still need, but in lesser amounts. The new ChooseMyPlate graphic shows us what



each of our meals might look like, but remember, exercise is also important.

Notice that solid fats and sugars are not part of the plate. Instead, they are considered to be “extras” (or “discretionary calories”) and are allowed only in limited amounts. Girls who get lots of exercise can have a larger amount of extras than girls who are not physically active.

That’s because oils and other fats have more **calories** than any other types of food and our bodies require only small amounts each day. Sugar, too, packs a lot of calories but no nutrients – nothing that our body requires in order to work properly. In other words, sugar contains empty calories.

## Personalize Your Plan

The ChooseMyPlate website can provide a personalized diet plan just for you. Go to [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov) and fill in your age, sex, and level of daily exercise (less than 30 minutes, 30 to 60 minutes, or more than 60 minutes). Your personalized plan will display the amounts of grains, vegetables, fruits, milk, and meat and beans you should be eating each day. It also provides your daily allowance of oils and extras (solid fats and sugars).

For example, a 15-year-old girl who gets 30 to 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise each day should eat:

- grains (6 oz.)
- vegetables (2-1/2 cups)
- fruit (2 cups)
- milk or milk products (3 cups)
- meat or beans (5-1/2 oz.)

She may also consume 6 teaspoons of oil. This physically active 15-year-old also is allowed 265 calories for extras (added sugars, solid fats like butter, or a sweetened or higher-fat product like chocolate milk or regular cheese). If this girl were not as physically active (getting less than 30 minutes of daily exercise), she would be allowed only 5 teaspoons of oil and 195 calories for extras.

resource: [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)

The ChooseMyPlate website includes links to detailed information on each of the food groups. These links describe the nutritional and resource: [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov) health benefits of the foods. They also provide examples of various food choices and the specific amounts that count as one serving. You can print out ChooseMyPlate Meal Tracking Worksheets to help you keep track of your daily food intake and exercise.

## Focus on Food Groups

Grains, vegetables, and fruits are your best sources of vitamins, most minerals, and dietary fiber. A diet high in fiber reduces the risk of **can-**  
**cer** and heart disease and helps control your weight by making you feel

full longer. Health experts say we need at least 20 to 35 grams of fiber every day. (The Nutrition Facts box on packaged foods gives information on the calories, fat, fiber, and other nutrients in one serving of that food. See “Making Sense of Food Labels” below.)

Milk products are rich in calcium and are a good source of protein. Calcium is very important for



## Making Sense of Food Labels

**Serving Size:** → amount of food to which all the other numbers refer. Sometimes a food can seem nutritious until you compare serving size to how much you usually eat.

**Total Fat & Saturated Fat:** → tells you how many grams of different types of fat are in one serving. This helps you understand how much and what kind of fat is in a food.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 15 crackers (30g)	
Servings per container: About 7	
Amount per serving	
<b>Calories</b> 130	<b>Calories from Fat</b> 30
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 3.5g	6%
Saturated Fat 0.5g	3%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 230mg	9%
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 22g	7%
Dietary Fiber 1g	
Sugars 4g	
<b>Protein</b> 2g	
Vitamin A 10%	Calcium 4%
Vitamin C 0%	Iron 6%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.	
Calories:	2,000 2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g 80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g 375g
Dietary Fiber	25g 30g
<b>INGREDIENTS:</b> Enriched wheat flour, vegetable shortening (partially hydrogenated soybean oil), sugar, salt, leavening (calcium phosphate, baking soda), hydrolyzed corn and yeast protein (contains glutamate).	

**% Daily Values:** → the percentage of the daily recommended allowance of each nutrient one serving gives you.

**List of Ingredients:** → listed in order by the amount of each item in the product. Long names that look like chemicals may be additives or preservatives which you may not want to eat in large quantities. Read closely if you have food allergies.

girls. You need lots of it to build strong bones and teeth. The bone mass you build (with calcium-rich foods) in your teens and young adult years needs to last you a lifetime. When you get older (about age 50), you will start to lose more bone mass than you make. If you lose too much, your bones become brittle and can break easily (a condition called **osteoporosis**). So it's important to start off with strong bones.

Meat and beans are your main sources of protein. Your body needs protein for the normal growth and repair of all cells and tissues (organs, muscles, nerves, blood, skin, hair). It also helps fight infection and fatigue. Protein foods are good sources of B vitamins, iron, zinc, and magnesium. Nuts, seeds, and plant oils are rich in vitamin E and essential fatty acids required for good health.

## Food Choices and Servings

Here's a quick look at the food choices and the general serving sizes recommended in each food group. (To view more food choices and serving sizes, go to [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov).)

**Grains.** The grain group includes foods made from wheat, oats, rice, cornmeal, barley, and other cereal grains. At least half of your daily grains should be "whole grains." Whole grains preserve the whole kernel of grain. Whole grain products include whole wheat breads, cereals, crackers, pasta, and tortillas plus oatmeal, brown rice, wild rice, whole cornmeal, cracked wheat, and popcorn. Whole grains are high in fiber.

In refined grains, the whole kernel has been stripped from the grain, removing B vitamins, iron, and much of the dietary fiber. Most refined grain products are "enriched" after processing. This means the vitamins and iron are added back, but the fiber is not. Refined grain products include regular crackers, noodles, spaghetti, macaroni, flour and corn tortillas, pretzels, and most breakfast cereals, plus white bread products and white rice.

General serving size: One ounce of grain is 1 slice of bread, 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal, or 1/2 cup of cooked rice, cooked pasta, or cooked cereal.

**Vegetables.** The ChooseMyPlate plan groups vegetables as dark green, orange, starchy, dry beans and peas, and other types. Choose

several servings from each group each week. Here are some examples from each group:

- Dark green (broccoli, dark green leafy lettuce, romaine lettuce, spinach)
- Orange (sweet potatoes, carrots, butternut squash, pumpkin)
- Dry beans and peas (black beans, black-eyed peas, pinto beans, soybeans or tofu, split peas)

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## Is It OK to Be a Vegetarian?

Yes. A vegetarian diet can be a very healthful way to live. In fact, health experts would like to see everyone eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains and less meat.

The two most common types of vegetarians are lacto-ovo (eats no meat but does eat milk products and eggs) and vegan (eats no animal products).

The best type of vegetarian diet for an adolescent or teen is the lacto-ovo diet. That's because it's easier to satisfy your calcium and protein requirements when you include milk, yogurt, cheese, and eggs. People who don't eat meat can develop iron deficiency anemia (a condition that can cause tiredness and weakness). So if you decide to become a vegetarian, check with your school nurse, health clinic, or family doctor for a food plan that will provide all the nutrients you need. A daily multivitamin with iron may be recommended.

- 
- Starchy (corn, green peas, lima beans, potatoes)
  - Other vegetables (green beans, tomatoes, cabbage, green or red peppers, zucchini, iceberg lettuce, vegetable juice)

General serving size: One serving is 1 cup of raw or cooked vegetables or vegetable juice or 2 cups of raw leafy greens.

**Fruits.** Choose any type of whole fruit (fresh, canned, frozen, dried) or 100% fruit juice. Fruit choices include apples, bananas, berries (strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, cherries), grapefruit, grapes, melons (cantaloupe, honeydew, watermelon), oranges, peaches, pears, pineapple, raisins, 100% juice (orange, apple, grape, grapefruit), and many more. Choose whole fruit more often than fruit juice.

General serving size: One serving is 1 cup of fruit or 100% fruit juice or 1/2 cup of dried fruit.

**Milk.** Milk choices include milk, yogurt, or cheese (hard natural cheese, ricotta, cottage cheese, processed cheese). Most of your choices should be low-fat or fat-free products. They also should have no added sugars. If you opt for a full-fat product (like regular cheddar cheese) or a sweetened milk product (like chocolate milk or frozen yogurt), compare the calories in the product to the calories of the low-fat version. The calorie difference should be counted as part of your extra or “discretionary” calories for the day.

General serving size: The typical serving size is 1 cup of milk, 1 regular container of yogurt, 2 cups of cottage cheese, 1-1/2 ounces of natural hard cheese, or 2 ounces of processed cheese.

**Meat and beans.** Choose lean or low-fat meats (like beef, ham, or pork); poultry (like chicken or turkey); fish; eggs; dry beans and peas (including soybeans, tofu, veggie burger patties, black-eyed peas, lentils); and nuts and seeds (almonds, cashews, peanuts, peanut butter, sunflower seeds, walnuts). Choose fish, nuts, and seeds more often than meat or poultry. Meats should be baked, broiled, or grilled – not fried. Always trim visible fat from meats and remove the skin from poultry.

General serving size: A 1-ounce serving is 1 ounce of meat, poultry, or fish; 1/2 cup of cooked dry beans; 1 egg; 1 tablespoon of peanut butter; or 1/2 ounce of nuts or seeds.

## Smooth Move...

Don't like plain milk? Make a fruit smoothie. It's a great way to get calcium, protein, and fruit – all in one delicious drink. Smoothies are easy to make and easy to take (in case you're in a hurry).

To make a fruit smoothie:

1. Put 1 cup of fruit in the blender (try 1/2 cup banana and 1/2 cup strawberry).
2. Blend. Slowly add 1/2 cup of low-fat milk.
3. Add a small amount of honey (if desired).
4. Enjoy.

(For an extra-frosty smoothie, slice and freeze the fruit first.)

Experiment with different types of fruit and fruit juices. (Try 1 cup of orange juice, 1/2 cup of plain yogurt, and a small banana.) Add flavorings (such as vanilla or maple extract) and spices (such as cinnamon or nutmeg). Let your imagination go wild!

**Oils.** Most of us get plenty of oils through cooking oil, salad dressings, mayonnaise, and tub or squeeze margarines. Nuts, seeds, avocados, and olives also are naturally high in healthful oils. Be careful not to consume too much oil. Each tablespoon has about 120 calories. Also, check the Nutrition Facts panel (see page 9) of margarines to make sure they contain no trans fat (a very unhealthy type of fat).

Solid fats are considered “extras” and should be consumed only in small amounts and preferably not at all. Solid fats include butter, stick margarine, lard, and shortening (including vegetable shortening).

General serving size: Oil serving sizes are measured in teaspoons (1 tablespoon is 3 teaspoons). Eight large olives count as 1 teaspoon of oil, 1/2 of an avocado counts as 3 teaspoons, 2 tablespoons of peanut butter counts as 4 teaspoons, and 1 ounce of most nuts counts as 3 teaspoons.

One more thing: Try to drink 6–8 glasses of water every day. It’s important for all your body functions. Plus, drinking lots of water helps your skin look its best and can keep you from feeling hungry between meals.

Feeling a little overwhelmed? Don’t worry. No one expects you to become a Nutrition Saint or to never eat another brownie. And the Food Police won’t arrest you if you eat French fries once in a while.

The important point is to be aware of what you are eating. Then try to go a little easier on the junk and a little heavier on the good foods. Small changes in the way you eat can make a big difference.

### Good vs. Bad Fats

Not all fats are unhealthy. Omega-3 fatty acids are “good fats” found primarily in fish and fish oil. Canola oil and flaxseeds, walnuts, and soybeans (and their oils) also contain these healthful fats. Omega-3 fatty acids have beneficial effects on your heart, eyes, and brain.

Monounsaturated fats (found in olives, olive oil, canola oil, avocados,



## What's Up with Fat?

Everyone needs some fat each day. But most of us eat way too much. Fat is everywhere in our modern diet of fast-food meals, store-bought foods, snacks, and desserts.

Too much fat clogs the blood vessels that bring oxygen to the heart and brain. (This artery “goo” begins forming during childhood.) Clogged arteries can cause heart attacks and strokes later in life. Too much fat in the diet also has been linked to several types of cancer, including colon cancer and breast cancer. Finally, a high-fat diet leads to weight gain. Fat packs more calories than protein or carbohydrates.

High-fat foods include: Hamburgers and most other meats, fried foods (including fried chicken, chicken nuggets, doughnuts, and French fries), pizza, whole milk, ice cream, cookies, candy bars, cakes, pies, pastries, dips, and salad dressings.

You don't have to give up these foods to be healthy. You just need to choose them less often. Think of these high-fat favorites as a special treat, not everyday eating.

For help in making good choices in fast-food restaurants, see “Fast-Food Frenzy” on page 19.

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almonds, peanuts, peanut butter, sesame seeds, and macadamia nuts) are other healthful fats. They help protect your heart and may reduce the risk of some cancers.

Saturated fats and trans fatty acids (also called trans fats) are the troublemakers. Saturated fats are found primarily in animal products (such as meats and regular milk, butter, and cheese) and in palm oil and coconut oil. Bakery products and snack foods made with these ingredients are a major dietary source of saturated fat. These bad fats raise levels of LDL (“bad”) cholesterol (increasing the risk of heart disease) and are linked to the development of several types of cancer.

Trans fats are oils that have been chemically altered to be more stable at room temperature. These fats are commonly used in French fries and other fast foods, and they enable margarine to remain solid at room temperature. Food manufacturers also use trans fats to extend the shelf life of processed foods like cookies, crackers, and snack foods. Trans fats behave like saturated fats in your body and

may be even worse for your health.

The best way to reduce your intake of unhealthy fats is to eat fewer fast foods, bakery products, and snack foods and use low-fat or fat-free dairy products.

## *Staying Active*

Did you know that you can dance your way to good health and a great body? It's true. Regular physical activity is just about the best thing you can do for yourself. It keeps your body in shape, reduces **stress** (we all need that!), improves your mood, and boosts your energy level. And it doesn't have to be a boring, run-four-laps-around-the-track kind of activity.

Just turn on some music and dance. While you're perfecting your dancing skills, you'll be putting your heart and lungs through a great aerobic workout. Aerobic activities increase your heart rate (which strengthens your heart) and make you breathe hard and sweat a little.

If you haven't been active for a while, start out with a few minutes of dancing. Gradually increase your dance time until you're moving around for about 30 minutes. Health experts say we should get at least 60 minutes of physical activity almost every day.

Dancing's not your thing? No problem. You have plenty of other activities to choose from:

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### **Lifting Weights Isn't Just for Jocks**

Who said girls don't do weights? Weightlifting (or strength training) is an excellent activity for everyone – especially girls. It actually increases our bone mass, which is the key to avoiding osteoporosis later in life.

Plus, strength training builds muscle mass (but not the big, bulky muscles that guys develop – it takes lots of male hormones to do that). Muscle mass is really important in weight control because muscle uses up more energy (calories) than fat does. More muscle mass means that our bodies burn more calories, even when we're asleep (what a deal!).

The best way to learn about strength training is through a coach at school or an instructor at your local YMCA or gym. You can lift weights two or three times per week. But don't exercise the same muscles two days in a row – your muscles need at least one day to rest!

- Walk your dog (he'll love you for it).
- Jump rope.
- Go skating or riding bikes with some friends.
- Turn on an exercise show on TV.
- Walk the mall with a friend.
- Sign up for an exercise class at your local community center.
- Stay after school and walk the track with your friends.
- Find a sport that you really love. Volleyball, soccer, basketball, tennis, swimming, and track are all great activities. Gymnastics, cheerleading, martial arts, softball, and bowling are good activities, too.

The point is to find some activities that you really enjoy and do them regularly.

### Are You Overweight?

For an increasing number of teenagers, the answer to that question is yes. In fact, in the last 30 years, obesity has more than doubled among American teenagers. Some of the reasons: more fast food meals, super-sized portions, unhealthy snacks, and sugar-loaded soft drinks. Add hours of daily screen time on the computer or watching TV and you have a recipe for weight gain.

We all know that being overweight is no fun. It can zap your energy, make you feel uncomfortable in your clothes, and drag down your **self-esteem**. Girls who are overweight often get teased, bullied, or left out of the social scene. Excess weight can lead to depression, negative body image, abnormal menstrual periods, sleep problems, and type 2 **diabetes**. It also increases the risk of heart disease and cancer later in life.

Calculating your body mass index (BMI) will show whether you are overweight or at risk of becoming overweight. BMI relies on height and

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) ("child and teen BMI calculator")

- We all know that regular physical activity is good for the heart. But exercise also:*
- Burns calories.
  - Suppresses your appetite.
  - Reduces stress.
  - Relieves mild depression.
  - Promotes feelings of well-being.
  - Increases mental alertness.
  - Builds strong bones.
  - Firms and tones your body.
  - Increases flexibility and agility.
  - Improves coordination.
  - Increases energy and stamina.
  - Helps you sleep.
  - Improves your skin.
  - Boosts self-confidence.
  - Helps prevent health problems (heart attack, stroke, diabetes, osteoporosis, cancer).

15 Great Reasons to Get Physical...

weight to determine the amount of body fat. The best way to find your BMI is to use the BMI calculator on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website. (Go to [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) and type in “child and teen BMI calculator” in the search box.)

## *Slimming Down*

Dieting, as in not eating at all or living on nothing but lettuce and celery, is not a good idea. That’s true for everyone, but especially for adolescents and teens. First off, it doesn’t work. Secondly, it robs your body of important nutrients that you need to grow and be healthy.

It’s true that if you don’t eat or if you eat only “rabbit food,” the numbers on your scale will go down. But at least half of that “weight loss” is

**W**hat’s the solution to losing weight? Eat a little less and exercise a little more. That doesn’t sound exciting, but it’s the only real solution...

really water loss. As soon as you eat regular food, your weight will bounce back up.

More importantly, our bodies are pretty smart, and they’re programmed for survival. If you starve your body long enough or often enough, it learns to function on fewer calories. Everything slows down, and you’ll need less food to stay at your current weight. That makes weight gain more likely. It also makes it even harder to lose weight the next time. Not a good thing!

Plus, when you deprive yourself of foods you enjoy, you’re setting yourself up for a real **binge**. Sooner or later you’ll crave those foods so much that you’ll end up pigging out on them and gaining back the weight you lost – and maybe more!

### Do the Math

- One pound of body fat = 3,500 calories.
- To lose one pound per week, you need to get rid of 500 calories per day (7 days X 500 calories = 3,500 calories)
- You can do that by eating 500 calories less each day or by burning 500 calories more each day or by combining the two – eating a few hundred calories less and burning a few hundred calories more.

## Test Your Drive-Through I.Q.

In a perfect world, we'd all have a cook who puts nutritious home-cooked meals in front of us every night. But in the real world, we're more likely to grab at least some of our meals at a fast-food restaurant. That can make weight control more challenging.

Before we take a look at good choices in fast-food restaurants, let's test your "Drive-Through I.Q."

Questions:

**1. If you're watching your dietary fat and calories, which of the following selections is the smartest choice?**

- a. regular hamburger
- b. chicken nuggets
- c. fish sandwich

**2. Which has more fat?**

- a. grilled chicken salad with ranch dressing
- b. large taco
- c. grilled chicken sandwich

**3. A value-priced meal with a bacon cheeseburger, large French fries, and a large soda is:**

- a. a lot of food for the money
- b. a heart attack in a sack
- c. nearly a day's worth of calories and almost two days' worth of fat
- d. all of the above

Answers:

1. a. A plain hamburger has about 300 calories and 12 grams of fat, compared to 400 calories and 25 grams of fat for 9 chicken nuggets and about 700 calories and 40 grams of fat for a fish sandwich.

2. a. The salad **WOULD HAVE BEEN** a good choice, but **ONE** package of dressing contains about 20 grams of fat. The large taco has about 17 grams of fat, and a grilled chicken sandwich (without mayo) has about 5 grams of fat. To make the salad healthy, use a reduced-fat dressing.

3. d. All of the above. Your value-priced meal totaled 1,750 calories and 109 grams of fat!

How'd you do? If you didn't do so well, don't feel bad. Fast-food restaurants are tricky. Some of the foods that sound healthiest – like fish, salad, or chicken – can be real heart-stoppers and hip-expanders if they're fried or covered with dressing. Check "Fast Food Frenzy" on the next page to discover ways to make better choices and still have fun eating fast-food.



So what's the solution to losing weight? Eat a little less and exercise a little more. That doesn't sound too exciting, but it's the only real solution to long-term weight control. Focus on the nutrition and exercise guidelines we discussed earlier. Try to increase your physical activity while you cut back on high-calorie, nutritionally empty foods, especially soft drinks, snack foods, and desserts. Small changes can have amazing effects.

Aim for a modest weight loss of 1 to 2 pounds per week. A slow, steady weight loss is safer than crash dieting, and the weight is more likely to stay off. If you can trim 300 calories per day from your diet (that's one large candy bar or a 12-ounce can of soda and a small bag of chips) and burn 200 calories with 45 minutes of exercise, you'll lose a pound a week, or about 25 pounds in six months (see "Do the Math" on page 17). Simply cutting back on fast foods can make a big difference (see "Test Your Drive-Through I.Q." on page 18 and "Fast-Food Frenzy" below).

One final point: Don't get carried away with losing



## Fast-Food Frenzy

Ordering in fast-food restaurants can be tricky. Here are some hints on making good menu choices:

- Look for grilled chicken items, such as a plain grilled chicken sandwich (hold the mayo) or chicken fajita (hold the sour cream and guacamole).
- Choose a grilled chicken salad instead of a chef salad or taco salad. Be sure to ask for the fat-free or reduced-fat dressing.
- Order a plain hamburger or a roast beef sandwich (no mayo – try mustard instead). Ask for extra lettuce and tomato to make it more filling and to add vegetables to your meal.
- Choose single items – not “value” meals – and order everything in small or regular sizes.
- Split an order with a friend or take half home to eat the next day.
- If you're unsure about the best choice, ask to see the restaurant's nutrition information.

weight. Girls are supposed to have a little padding. We weren't made to be like clothes hangers, with all those pointy angles and bones sticking out. Mother Nature gives us a little layer of fat so that our bodies can protect and nurture a baby someday.

## *Eating Disorders*

Lots of girls worry about their weight. But sometimes these worries turn into eating disorders. Eating disorders can have serious – even deadly – health consequences. If you recognize yourself – or a friend – in the descriptions that follow, get help.

Talk with a friend, parent, teacher, school guidance counselor, clinic nurse, or doctor. But don't wait. Most people with an eating disorder need professional treatment. The longer the illness goes untreated, the harder it is to overcome.

### **Anorexia Nervosa**

Girls and women with anorexia nervosa are obsessed with being thin. They starve themselves, exercise for hours, use laxatives, and sometimes vomit up their food to lose more and more weight. Girls with anorexia nervosa have a very distorted body image. They continue to see themselves as too fat, even when they are extremely underweight. Many anorexic girls don't realize they have a problem. If left untreated, anorexia nervosa can lead to serious heart problems, even death.



## Bulimia Nervosa

Girls with bulimia nervosa typically are not significantly overweight or underweight. But they're preoccupied with food and terrified of getting fat. Bulimic girls binge (eat huge amounts of food, often in an out-of-control manner) and then **purge** (force themselves to vomit up the food). Frequent purging can lead to inflammation of the throat and damage to the teeth.

After a binge, a girl also may use laxatives, **diuretics** ("water pills"), or diet pills. She may starve herself or over-exercise to keep from gaining weight. Girls who are bulimic often feel intense shame, guilt, **anxiety**, and depression over their behavior. But they feel powerless to stop it.

## Binge-Eating Disorder

Binge-eating disorder involves eating large amounts of food within a short amount of time. Girls who have the disorder often feel powerless and out of control during the episodes. They typically eat alone (often to the point of discomfort) because they are ashamed of how much they are eating. Afterward they feel guilty, disgusted with themselves, and depressed. Binge-eating disorder is similar to bulimia nervosa except that girls usually don't purge, fast, or exercise excessively to get rid of the extra calories. As a result, many girls who binge are overweight. Girls may binge in response to stress, emotional pain, or anger.

Do you recognize yourself or someone you know in any of these descriptions? If so, it's important to get help. See the Hotline numbers in the back of the book.

## *Tattoos and Body Piercing*

People have been decorating their bodies with tattoos and body piercing since ancient times. Although tattoos and piercing are a popular means of self-expression, people have strong reactions to both. Parents, teachers, employers, friends, and someone you like may judge you or assume things about you based on your "body art." Tattoos and pierced body parts are permanent, unless you can afford expensive laser surgery or other plastic surgery to remove or repair them.

## Before you commit to a tattoo or body piercing, ask yourself these questions:

- *Is this what I really want? Or am I being pressured to do it for someone else (like a boyfriend or girlfriend or a group)?*
- *Am I ready to face possible negative reactions from people?*
- *How will I feel about this tattoo or piercing a year from now? Five years from now?*
- *Is there another, less permanent way to express myself?*

Make sure you understand the risks of tattooing and piercing. Both can transmit serious diseases if the equipment is contaminated. These include **hepatitis**, tetanus, tuberculosis, and **HIV infection (AIDS)**. Skin infections and allergic reactions are possible, and some people may develop excessive scarring around the tattoo or piercing.

Piercings in the mouth or nose pose a higher risk of infection because those areas are full of bacteria. Also, a pierced tongue can damage your teeth and cause gum problems.

If you decide to go ahead with a tattoo or body piercing, have it done with sterilized equipment in a clean, safe place. Needles that have been re-used can spread dangerous infections. Don't be afraid to ask how the needle or instrument was sterilized and to see the sterilized equipment.

Be sure to follow all instructions on how to keep the wound clean. If the area becomes hot, red, or painful, you may have an infection and need to see a doctor immediately.



## CHAPTER 2 • Your Body

### 2 Periods

Periods. What a hassle. But the good news is that having your period is a sign that your body is doing what it's supposed to do. By now you've probably received the basic information on **menstruation** from your mom or school health class. If not, or if you need a refresher, see "Menstrual Cycle 101" on page 26.

We'll concentrate here on two common monthly problems – PMS (**premenstrual syndrome**) and **cramps**. The FAQ box on page 24 may answer some of the other questions you have about periods.

### Premenstrual Syndrome

"She sure is in a bad mood! She must have PMS." How many times have you heard someone say that about a girl? PMS gets blamed for a lot of things that have absolutely nothing to do with having a period (like when a girl stands up for herself or gets angry for a good reason!). In fact, most girls never have PMS. Others may have only mild symptoms.

But PMS is a real problem for some girls, and it can cause a variety of unpleasant feelings (see "Do You Have PMS?" on this page). PMS is your body's response to changing hormone levels. The symptoms are most intense in the 7–10 days before your period, and they usually disappear a day or two after you start.

Fortunately, you can take steps to prevent or ease many of the unpleasant feelings:

- Keep exercising! You may be tempted not to exercise because you feel tired and bloated. But exercise helps!
- Watch your diet. Salty foods make

### Do You Have PMS?

Here are some of the symptoms of premenstrual syndrome:

- fluid retention (swollen fingers or ankles, puffy face)
- bloating (feeling heavy, weight gain)
- breast tenderness or swelling
- moodiness (increased emotional sensitivity, crying, feeling "blue")
- irritability (grouchy, impatient, quick to anger)
- back pain or headache
- diarrhea or constipation
- skin problems (more blemishes, rashes)
- food cravings (especially chocolate and other sweets or salty foods)
- difficulty in concentrating
- fatigue and/or cramps

# FAQ

Q. Sometimes I go two or three months without a period. Is that normal?

A. It may be. It depends on how long you've been menstruating and whether or not you're sexually active. Many girls have irregular periods for the first year or two after they start menstruating. If you're sexually active, however, pregnancy is a possibility anytime you miss a period.

Q. Sometimes I have clots in my menstrual blood. Are these dangerous?

A. No. Menstrual blood is sticky, and clots can form as the blood sits in your uterus before it is released.

Q. I have short periods compared to my friends. Does this mean I'll have trouble having a baby?

A. No. Most periods last three to seven days. But a period that's a little shorter doesn't mean there's a problem. (Very heavy bleeding – continually soaking through a pad or tampon every hour or less – or periods that last more than seven days should be checked out by a doctor.) Spotting (occasional very light bleeding) is common in adolescents, and athletes or girls taking birth control pills frequently have shorter or lighter periods.

fluid retention and bloating worse. High-sugar foods can contribute to irritability or moodiness. **Caffeine** may add to tension and make breast tenderness worse.

- Reduce overall stress. Practice the stress-reduction skills discussed in the Stress section.
- Take a warm bath.
- Get more rest. Extra sleep helps prevent fatigue, irritability, and moodiness.
- Be kind to yourself. Remind yourself that you're not crazy and that these unpleasant feelings will pass.
- Talk with a doctor. A doctor may be able to prescribe medication.

## Cramps

Menstrual cramps are like little “labor pains.” During childbirth, the muscles of the **uterus** contract to open the **cervix** (the opening of the uterus) and move the baby out. The cramps you feel during your period are a milder version – little contractions to move menstrual blood from the uterus.

The uterine lining also releases natural chemicals called **prostaglandins** as it pulls away from the wall of the uterus. These chemicals interfere

with blood flow to the uterus and contribute to the cramping and pain.

More than 50% of girls and women have cramps. Cramps can be mild and easily controlled with a heating pad and over-the-counter pain relievers. Or they can be painful enough to keep some girls in bed for the first day of their periods. With severe cramps, the pain can extend to the lower back and down the legs. Nausea and vomiting also may occur.

Exercise helps relieve mild cramps. It triggers the release of **endorphins** (natural pain-relieving and mood-elevating chemicals), and it may slow the release of prostaglandins. Plus, exercise increases blood flow to the uterus and just makes you feel better in general.

**Q. Will I still be a virgin if I use tampons?**

**A. Yes.** The hymen (the collar of tissue that surrounds the opening to the vagina) has a small opening that usually allows slim tampons to pass through. But don't worry too much about the state of your hymen. You are a virgin if you have never had sexual intercourse, even if you use tampons.

**Q. Is it possible to lose a tampon inside your body?**

**A. No.** Even if you push a tampon in very deep, it will not get lost in your body. Your uterus forms a "dead-end" at the end of the vagina, leaving nowhere for the tampon to go. If it feels like you've lost a tampon, don't panic. Wash your hands and then reach into the vagina with one or two fingers to pull it out. (It may help to stand and prop one foot up on the toilet seat.)

**Q. Do I need to use scented or deodorant tampons or pads?**

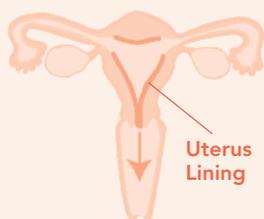
**A. No.** Menstrual blood does have a distinct odor. But if you change your pad or tampon every two to four hours, this odor will not be noticeable to anyone else. Plus, the chemicals in deodorant products can cause irritation or allergic reactions in some people.

**Q. Can tampons cause toxic shock syndrome?**

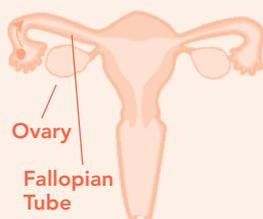
**A. They can – but only very rarely.** Toxic shock syndrome (TSS) is a very serious infection that releases dangerous toxins (poisons) into the bloodstream. The infection is associated mostly with high-absorbency tampons (those labeled "Super Absorbency" or "Super Plus Absorbency"). Only a handful of TSS cases are reported each year. But it's important to take the following precautions: Use the lowest effective absorbency tampon; store tampons in a clean, dry spot; wash your hands with soap and water before and after inserting or removing a tampon; and don't leave a tampon in more than two to four hours (use a pad at night). The symptoms of TSS include sudden high fever; vomiting; diarrhea; muscle aches; dizziness, fainting, or near-fainting; and a rash that resembles a sunburn.

## Menstrual Cycle 101

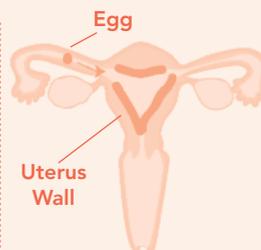
The menstrual cycle usually begins after age 9 and before age 16, typically between ages 11 and 14. The average cycle is 28 days, but can vary from 24-35 days, depending on the individual girl.



**Day 1: Beginning of Cycle (Period)...** The uterus sheds its blood-filled lining because it is not needed to support a fertilized egg. Lasts 3-7 days.



**About Day 14: Middle of Cycle...** An egg in an ovary matures and is released into a fallopian tube where it travels toward the uterus.



**Day 14-28: End of Cycle...** As the egg moves down the fallopian tube, the uterus wall thickens and develops a spongy lining of blood-filled tissue in preparation for receiving a fertilized egg.

Over-the-counter pain relievers such as ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, and others) or naproxen (Aleve) will relieve mild to moderate cramps. (Ibuprofen and naproxen also decrease prostaglandin production.) Do NOT take aspirin. Aspirin can cause a rare but sometimes deadly disease called Reye's syndrome in children and teens.

If your cramps are severe enough to wake you up at night, keep you in bed for a day, or cause you to miss school, see a doctor. He or she may prescribe a stronger pain medication or an **oral contraceptive** (birth control pill). Birth control pills are believed to decrease the buildup of the uterine lining. That means less prostaglandin production when the lining separates and less tissue to push through the cervix.

## Pelvic Exams

Doctors recommend regular pelvic exams beginning somewhere around age 21. Girls who are sexually active should begin sooner. But if you are age 16 and have not had a menstrual period (or age 14 and have no signs of breast development), you should be evaluated by a **gynecologist** (a doctor who specializes in women's reproductive health). These situations might be normal, or they could indicate a problem that needs to be corrected. You also will need to have a

## Vaginal Infections

If you are experiencing itching in or around your vagina or you have an unusual discharge, you may have a vaginal infection. Normal vaginal secretions are clear or white and don't have a strong odor. But a greenish, brownish, or lumpy white discharge (sometimes with a strong or unpleasant odor) may indicate an infection. Yeast infections are common. Discharge from a yeast infection is white and looks lumpy (like cottage cheese).

Many vaginal infections require prescription antibiotics. (Yeast infections can be treated with over-the-counter medications. But if this is your first vaginal infection, it's a good idea to have it checked out by a doctor first. If your discharge isn't white – and doesn't look like cottage cheese – you probably don't have a yeast infection.)

To help prevent vaginal infections and irritation:

- Wash your genital area with mild soap and water every day.
- Don't stay in a wet bathing suit or sweaty tights or leotard. Moisture helps bacteria grow.
- Wear all-cotton underwear. Cotton “breathes” (allows air to pass in and moisture to evaporate out) and will help keep your vaginal area cool and dry.
- Put on clean underwear every day.
- Wipe carefully – from front to back – after bowel movements to keep fecal bacteria away from the vaginal area.
- Don't take frequent bubble baths or use perfumed soaps regularly. Both can irritate the area.
- Don't use “feminine sprays” or douches. Your vagina cleans itself very well, so you do not need these perfumes and chemicals to feel “fresh.” In fact, frequent douching increases the risk of vaginal infections.

pelvic exam if you are sexually active or if you suspect that you might have a **vaginal infection** or **sexually transmitted disease (STD)**.

In a pelvic exam, the doctor will examine your **vagina** and cervix and press on your abdomen to check the health of your reproductive organs. Usually a nurse asks you to remove all your clothing – or at least everything from the waist down. (You will be given a hospital-type gown or sheet to cover you.) When the doctor comes in, you will lie back on the examining table and place your feet in the metal “stirrups” attached to the table. (The stirrups help position your body for the exam.) If the doctor is male, a female nurse should remain in the room during the exam.

The doctor will use a light and an instrument called a **vaginal speculum** to view your vagina and cervix. He or she will insert the speculum

into your vagina and gently spread the walls apart to examine the area. (It's a little bit like how a doctor uses an instrument to look into your ear to view your eardrum.) Speculums come in various sizes, and the doctor will choose the one that causes the least discomfort. There's even one made especially for **virgins**.

During your pelvic exam, your doctor also will do a **Pap smear**. In the Pap smear procedure – which is painless – the doctor will take a small sampling of cells from your cervix and send them to the laboratory to be checked for any abnormalities. You also will receive a clinical breast exam. In the breast exam, the doctor will feel for any lumps or other abnormalities in your breasts by gently pressing down on the breast tissue.

If you have a vaginal infection, the doctor may take a sample of your vaginal secretions with a q-tip to send to the laboratory for testing (see “Vaginal Infections” on page 27). Finally, the doctor will place one or two gloved fingers into your vagina to feel the position of your uterus and to feel your ovaries (while pressing down on your lower abdomen with the other hand). That's it. You're done!

To make pelvic exams a little less stressful:

- Consider going to a female doctor or to a doctor you've heard will take time to explain the exam and talk with you.
- Try to relax. The examination is more difficult if your muscles are tensed.
- Try to distract yourself by closing your eyes and thinking about something pleasant.
- Remind yourself that this is no big deal for the doctor. A gynecologist may do 20 or 30 pelvic exams every day – week after week, month after month. Gynecologists have seen it all.

When you visit the doctor, be sure to be open about your sexual history and any symptoms you may have. (You can be totally honest because doctors have a professional code of conduct that forbids them to reveal personal information about patients.) If you don't understand something, ask questions. It's also a good idea to write down the date that your period starts each month and have the date of your last period handy when you go in for a doctor visit.

Finally, remember that it's OK to examine your own body occasionally. It's a good way to get to know how your body normally looks and feels. That way, if something odd or abnormal shows up, you'll be able to get it checked out right away.

## *Breasts*

If only our brains got as much attention as our breasts! Everyone seems obsessed with them. Everywhere you look, TV stars and models are showing off their great big breasts on their skinny little bodies. It's enough to make any real girl feel inadequate.

But let's try to look past breast mania for just a minute. Let's look at our breasts for what they really are – an important and pleasurable part of our female anatomy. First and foremost, Mother Nature gave us breasts to provide nourishment for babies. Then she threw in a little bonus – she added some sexy and pleasurable feelings to go along with them. That's it. All this “bigger is better” stuff is something dreamed up by TV producers and magazine editors.

So if you're worrying about the size or shape of your breasts, don't. They are **JUST RIGHT** for YOU. And they have all the necessary equipment to do the two important jobs they are meant to do: nurse a baby and make you feel good.

What about breast tenderness and breast lumps? If your breasts feel tender in the week or so before your period starts, try some of the self-help measures listed on page 24.

Some girls find relief by avoiding caffeine and eliminating salty foods during this time. If the tenderness continues and is really bothersome, try an over-the-counter pain reliever, such as ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or naproxen (Aleve). Do not take aspirin (see page 26).



## Considering Breast Implants?

Many women are very happy with their breast implants, but it is not a decision to be taken lightly – and probably not one that should be made by a teenager. Breast enlargement surgery is a major operation and can cause future medical problems.

According to the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA), it is likely that a woman will need one or more additional surgeries in her lifetime to correct problems related to her breast implants. The FDA estimates that about 40% of women have at least one serious problem within the first three years.

Possible problems include wrinkling, improper placement of the implant, loss of feeling in the nipple area, implant rupture (an opening of the implant shell), and capsular contracture. Capsular contracture is a tightening and squeezing of the breast tissue that can cause rippling of the skin, changes in breast shape, and hardening of the breast. Some women with breast implants are not able to produce enough milk to breastfeed a baby. Also, if the implants have to be removed, the woman's natural breasts may end up looking stretched out and saggy.



So if you think you want to have breast implants, think about waiting a few years. Breast development often continues into your early 20s, and by that time, you may be pleasantly surprised and pleased with the breasts Mother Nature gave you.

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Breast lumps can be scary. We all immediately think cancer. But breast cancer is extremely rare in teenagers. Most breasts normally are a little lumpy and bumpy, especially in the week or so before your period.

When you're a little older (about age 20), you will need to start performing breast self-exams every month. For now, though, it's a good idea to just get to know your breasts. Learn what they normally feel like and note how they change during the month. If anything unusual does develop, have your doctor take a look at it right away.

# FAQ

**Q.** One of my breasts is a little bigger than the other. Is this normal?

**A.** Yes. One breast often develops earlier than the other, but the smaller breast usually catches up (although most women don't have perfectly matching breasts). Rarely, one breast will fail to develop normally, usually because of an injury to the breast before puberty. If breasts remain quite different in size, surgery to make them more similar may be possible.

**Q.** Can special exercises make my breasts larger?

**A.** Sorry. No special exercises, herbs, breast creams, or breast-enlarging device will change the size or shape of your breasts. The look of your breasts – like eye color and height – is largely inherited. Weight gain increases breast size in many girls. But, again, heredity often determines where we accumulate excess fat.

**Q.** My nipples point inward instead of out. Am I some kind of freak?

**A.** Not at all. Although "outies" are by far the most common nipple position, many women have "inverted" nipples.

## Personal Hygiene

The word hygiene means "practices that help maintain health and prevent disease, especially through cleanliness." For most of us, it also means taking steps to smell good and look good, with clean hair, fresh breath, and no offensive body odors.

**Body odor.** The first step to smelling fresh and clean is to take a daily shower or bath with warm water and soap to remove sweat and bacteria. Don't neglect your armpits, genital area, and feet because they are the three

areas of your body with the most sweat glands. Be sure to put on clean underwear and socks every day.

**Clean hair.** If you have oily hair, you may need to wash it every day or two. Choose either a plain shampoo or one made for oily hair. If you use conditioner or styling products, choose ones that don't make your hair look greasy.



**Fresh breath.** Mouthwash, breath sprays, and breath mints freshen your breath for only a brief time. To keep your breath smelling fresh all day, brush and floss your teeth often and visit your dentist regularly. Don't smoke! Smoking causes bad breath and stains your teeth. (The smoke also clings to your clothes, giving them an unpleasant odor.) Drinking alcohol and eating garlic or onions also may cause bad breath.

**Body hair.** Shaving underarms and legs is a personal choice. However, many people consider clean-shaven legs and armpits to be an important part of good hygiene.

**Vaginal hygiene and menstruation.** You do not need to use vaginal sprays or douches. Your vaginal secretions keep your vagina clean. Just wash the outer genital area as you normally would. During your period, you should continue to bathe or shower every day. Be sure to change your tampons or pads 4 to 5 times per day.

**Hand washing.** Frequent and proper hand washing will help you avoid colds and flu and prevent more serious infections like food poisoning. Always wash your hands after using the restroom, playing with your pet, or spending time in public places like shopping malls or movie theaters. Wash your hands before handling food or eating and anytime you've been around someone who is sick.

To properly remove dirt and germs, lather your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds, making sure to clean under your fingernails. Then rinse thoroughly. And don't just wave your hands past the hot air dryer – really dry your hands with paper hand towels or a thorough drying under the blower.

## CHAPTER 3 • SELF-IMAGE

### Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is a fancy word for how much you like yourself. A girl with high self-esteem feels good about who she is and what she has to offer to her family, friends, and society. She believes that her life matters – and that the world is a better place with her in it. Good self-esteem makes us confident in our abilities and optimistic that we will be successful in life.

#### How Do You Develop Good Self-Esteem?

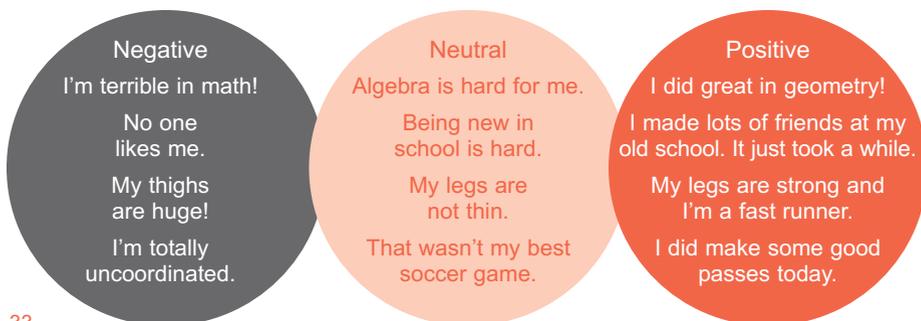
- **Listen to how you talk to yourself.** Many of us say things to ourselves that we would never say to a good friend – or even to someone we didn't like! The next time you get down on yourself, listen to your internal "self-talk." Then try to turn negative comments into neutral statements (just the facts) or even positive comments (see "De-Fusing Negative Thoughts" below).

#### De-Fusing Negative Thoughts

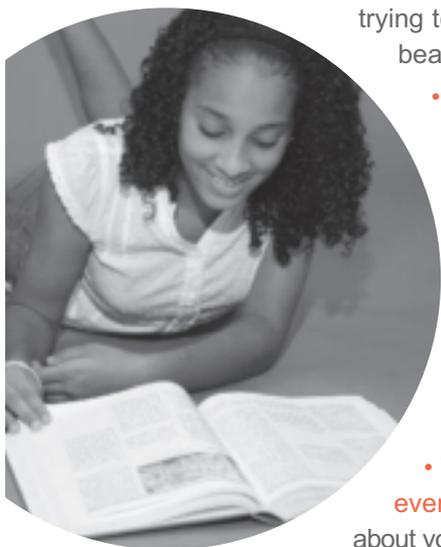
When something goes wrong, many of us tend to generalize – or exaggerate the experience. For example, if you give the wrong answer in class, you might say to yourself, "I'm so stupid!" Of course, we all know that one wrong answer does not mean that a person is stupid. The problem is that if you keep giving yourself these negative – and untrue – messages, pretty soon you will start to believe them.

The same is true with the words "always," "nobody," and "everybody." One dropped book doesn't mean that you're "always so clumsy." Getting snubbed by one person doesn't mean, "Nobody likes me."

Here are some examples of how to turn negative self-talk into neutral comments (just the facts) and then positive statements:



- **Know who you really are.** Girls and women have a bad habit of thinking that how they look is who they are. Our physical self is definitely part of our identity. But it's not the most important part. The real you is what's in your heart and head. It's your thoughts, your feelings, your memories, your talents, and your moral and spiritual values. Don't confuse the wrapping with the gift inside.
- **Try not to compare yourself with others.** Each one of us is unique, with special gifts and special challenges. Trying to measure yourself against another girl is as pointless as trying to compare two snowflakes. Both are beautiful in their own ways.



- **Try not to worry so much about what other people think.** Most of the time, other people don't even notice those things we're so worried about – they're too busy thinking about themselves!
- **Quit trying to be perfect.** Real people aren't perfect. They make mistakes, and sometimes they fail. That's OK. That's how we learn.
- **Think positive thoughts about yourself every day.** Write down five things you like about yourself and review your list every morning.

At the end of every day, jot down five things you achieved that day. These don't have to be great achievements, just simple things – little successes that you're proud of.

- **Give and receive compliments.** Sometimes it's hard to recognize our own best qualities. Why not sit down with one or two of your friends and share the things you like about each other (see "Friends Are Our Best Cheerleaders" on page 35).
- **Self-esteem isn't something we're born with. It has to be nurtured and cared for.** Self-esteem is like a garden. Negative thoughts are the weeds that choke our self-esteem. Positive thoughts are the fertilizer that makes our self-esteem grow and flower. Be sure to tend to your self-esteem every day. The effort will pay off in happiness and success in life.



## Friends Are Our Best Cheerleaders

Try this exercise with one or two good friends. Each person fills in the blanks about the other person and then shares her answers. You may learn some surprising things about yourself!

I like you because:

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Three things I admire about you are:

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Your three most attractive physical qualities are:

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## Peer Pressure

Peer pressure – it is so hard to resist. When a friend or group puts pressure on you to do something that you know is wrong, saying “NO” can take every ounce of your emotional strength.

You have all kinds of worries: What if they make fun of me? What if they decide I’m totally uncool? What if they reject me and don’t let me hang out with them anymore?

But finding ways to handle peer pressure is one of the most important challenges you will



face during your teen and young adult years. Learning to say “No” to dangerous activities (like doing drugs or riding with someone who’s drinking) can literally save your life.

**Important points to remember:**

**1. You always have a choice.** You can always walk away from a dangerous or illegal activity.

**2. You’re probably not alone.** Chances are, other people in the group are as uncomfortable as you are. Have the courage to say “No,” and others may follow your lead.

**3. Be prepared.** Think about possible situations now – like cheating on a test, skipping school, or shoplifting – and practice ways to say “No, thanks” in a clear and definite manner (see “How to Say NO” to the right).

**4. Know your own values.** Know who you are and what you believe. Write down your values using “I” statements –

“I am a loyal person,” “I tell the truth,” “I don’t drink,” “I don’t steal.” Review your values often.

**5. Be an independent thinker.** Spend some time alone each day, just thinking. Come to your own conclusions about life. Don’t blindly accept the opinions of others.

**6. Trust your feelings.** If you have a “gut” feeling (a deep-down, pit-of-your-stomach feeling) that an action is wrong, walk away.

**7. Remind yourself of the possible consequences.** If you feel like you’re about to give in to peer pressure, take a deep breath and stop to think about all the reasons you shouldn’t follow the crowd (such as suspension from school, arrest, or physical danger).

### How to say NO

Sometimes body language and tone of voice speak louder than words. When you tell someone “No,” be sure to:

- *Look him or her straight in the eye.*
- *Stand up straight, shoulders back.*
- *Speak clearly in a firm but calm voice.*
- *Keep your statement short (for example, “I don’t want to.”)*
- *If necessary, repeat your statement word-for-word in the same tone of voice.*
- *Turn and walk away if necessary. Don’t argue or try to defend your choice.*

**8. Remember the meaning of true friendship.** As hard as it might be, you may need to choose different friends. Real friends don't push one another to do something dangerous or illegal.

**9. You don't have to repeat your mistakes.** Just because you did something once doesn't mean you have to do it again. You always have a choice.

## Stress

Stress refers to the things in life that make us tense or uptight. Stress causes both mental and physical changes in our bodies. It can create a panicky "I-can't-do-all-this" feeling or cause you to worry all the time. People who are under stress often become forgetful, grouchy, nervous, and easily frustrated. They may have trouble concentrating, making decisions, or falling asleep.

The physical effects of stress have to do with its original purpose in our lives. In caveman times, physical danger was everywhere – saber-toothed tigers, falling rocks, human enemies. The so-called "stress response" – tensed muscles, increased heart rate, fast breathing – served as a natural defense, helping the caveman to confront the danger or run from it.

Today, however, most of our "lions and tigers" are in our heads. They're mental threats (worries, fears, pressures), and they are everywhere. The list of things that can stress us out is endless – arguing with parents, getting dumped, blowing a big test, and even positive things like playing in a big game or going out on a date with someone you really like.

Unfortunately, our body doesn't know the difference between physical danger and a mental threat. When our brain screams "DANGER," our body starts cranking out the stress chemicals. If you've been under a lot of stress for a long time, those chemicals may be running through your body all the time – and that can wear you down, make you tired, and even make you sick.

## What to Do About Stress

Working on your reactions to stressful events is one of the best things you can do for yourself. Being unable to deal with stress can lead to overeating, **substance abuse** (overuse or dependence on alcohol, tobacco, or drugs), violence, and problems with relationships.

## Taming the Stress Monster

How do you stay calm and sane in a stressful world? Here are some suggestions:

- Exercise. Exercise releases natural chemicals called endorphins that have a calming effect. Exercise also improves your general mood.
- Get plenty of sleep. Feeling rested can help you cope better with all types of stress. Fatigue makes you more irritable and more easily upset.
- Eat right. If you eat too many junk foods and not enough nutritious foods, you can miss out on important stress-busting vitamins and minerals.
- Limit caffeine. Colas, tea, coffee, “energy drinks,” and other beverages with caffeine can make you jittery.
- Problem-solve. Take a calm look at the stressful situation and figure out what the real problem is. Then list the steps you can take to solve it.
- Share your worries with a friend. Talking can bring instant relief.
- Laugh. Laughter is a great stress reliever. If possible, find something funny about the situation or find something else to laugh about. Rent some funny movies or call up a funny friend.
- Go ahead and cry. When you need to cry, do it.
- Get some sunshine. Daylight has positive effects on our mood.
- Listen to music. Quiet music has a wonderful calming effect.
- Pray or meditate. Find inner peace through spiritual values or quiet contemplation.
- Take slow, deep breaths. Deep breathing relaxes mind and body.
- Stretch or do yoga. Take long, slow stretches for relief from tension.
- Visualize a peaceful scene. Close your eyes and picture a quiet lake, a mountain meadow, or a beautiful sunset. Imagine you are there.
- Pick a “worry time.” If you just have to worry, pick one time each day and do all your worrying (and problem-solving) then. If you catch yourself starting to worry at some other time, stop and tell yourself that you’ll worry about that during “worry time.”
- Don’t run away from your problems. Some people hide from problems in alcohol, drugs, overeating, or other unhealthy behaviors. Most big problems don’t go away unless you have the courage to face them.
- Learn to accept what you can’t change. Some things are simply out of our control – a divorce, illness, or death in the family, for example. Work to accept these issues (with help from a counselor, if necessary).
- Remember what’s good in your life. Make a list (more lists!) of all the good things happening right now or keep a journal.
- Remember that things change. What worries you today may seem unimportant next month. Remember, life can bring surprises!

**The most important thing to remember about stress is: You may not be able to control the events that cause you stress, BUT you CAN control your reaction to these events.**

First, you need to look at the things that trigger your stress response. Then you need to work on quieting your physical responses to stress when it occurs (see “Taming the Stress Monster” on page 38). Stress is part of life. No one can escape it. But we CAN change how we view life’s ups and downs.

## Cutting

You may know someone who cuts...or maybe you secretly cut yourself. A girl may cut herself with a razor blade, broken glass, or another sharp object as a way of dealing with deep emotional pain. Burning the skin with a cigarette or match, picking scabs, and scratching are similar forms of self-injury.

Girls who cut often have trouble expressing their anger or frustration. Some cut as a way of dealing with intense pressure, anxiety, depression, or rejection. A cutter may be a **perfectionist** who feels like a failure because she can’t live up to her own expectations or those of others. Many girls who cut also have eating disorders, and about two-thirds have been victims of **sexual abuse** or another form of violence or trauma.

Cutting may give a troubled girl a sense of control, or the pain may be a way to “feel” something again after a period of emotional numbness. Most cutters feel intense shame over their cutting. They try to hide their wounds and scars under long-sleeved shirts and pants, even in summer. Cutting often becomes an **addiction** similar to drug addiction.

A girl who has been cutting for months or years usually needs professional counseling to break free of her addiction. A therapist can help her understand the **psychological** issues behind the cutting. Medication may be prescribed to treat underlying depression or anxiety.

Stopping the cutting depends on finding ways to deal with painful emotional issues in a healthful, positive manner. If you cut, talk to a parent or other trusted adult and get help. If you have a friend who cuts, let her know you love her and are worried about her – and that you’ll support her through whatever it takes to help her heal.

## Depression

Everyone has a case of the “blues” once in a while. But if you don’t snap out of a sad mood in a week or so, you may be depressed. People often use the term “depressed” to describe a lot of feelings that aren’t really depression (like being a little down, for example, or feeling disappointed about something). But true depression is a serious medical condition that can lead to dangerous behavior and even **suicide**.

If you’ve been sad or had other symptoms for more than two weeks, you need to get help. Talk with a parent, teacher, school counselor, nurse, minister or rabbi, or other trusted adult.

Some of the signs of depression are listed below.

- Feeling sad, hopeless, worthless, guilty, or empty
- Trouble sleeping – can’t get to sleep or wake up too early
- Wanting to sleep all the time – “hiding out” by oversleeping
- Overeating or eating very little
- Losing interest in regular activities (like sports or hobbies)
- Withdrawing from friends and family
- Not doing homework or class assignments
- Having trouble paying attention, remembering things, or making decisions
- Skipping school
- Experiencing physical problems – headaches, stomachaches, back pain
- Taking drugs or drinking alcohol
- Thinking about death or killing yourself (see “Suicide” section)

Depression isn’t something to be ashamed of. Many people suffer from it at some point in their lives. It can be caused by something that has happened in your life recently or by a chemical imbalance in your brain. You may be at higher risk of depression if one or more of your family members have had depression.

The good news is that you don’t have to stay depressed. Talk with your doctor about treatments that can help you feel like yourself again.

## Suicide

Suicide is one of the leading causes of death for teens and young adults. Feeling hopeless, helpless, or like the world would be better off without you are symptoms of serious depression and possible suicide. Alcohol and drug abuse, family violence, physical or sexual abuse, or a family history of suicide or attempted suicide also increase the risk.

If you have been thinking about death a lot or have actually thought about taking your own life, you need to talk with a trusted adult or call a suicide Hotline RIGHT NOW. Put this book down and call someone IMMEDIATELY. (Suicide Hotline phone numbers are listed in the back of the book.)

But what if you suspect that a friend is in trouble? Would you know what to look for or how to help? Check the “Suicide Warning Signs” box below for a list of behaviors that can signal suicide.

If you believe that a friend is thinking about killing herself (or himself), here’s how to help:

1. Tell her that you are concerned about her and why.
2. Ask directly: “Are you thinking about killing yourself?”
3. Put your arms around her and tell her you love her.
4. Let her know that you will help her through this crisis.

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### Suicide Warning Signs

- Sadness, hopelessness, empty feeling, depression
- Behavior changes – increased substance abuse, frequent crying, skipping school
- Withdrawal from friends and activities
- Talking about death or threatening suicide
- Giving away possessions
- Taking care of future commitments (canceling babysitting jobs, for example)
- Strange comments, like: “I’ll feel better soon” or “You won’t have to worry about me much longer”
- Sudden, unexplained happiness or peacefulness after a dark, depressed mood

5. Remind her that help is available – and that she will feel better, no matter how hopeless she feels right now.

6. Call her family immediately and tell another adult, especially a school nurse, counselor, or teacher. Your friend may ask you not to tell. But this is one secret you cannot keep. Her life may depend on it.

## *Grief*

Grief is the intense emotional pain we feel after we lose someone important to us. Death of a parent, friend, or boyfriend causes intense grieving. But other losses also can trigger grief reactions. Some of these losses include the death of a much-loved pet, parents' divorce, abandonment or desertion by a mother or father, loss of an unborn child, and placing a baby for adoption.

Here are some feelings and emotions associated with grief:

- **Shock.** You may feel numb or dazed.
- **Disbelief.** It's hard to accept the reality of the loss. You may wake up in the morning and, for a second, forget that the death or loss has occurred.
- **Anger.** You may feel abandoned or resentful that the person has died and left you.
- **Guilt.** Nearly everyone has regrets for words of love that went unspoken or broken relationships that weren't healed.
- **Depression.** Most people become depressed as the reality of the loss sinks in.
- **Acceptance.** Gradually, over many months or several years, the pain will begin to ease. You finally will be able to accept your loss and the changes it has brought about.

It's important to give yourself time – and permission – to work through your many emotions. If you try to ignore your feelings, sooner or later – maybe even several years down the road – the grief will surface and need to be worked through. Unresolved grief is at the heart of many cases of alcoholism, drug abuse, overeating, and chronic depression.

## CHAPTER 4 • SUBSTANCE ABUSE

### Alcohol

It's tempting, isn't it? Drinking always looks like so much fun. Kids are laughing and flirting and seeming to have such a good time. It's hard not to want to be a part of that.

But if you stick around for a while, you'll see a different side to alcohol: Girls laughing too loudly, slurring their words, crying, screaming at a friend or boyfriend, spilling food all over themselves, falling down, throwing up. Being drunk isn't pretty.

Plus, drinking has negative effects on your mind and body. Alcohol can make depression and **anxiety** worse; impair your memory, sleep, or coordination; lead to poor nutrition (empty calories); and affect your school work. (Teens who drink regularly are more likely to drop out of school.) It's also illegal for anyone under age 21 to buy alcohol or to have it in their possession. Getting caught drinking can get you kicked off sports teams or out of school clubs.

### Binge Drinking

Binge drinking – drinking five or more drinks in a row – can be deadly. Downing multiple drinks in a short amount of time can make your brain shut down (see “Blood Alcohol Level” on page 45). Binge drinking – including drinking “games” – can quickly

### 10 Ways to Say No to Alcohol

Here are some of the ways other girls have handled pressure to drink. Try to think of your own ways to state your decision clearly and firmly.

- I don't drink. (Simple and very powerful – no excuses, no arguments.)
- No, thanks. I have to get up really early in the morning.
- I can't. It interferes with my running (gymnastics, basketball).
- No, thanks. I'm on a diet.
- I can't risk getting caught. I'd be grounded for life.
- No, thanks. I act too stupid when I drink!
- I can't. Alcohol interacts with my medication. (Alcohol affects vitamins, antibiotics, over-the-counter pain relievers, and most other medications.)
- Alcoholism runs in my family, so I don't drink.
- No, thanks. It makes me feel awful the next day.
- I'm fine, thanks (holding up a glass or mug with ginger ale or soda).

You don't have to explain your decision or defend yourself. If someone is too persistent, look him or her in the eye and say, “Why is it so important to you?” or simply walk away.

## Alcohol Myths

**Myth #1:** You can't get drunk on beer. Wrong. Alcohol is alcohol – whether it's made into beer, wine, wine coolers, champagne, "spiked" punch, or a mixed drink. The effects on your brain and behavior are the same.

**Myth #2:** Kids can't become alcoholics. Wrong again. Problem drinking is common among teens who use alcohol. (Problem drinkers are people who have been drunk six or more times in the past year or who have had alcohol-related problems at school, with friends, or with the police.) Alcoholism – emotional and physical dependence on alcohol – can develop within a year or two. That's particularly true if a parent, grandparent, or other blood relative is an alcoholic.

**Myth #3:** Coffee sobers you up. This myth is especially dangerous. The caffeine in coffee may help you stay awake, but it does not make you sober. Coordination, judgment, reaction time, and vision are still affected. Drinking lots of coffee does not make it safe to drive home!

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lead to mental confusion, inability to stand, vomiting, urinating on yourself, passing out, and even a life-threatening **coma**.

But that's only part of the problem. Doctors now know that the developing teenage brain is especially at risk to damage from alcohol. Frequent binge drinking changes parts of the brain that are important for memory and learning – and the damage is worse than what is seen in the adult brain. Binge drinking also affects impulse control,

### Did You Know...

- Alcohol-related car accidents are the leading cause of death for teens and young adults age 16 to 20.
- Driving drunk kills about 3,000 people in this age group every year and injures thousands more. Injuries can include paralysis, coma, and permanent brain damage.
- Alcohol is involved in other accidents as well including falls, drownings, boating accidents, and accidental shootings.

self-motivation, spatial skills, and the ability to plan, focus attention on a task, or think about the consequences of actions.

Depression, suicide attempts, and other types of violence are more common among people who binge drink. The same is true for **date rape**, pregnancy, and exposure to sexually transmitted diseases. Drunk driving is a deadly consequence of binge drinking. Also, people who begin drinking heavily in their teens are at a very high risk of becoming alcoholics.

## Special Concerns for Girls

It's a fact that girls get drunk more quickly than boys. We're usually physically smaller, and our bodies don't process alcohol as well as a guy's body does (it has to do with our digestive systems). Over time, alcohol is more damaging to a woman's body. Long-term, heavy alcohol use can lead to heart problems, memory loss, and liver failure.

Most tragic of all is when a sexually active girl gets pregnant and continues to drink. Alcohol can do permanent harm to her baby. The baby may be born with brain damage, facial deformities, or heart and kidney problems. Children born to mothers who drank during pregnancy often have behavior problems and learning disabilities. Some of this damage occurs during the first few weeks and months of pregnancy, often before a girl realizes she's pregnant. Even a few drinks a week can cause problems.

For help in resisting the temptation to drink, review the sections on self-esteem, peer pressure, and stress management. Know what you will say before you feel pressured to drink (see "10 Ways to Say No to Alcohol" on page 43). Remember, it just seems like everyone is doing

it. Millions of girls have said, "No thanks" to alcohol.

**Blood Alcohol Concentration  
for Women**

Drinks	Body Weight in Pounds						
	90	100	120	140	160	180	200
1	.05	.05	.04	.03	.03	.03	.02
2	.10	.09	.08	.07	.06	.05	.05
3	.15	.14	.11	.10	.09	.08	.07
4	.20	.18	.15	.13	.11	.10	.09
5	.25	.23	.19	.16	.14	.13	.11
6	.30	.27	.23	.19	.17	.15	.14
7	.35	.32	.27	.23	.20	.18	.16
8	.40	.36	.30	.26	.23	.20	.18
9	.45	.41	.34	.29	.26	.23	.20
10	.51	.45	.38	.32	.28	.25	.23

*One drink is 1.25 oz. of 80 proof liquor,  
12 oz. of beer, or 5 oz. of wine*

## Blood Alcohol Level

A blood alcohol test measures the amount of alcohol in a person's bloodstream. The chart on the left provides general estimates of blood alcohol level by number of drinks. (One drink is equal to one 1.25-ounce shot of liquor, such as vodka or tequila, or one 5-ounce glass of wine, or one 12-ounce beer.) But remember that the levels rise faster in girls.

Here are some of alcohol's effects at different blood alcohol levels:

- .02 Relaxation, positive mood, some loss of judgment
- .05 Feeling of well-being, exaggerated behavior (talking louder, laughter), loss of inhibitions, more intense emotions, less alert
- .08 Feeling of euphoria. Impairment in speech, balance, vision, and reaction time. Poorer judgment, less self-control, reduced sense of danger. Reasoning and memory are impaired.
- .10 Slurred speech, reduced coordination, and slowed mental processing and reaction time. Loss of good judgment.
- .15 Major loss of muscle control and loss of balance. Blurred vision. Person may become angry, anxious, or depressed. Vomiting may occur.
- .20 Confusion, inability to walk without help. Blackouts are common.
- .25 Severe impairment of all mental and physical functioning. Serious falls or other accidents may occur. Risk of death from choking on vomit.

At blood alcohol levels beyond these, people often become unconscious. Some will go into a coma or stop breathing.

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Blood alcohol levels also depend on how fast a person is drinking and how much food is in the stomach.

In every state, a blood alcohol level of .08 is considered legally drunk. BUT KEEP IN MIND that Texas has a ZERO TOLERANCE law for minors (people younger than age 21). That means a minor with ANY detectable level of alcohol in her blood can be charged with "minor in possession" of alcohol (MIP) or, if driving, with "driving under the influence" (DUI).

## Why Some Teenagers Drink

A girl may start drinking for a number of reasons:

- to see what it feels like
- to please someone she likes
- to fit in with a certain crowd
- to feel more self-confident
- to feel more grown up
- to get back at someone – or to feel in control
- to escape from problems with friends, parents, or school
- to block out painful feelings, such as loneliness, depression, or grief

But alcohol doesn't solve problems. Being drunk dulls the emotional pain and may quiet the anxiety for a few hours, but the feelings don't go away. Plus, drinking creates a whole new set of problems – loss of control, embarrassing behavior, unplanned sex or date rape, arguments and fights, school problems, conflicts at home, car accidents, and run-ins with the law.

## Cigarettes



Let's think about this for a minute: What is it about setting fire to rolled up leaves and sucking in the smoke that's supposed to be so cool? OK, it's a little rebellious. It's a way of making a statement or of doing something that a lot of people are telling you not to do. And cigarette companies have done their best to convince us that smoking is glamorous, sexy, and very grown up.

But smoking really stinks – in a lot of ways.

Cigarette smoke smells bad. It stays in your hair, on your fingers, on your breath, in your clothes, even inside your backpack and locker. A girl buys the right toothpaste, the best mouthwash, great-smelling shampoo, and nice clothes – and then she covers it all up with the smell of stale cigarettes. Does that make sense?

And ask anyone what it's like to kiss someone who smokes: "Like kissing an ashtray." Not exactly sexy.

But what really stinks about cigarettes is that the **nicotine**

### Did You Know...

- An estimated 438,000 Americans die each year from smoking-related diseases.
- About 1 out of every 3 smokers will die early because of cigarettes.
- Experts estimate that a person loses 5-1/2 minutes of life for every cigarette smoked. That adds up to about 4-1/2 years of life lost for someone who smokes a pack a day for 25 years and about 9 years of life lost for someone with a two-pack-a-day habit.
- Among adolescents who have smoked at least 100 cigarettes, most say they would like to quit but can't.
- In a national survey of female smokers (age 12 to 24), 76% said they were dependent on cigarettes. Among those who had tried to quit, 82% were not able to do so.
- 70% of kids who smoke say they wish they had never started.

in them is **addictive**. As with some other drugs, you can get hooked on nicotine in a very short time. In fact, about half of teens who try cigarettes become regular smokers. Once you start smoking, it is very hard to quit. And it's a very expensive habit.

Smoking also affects your ability to play sports (by reducing your endurance), gives you an unattractive cough, and makes you spit up gross stuff called phlegm. Over the long term, cigarettes cause lung cancer, contribute to heart attacks and strokes, and complicate many other diseases. It also increases the risk of other cancers such as cervical cancer. If that weren't enough, smoking makes our skin age faster – that means early wrinkles!

If you've already started smoking, try to quit. If you need help, talk with your school nurse, clinic physician, or family doctor.

## *Legal Drugs*

Prescription drugs and non-prescription “over-the-counter” medications help millions of people every day. But these legal drugs can be abused.

Taking medication prescribed for someone else is dangerous. Just because a medication is legal doesn't mean it's risk-free. In fact, many prescription medications can have dangerous side effects. And they can be deadly when combined with alcohol or other medications or when taken in large amounts.

With some prescription drugs, it is a serious crime to possess or take someone else's medication. This includes prescription pain-relievers such as the narcotic pain medications Vicodin and Oxycontin and medications prescribed for attention-deficit disorder (ADD), such as Ritalin and Dexedrine. Buying or selling these legal drugs is against the law.

Even some medications and herbal products that you can buy right off the drugstore shelf are very dangerous in large amounts. Dextromethorphan (DXM), an



## How Different Drugs Affect You...

DRUG	COMMON NAME	EFFECTS
<p>Marijuana</p>	<p>Weed, pot</p>	<p><i>Immediate: Euphoria; talking a lot; slowed sense of time; hunger.</i></p> <p><i>Long-term use: Hallucinations; panic; paranoia; memory loss; learning problems; lung damage.</i></p>
<p>LSD (Mushrooms, peyote, and mescaline can cause similar effects)</p>	<p>Acid, trips, microdots</p>	<p><i>Immediate: Hallucinations; altered sense of time; feelings of detachment from your body or of melting into your surroundings; confusion between illusion and reality; loss of judgment; lack of muscle coordination.</i></p> <p><i>Long-term use: Extreme fear or panic ("bad trip"); confusion; depression; feelings of going crazy or of having died; triggering of mental disorders; altered senses; ongoing anxiety.</i></p>
<p>Cocaine/Crack</p>	<p>Coke, snow, rock</p>	<p><i>Immediate: Euphoria; excessive alertness; restlessness; talking a lot; dry mouth; nausea; sweating.</i></p> <p><i>Long-term use: Addiction; depression; paranoia; irritability; mood swings; damage to nasal passages; anorexia; malnutrition; chest pain; aggressive or violent behavior; seizures; coma; sudden cardiac (heart) death.</i></p>

DRUG	COMMON NAME	EFFECTS
Methamphetamine	Speed, ice	<p><i>Immediate: Extreme stimulation; euphoria; restlessness; anxiety; impulsive behavior; impaired judgment.</i></p> <p><i>Long-term use: Addiction; hallucinations; sleeplessness; seizures; paranoia; stroke; death.</i></p>
Heroin	Smack	<p><i>Immediate: Euphoria; sleepiness; nausea; vomiting; slowed breathing.</i></p> <p><i>Long-term use: Highly addictive; infections (including HIV; hepatitis); tremors; collapsed veins; coma; circulatory system collapse; death by overdose.</i></p>
Inhalants	Poppers, laughing gas, glue, paint, solvents	<p><i>Immediate: Dizziness; impaired judgment; breathing difficulty; headaches; slurred speech; hallucinations; nausea; abdominal pain; racing heart.</i></p> <p><i>Long-term use: Loss of consciousness; seizures; damage to kidneys, liver, or brain; coma; death; Many are known to cause cancer.</i></p>
MDMA	Ecstasy	<p><i>Immediate: Euphoria; hallucinations; teeth grinding; headache; heartbeat irregularities.</i></p> <p><i>Long-term use: Depression; anxiety; panic attacks; sleeplessness; brain damage.</i></p>
PCP	Angel dust, ozone	<p><i>Immediate: Hallucinations, abnormal thoughts; slurred speech; numbness; aggressive behavior; depression.</i></p> <p><i>Long-term use: Paranoia; memory loss; kidney failure; seizures; stroke; coma; death.</i></p>

ingredient in many cough and cold medicines, can be life-threatening when abused. Teenage girls also have had strokes or have died from overdosing on non-prescription diet pills. Remember, too, that just because a diet or “energy” product is made from herbs (plants) doesn’t mean that it can’t harm you. Many of the most powerful – and dangerous – drugs are also made from plants!

Use care when taking any kind of medication – prescription or non-prescription. Read all the instructions and precautions and never take more than the recommended amount. Also, don’t buy prescription medications off the Internet. Many of these medications are made in other countries and may contain dangerous ingredients or toxic substances.

## *Illegal Drugs*

Kids try illegal drugs for many reasons. Maybe their best friend has started doing drugs. Maybe they want to fit in with a group of kids who are using them. Some kids get into drugs as a way to escape the emotional pain, frustration, or boredom in their lives. Others may feel so bad about themselves that they just don’t care what happens to their minds or bodies.

If you’re tempted to do drugs, remember:

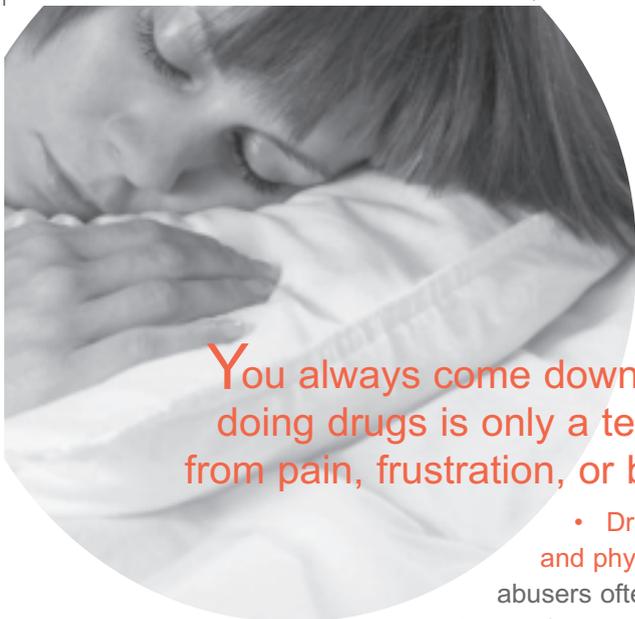
- **Illegal drug use carries severe penalties.**

You could be suspended from school, sent to an “alternative” school, put in juvenile detention, or sent to jail.

- **Drugs are unpredictable and dangerous.** You have no way of knowing how a drug will affect your mind or body. Some street drugs are diluted with other chemicals, even deadly poisons. Combinations of drugs – or drugs taken with alcohol – are especially dangerous.

- **The problems that pushed you to use drugs will always be waiting for you in the morning.** Part of growing up and maturing is learning how to deal with these problems in healthful, effective ways.





You always come down. As with drinking, doing drugs is only a temporary escape from pain, frustration, or boredom.

- Drug use can lead to mental and physical changes. Drug abusers often lose interest in regular activities (like sports or hobbies). Grades drop. Conflicts with friends and family increase. Some kids become withdrawn and depressed. Others get angry, out-of-control, or violent. Drug addiction often leads to stealing, drug dealing, and other crimes as a way to pay for the drugs.

- Drugs can have serious – even fatal – health consequences. (See “How Different Drugs Affect You...” on pages 49 and 50.) Drugs, like alcohol, affect your ability to drive or perform other tasks and can lead to serious accidents. Drugs that are injected increase the risk of HIV infection (AIDS) and hepatitis.

If you're already into drugs, get help now. Your future – even your life – may depend on it. The longer you use, the harder it is to stop.

### Steroids and Body-Enhancing Supplements

Some girls take steroids or dietary supplements to boost athletic performance or create a leaner body. But these substances can have dangerous side effects, including blood clots, strokes, tumors, and psychiatric problems. A girl may develop bad acne or masculine traits like a deep voice, male-pattern baldness, and increased facial hair. Some performance-enhancing substances, like anabolic steroids, are illegal. Legal or not, they're just not worth the risk.

## CHAPTER 5 • RELATIONSHIPS

*Good Relationships*

For most of us, things – money, clothes, cars, other possessions – aren't nearly as important as people. Our relationships with friends, family, and the people we like bring us our greatest joy and satisfaction in life.

All good relationships have these qualities in common:

- **Honesty.** People who care for one another don't play games, cheat, or lie. It's important to be straight with your friends, parents, and people you like.
- **Loyalty.** In a good relationship, people stand up for one another. Loyal friends don't gossip or tell each other's secrets.
- **Trust.** Trust develops from honesty and loyalty. Without trust, suspicion, jealousy, and fear of betrayal are always present and can destroy the relationship.
- **Communication.** In healthy relationships, people feel free to express their thoughts and feelings. They also know how to listen with an open heart and an open mind (see "Communication Skills" on page 55).
- **Kindness.** People in strong relationships are thoughtful. They are generous with their smiles, hugs, kind words, and sincere praise.
- **Give-and-take.** In successful relationships, people compromise. They learn to put the other person's needs and desires before their own at least some of the time.



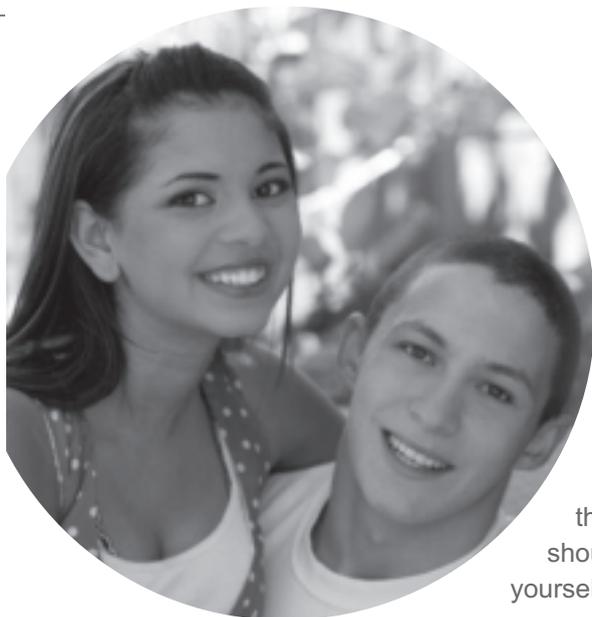
- **Boundaries.** In a healthy relationship, people remain individuals. They don't become dependent on one another for their happiness or self-esteem. Maintaining boundaries – a sense of self and space – keeps relationships balanced.
- **Forgiveness.** In good relationships, people admit their mistakes and say they're sorry. They're also willing to forgive when the other person has done something wrong.
- **Commitment.** Relationships don't always run smoothly. But people who are committed to one another don't let a few bumps in the road destroy the relationship. They keep on trying to "get it right." Mastering these qualities is the key to getting along well with all people – from brothers, sisters, and parents to teachers, bosses, neighbors, and your own children some day!

## *"Dating" Rights*

So the person you have a crush on in your math class just asked you out? That's great! Going out with a new person is just about the most exciting thing in the world – right up there with meeting your favorite TV star or winning a million bucks! But this romance stuff can be confusing, too.

Here are some things to keep in mind as you and your new crush get to know each other better. Remember, romance should be fun!

1. **You're still you.** Just because you're going out with a person doesn't give them the right to tell you how to dress, how to talk, or what to think.
2. **Don't forget about your friends.** A healthy dating relationship gives each of you your own space – and time to spend alone or with family and friends.
3. **You're in charge.** Some people are "control freaks" – they want to know where you are and who you're with every minute of the day. Who needs that kind of stress?
4. **You have the right to say no.** Just because a person spends money on you doesn't give them the right to expect sex in return. It's your body and your decision.



**5. Love shouldn't hurt.** It's not OK for a person to push, slap, or kick you; hold you against your will; or threaten to harm you.

**6. Don't put up with put-downs.** If a person screams or curses at you, makes fun of you, or complains about your appearance, show them the door! A romantic relationship should make you feel good about yourself.

**7. It's OK to change your mind.** If you're unhappy with the relationship for any reason, you have the right to end it. Be kind, but firm.

**8. Remember the "girlfriend test."** A healthy romantic relationship is like a good friendship. It's based on shared interests, respect, mutual support, and lots of fun. How does yours measure up?

## Communication Skills

First, a quiz: How many ears do you have? Now, how many mouths?

Isn't it interesting that Mother Nature gave us two ears and only one mouth? Hmmm. Maybe that's so we can listen more and talk less!

Listening – really listening – is the most important part of good communication. But most of us don't do a very good job of it. We're too busy thinking of what we're going to say next. Sometimes we totally tune out the other person (like parents or teachers, for example). Other times we act like we're listening, but our mind is somewhere else.

### Listening Skills

You can improve all of your relationships by becoming a better listener. Here's how:

- **Make and maintain eye contact.** Eye contact helps you keep your mind on the conversation.

- **Keep an open mind.** Don't automatically reject the other person's ideas or opinions.
- **Listen for meaning, not just words.** Watch for body language – posture, nervousness, facial expressions – and try to understand the feelings behind the words.
- **Mirror what is being said.** You do that by occasionally repeating back in your own words what the other person has said. Mirroring – also called reflective listening (see below) – tells the other person that you are really listening, and it allows any misunderstandings to be corrected immediately.
- **Keep your opinions and advice to yourself – for now.** Nothing shuts down communication faster than interrupting someone with your ideas on the subject. Just listen. If the person wants your opinion or advice, he or she will ask for it.

## Expressing Yourself

When it's YOUR turn to talk:

1. **Make and maintain eye contact.**
2. **Be assertive.** State your needs and feelings clearly.
3. **Keep it short.** Say it once. Try not to repeat yourself.
4. **Read the cues.** Watch the listener's body language. Fidgeting, looking away, and crossed arms can indicate disinterest, boredom, or discomfort.
5. **Check for understanding.** Ask the person if he or she understands what you have said. That way, you can clarify issues and avoid misunderstandings.

## Reflective Listening (Mirroring)

Reflective listening is NOT repeating word-for-word what the person has said. That would be insulting and could be seen as mocking. Instead, listen carefully to the meaning of the speaker's words and re-state that meaning in your OWN WORDS. Here are some phrases you might use:

You seem to be saying...

What I'm hearing is...

You're feeling...

Don't worry if you don't get the meaning exactly right. The important message is that you are REALLY listening and trying to understand. The speaker will clarify any misunderstanding.

## Conflict Resolution

Good communication skills often prevent conflicts from developing. But if you find yourself in an argument or fight, here are some important steps you can take to resolve the conflict:

- **Cool down.** Take a deep breath. Excuse yourself for a minute. Walk around and get some fresh air.
- **Ignore.** Ask yourself if you can ignore what has happened. If someone is teasing or taunting you for the first time or just once in a while, can you ignore it and walk away? If the conflict is too serious to ignore...

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### Using “I” Messages

Here is something important to remember about resolving any kind of conflict, from arguments with parents to serious threats at school:

“I” messages promote peace and help resolve conflicts.

“You” messages make people angry and start fights.

If a friend or classmate has done something to hurt or embarrass you, begin the discussion with an “I” statement. An “I” statement tells the other person how the situation made you feel. Here are some examples:

1. I feel betrayed when someone tells a secret that I shared with them.
2. I felt left out when you didn’t save me a seat at lunch.
3. I felt humiliated when you laugh at me in class.

“I” statements are non-threatening. You are simply stating your feelings, and most people will respond positively to that. You are not blaming the other person or making her feel defensive, but you are still getting your point across.

“YOU” statements, in contrast, attack, blame, and threaten the other person. And when people are threatened, they usually attack back. That’s how fights start and escalate. Watch what happens when you turn the “I” statements above into “You” statements:

1. You stabbed me in the back by spreading gossip about me.
2. You were really rude not to save me a seat at lunch.
3. You embarrassed me in front of everyone!

See the difference?

Next time you are upset with someone, stop and think what it is that you are FEELING and put those feelings into an “I” statement. Chances are, your honesty and openness will be rewarded with a peaceful resolution to the problem!

- **Decide.** Decide why you are upset and what you want the other person to do. Arrange to meet privately with the person.
- **Tell.** Tell the person how YOU feel. Don't attack the other person or point out his or her faults (see "Using 'I' Messages" on page 57).
- **Listen.** Use your listening skills to hear and try to understand the other person's feelings and needs.
- **Ask.** Ask for what you want, such as an apology or an end to the bad-mouthing or gossip. Then ask the person what he or she needs from you.
- **Agree.** Try to find a solution that's agreeable to you both – a "win-win" situation. Smile, shake hands, hug, say thank you, or support each other in another positive way.

If you are unable to resolve a serious conflict, ask a friend, teacher, school counselor, or parent to help.



### Girl Aggression

Most girls don't take out their **aggression** with their fists.

Instead, they use something just as painful – teasing and social rejection. This "mean girl" aggression is a type of bullying, and it is often carried out by members of **cliques**. (See "The Trouble with Cliques..." on page 59.)

Bullying is often aimed at someone who is weaker, less self-confident, or different. But it can happen to almost anyone. This girl aggression may involve:

- Gossip and rumors
- Name-calling
- Making faces or gestures
- Laughing at appearance or clothes
- Cruel teasing, mocking, or whispering
- Leaving one person out of a group activity
- Refusing to speak to someone

- Pretending to like a person and then rejecting her
- Vicious attacks through email or instant messaging
- Threatening physical harm

If you see someone being bullied, don't join in or be an onlooker – and don't spread the rumors you hear. If a girl is being physically hurt, you must tell an adult. (If you are afraid of the bully, ask the adult to not identify you as the source of the information.) You can help the girl who was bullied by talking with her in private and making sure she is OK.

Bullying can have life-long damaging effects on the person who is attacked. It can lead to depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, eating disorders, and even suicide.

If you participate in girl aggression, stop and ask yourself some hard questions: Why am I doing this? Does it make me feel good to hurt someone? How would I feel if the situation were reversed?

If you are a bullying victim, you must talk to a parent or a trusted adult at school. You wouldn't allow someone to continue to physically harm you. Psychological torment can be just as bad. The bullying must stop!

## Violence

Unfortunately, many of us will witness violence or experience it ourselves at some point in our lives. You may witness gang violence at school or **domestic abuse** at home. You may have seen a shooting or experienced physical abuse by a parent or person you like. Maybe

### The Trouble with Cliques...

Most friendship groups are healthy and flexible. But cliques are rigid, with tightly controlled membership and strict rules for how to think, act, and dress. It's all about power, popularity, and status.

Outsiders may wish they were members of a certain clique. But life on the inside can be tough. Clique members often gossip about each other. Plus, many girls in cliques constantly worry that they might do something wrong and be dropped from the group. A clique leader may keep her power by giving compliments and then ridiculing members to keep them insecure about their status in the group.

When you think about it, being in a clique doesn't sound like that much fun after all...

## What Is Sexual Abuse?

Sexual abuse occurs when an adult or someone else physically forces you to participate in unwanted sexual activity OR persuades you to do so through threats and intimidation. Any unwanted sexual activity is considered abuse. This includes unwanted or inappropriate touching, fondling, rubbing, masturbation, oral-genital contact, or vaginal or anal penetration with a finger or through sexual intercourse.

Sexual activities that don't involve physical contact may also be considered sexual abuse. These include someone showing his genitals to you, secretly watching you while you undress or shower, exposing you to pornography, or photographing or filming you in sexual poses or during sexual activity.

Sexual abuse is a serious crime. Most sexual abuse is committed by someone close to the victim. Sadly, an abuser can be a father, grandfather, uncle, brother, friend, neighbor, teacher, babysitter, or even a minister, rabbi, or priest. Older girls and women also can be sexual abusers.

People who have been sexually abused often experience anxiety, depression, guilt, shame, low self-esteem, feelings of worthlessness, and mistrust of people. Without psychological counseling, the effects of abuse often continue into adulthood. These long-term effects include unhealthy relationships with men and a high rate of alcoholism and drug abuse.

If you are being sexually abused – or were abused in the past – you **MUST** tell a trusted adult about the abuse **RIGHT NOW**. If you don't know where to turn for help, call a sexual abuse Hotline (see information in the back).

Remember: Sexual abuse is **NOT** your fault. **YOU** did nothing wrong, and you have no reason to feel ashamed. But you **DO** need to get help in coping with the ongoing effects of the abuse.

you were **raped** by a stranger or by someone you were dating. You may have been **sexually harassed** by a schoolmate or **sexually abused** by a family member or neighbor. (See “What Is Sexual Abuse” above).

Each one of these experiences can have long-lasting psychological (mental) effects. If you have experienced any of these types of violence, it is extremely important for you to reach out to someone you trust, such as a counselor or through a support group (see Hotline Numbers in the back). Many girls find a support group especially helpful. In a group, you are surrounded by other girls who have had similar experiences. It's often easier to open up and share your feelings with other people who “have been there” – people who truly understand what you have been through.

## Sexual Harassment

To harass someone means to trouble, worry, torment, or bother them. The term sexual harassment includes unwanted touching, hugging, staring, or romantic attention, as well as sexually oriented comments, jokes, and suggestive noises. The important point about sexual harassment is that it is NOT mutual. Unlike flirting, which is enjoyable to both parties, sexual harassment makes the person receiving the sexually oriented attention feel bad, threatened, or insulted.

Sexual harassment is against the law. If someone makes inappropriate, unwanted sexual comments or gestures about you, touches you without your consent, or repeatedly makes unwelcome romantic overtures to you, tell him or her to stop. If the harassment continues, talk to your parents or school officials.

Talking with someone about your experiences and feelings will help you understand your reactions to the violence. It will also reassure you that your reactions are normal. Keeping your fears, anger, and shame stuffed down inside can damage your sense of self-worth. And that can prevent you from having healthy relationships in the future.

People who don't talk about their feelings sometimes try to numb their pain with alcohol or drugs. But the numbing is only temporary, and substance abuse never solves the problem.

Additionally, violence has a nasty way of repeating itself. As strange as it may seem, victims of childhood violence may become

violent themselves in adulthood. That's why it's so important that you take steps right now to break the cycle of violence in your life. You have so many choices. You don't have to follow the same path.

## Stopping the Violence

You can take steps today to protect yourself from many types of violence (see also the following section on sexual assault). This includes physical abuse (hitting, shaking, burning, pinching, biting, choking, shoving, throwing, whipping, or beating) and sexual abuse (see box on page 60). If you are being physically or sexually abused, tell someone RIGHT AWAY. Physical abuse and sexual abuse are crimes. You have not done anything to deserve the abuse, and it MUST STOP! Tell a trusted adult – a relative, teacher, school nurse, or guidance counselor.

If you're not comfortable with that, call one of the Hotlines listed in the back. Trained counselors (often survivors of abuse themselves) can help you find a safe place to stay, if necessary, and help you bring an end to the violence.

Confronting the abuse is frightening and your safety is a factor. Your abuser may have threatened you with more violence or even death as a way of keeping you quiet. You do not have to do it alone. Trained professionals – counselors, social workers, police officers – can help you every step of the way.

## *Rape/Sexual Assault*

Many girls believe rape will never happen to them. In reality, 1 out of every 3 girls will be **sexually assaulted** before age 18. Here are some other disturbing statistics:

- 44% of all sexual assault victims in the U.S. are under age 18.
- Sexual assault is highest among girls age 16 to 19.

### Defending Yourself Against Crime

- Avoid going out alone at night.
- If you have to walk somewhere alone, avoid dark streets and walk near the curb (away from doorways and shrubs). Be ALERT! Walk quickly and purposefully.
- Carry a whistle or pepper spray.
- Never hitchhike.
- Don't approach a stranger in a car for any reason.
- If a suspicious-looking car approaches you on the street, run the opposite way and yell for help.
- When driving, park your car in a well-lit area of the parking lot.
- At a shopping mall, ask a security guard to accompany you to your car.
- Have your keys ready.
- Always check inside and under your car before you get in.
- Lock your doors.
- If you are followed, drive to the nearest public place. Stay in your car. Honk your horn to attract attention.
- At home, keep doors and windows locked.
- Leave lights on if you go out. Make sure your porch and driveway are well lit.
- Don't open your door to anyone who is unexpected. Ask for a name and phone number to verify any claims that the person is a repair person or city worker.
- Take a self-defense course. (See also "Self-Defense" on page 82).

# BE ALERT!

- 40% of rapists are age 16 to 20.
- 60%–80% of all sexual assault involve acquaintances or family members.

Sexual assault is most likely to occur between 8 p.m. and 2 a.m. and most occur on weekends and in the summer months.

What exactly is rape? Rape is forced sexual penetration. This includes penetration of the mouth, anus, or vagina with a **penis**, other body part, or object. If you haven't agreed to the penetration (or if you are unable to give consent because you're unconscious or otherwise mentally impaired) and a person uses force or THREATENS to use force, then it's rape.

Stranger rapes are more likely to involve a gun, knife, or other weapon, and they're more likely to result in physical injury. To reduce your risk of stranger rape, be alert at all times and follow the precautions listed in "Defending Yourself Against Crime" on page 62.

## Date Rape

Date rape (being raped by someone you know) is no less traumatic than stranger rape. Victims of date rape (also called acquaintance rape) often are filled with confusion, guilt, shame, and self-blame (even though they are NOT at fault).

A dating relationship can confuse the issue of consent. But your willingness to go out with a person does NOT mean that you have consented to have sex with them. Consent is the ability to choose what you want physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually, and sexually and then to communicate your choices. It is NOT a one-time decision. You can consent to one thing but not another, and you can change your mind at

### What Are Date Rape Drugs?

Date rape drugs are illegal drugs that can be used to gain control of a girl and sexually assault her. The most common date rape drugs are GHB (gamma hydroxybutrate) and Rohypnol (flunitrazepam). GHB is a clear liquid or white powder that is mixed into a drink. It prevents the victim from resisting the attack and also causes memory loss.

Rohypnol is an extremely strong and addictive sleeping pill. It is usually white but may be brownish pink. Rohypnol causes dizziness, disorientation, and confusion. If the pill is combined with alcohol or other drugs, the victim will have no memory of what happened.

any point during a sexual encounter. If you are drugged, coerced into drinking, or have been frightened, tricked, or pressured into saying “yes,” that is NOT consent. You can say NO at any time. No means no. Stop means stop. (For more on dating relationships, see “Dating Rights” on page 54.)

**Sexual Assault is never your fault. Some situations can increase the risk that someone will sexually assault you so be prepared.**

1. Hang out with people close to your age, you know really well, and in a group.
2. Talk about your personal boundaries and limits ahead of time.
3. Stay with the group and stay in sight of your friends and others. Bedrooms or bathroom are not safe places.
4. Stay sober and free from drugs and hang out with people who don't coerce you into drinking or using drugs .
6. Watch your drink when out with people or at a party.
7. It may feel embarrassing but you can say “NO” or “STOP” in a loud voice if things are going too far. Yell for help if necessary. Be firm – protect yourself first, the other person's feeling last.
8. Leave any situation that makes you uncomfortable, talk your way out or walk away. Use your cell phone or carry enough or ask a friend to take you home.

If you are sexually assaulted, you can talk with a counselor at on a Rape Crisis Hotline or crisis center. Counselors (often rape survivors themselves) can help you work through the many emotions you may be feeling. Counseling will help you to understand that the **sexual assault** was not your fault and that your reactions are normal.

### **Boyfriends and Girlfriends Can Be Charged with Rape**

Every state has laws that make it a crime to have sex with a person younger than a certain age **EVEN IF THE PERSON CONSENTS** to the sex. These are called “statutory rape” laws. In Texas, it is considered sexual assault to have sex with a person who is younger than 14 OR with a person who is younger than 17 if the person is 3 or more years older. Sexual Assault is a felony and may result in a prison sentence.

## CHAPTER SIX • SEXUALITY

### *Your Sexual Feelings*

“OK, here comes the boring biology lesson,” you’re probably thinking. “The I-o-n-g lecture about birds and bees, right and wrong, good girls and bad girls.”

Nope. We’re not going to lecture you about any of that (although the next section does contain important information on how not to get pregnant). This chapter is about feelings and choices.

#### What You May Be Feeling

One of the exciting – and confusing – things about being a teenage girl is that you can have 10 different feelings in one day (and maybe even one hour!). And many of these feelings center on – guess what! – sex. Your sexual feelings may include:

- **Curiosity.** Just about every girl is curious and interested in sex. What exactly happens during sex? What does it feel like? Why do people (especially TV, music videos, and movies) make such a BIG DEAL out of it?
- **Romantic feelings.** Romantic feelings and sexual feelings can get all mixed up. Many times, what we think are sexual feelings are really a craving for love and affection. When you think about a person you really like, are most of your fantasies romantic (hugging, kissing, holding hands, going out together, getting married) or sexual (actually having sex)? For most girls, love and affection are the most important feelings.
- **Sexual arousal.** Arousal is your body’s physical response to a person (racing heart; rapid breathing;

#### Saying No to Sex

Plan ahead how you will respond to pressure to have sex. Here are some possible responses:

- I don’t want to.
- I’m not ready for sex.
- I don’t know you well enough.
- I’ve decided to wait.
- I’ve made a spiritual commitment not to.
- It’s my body and my life.
- I don’t like being pressured.

Other tips:

- Set limits ahead of time if possible.
- Go out in groups.
- Don’t drink or do drugs, which can affect your judgment.

a tingly, warm, or wet sensation in your **genital** area). Sexual arousal is a very powerful feeling.

- **Pressure to have sex.** Today girls feel tremendous pressure to have sex. Sex is everywhere – on TV, in the movies, in magazines, in commercials, in music and even on the evening news. People you like can make you feel guilty, tell you you’re not normal, or threaten to “get it somewhere else” if you don’t have sex. Even girlfriends can push you to lose your virginity, tease you about being “frigid,” or try to convince you that you’ll lose the person you like if you don’t “give them what they need.” Finally, you may (incorrectly) assume that everyone is having sex (see “Did You Know...” right). Resisting all this pressure is tough – but not impossible.

## Did You Know...

Listening to kids talk, you’d think everyone was having sex. But the actual statistics might surprise you...

- 46% of all high school students (girls and boys) have ever had sex.
- Only 13% of 15-year-olds have lost their virginity.
- Among sexually active teens, the average age of first intercourse was 17.

If you have chosen abstinence, you are **NOT** alone! More than half of girls are just like you!

## Making Healthy Choices

Deciding whether to be **abstinent** (choosing not to have **sexual intercourse**) or to have sex is one of the most important choices you will make during your teen years. The choice you make now can literally alter the course of your life.

For example, deciding to become sexually active puts you at risk of teen pregnancy. Teen pregnancy, in turn, can lead to early marriage or single motherhood; dropping out of high school; not going to college; and not being able to get a well-paying job. Choosing to have sex at a young age also increases the likelihood of having multiple sexual partners and increases your exposure to diseases you can only get by having sex. Sexually transmitted diseases can lead to **infertility** (inability to have children), cervical cancer, or even death from HIV infection. Some sexually transmitted diseases can be transferred through **oral sex** as well as **intercourse**.

As hard as it may be, choosing **abstinence** (or “postponement”) means that you don’t have to worry about these serious issues. By waiting you will be better able to handle the responsibility of a

sexual relationship. A loving sexual relationship with the right person, at the right time, is one of life's most exciting and fulfilling experiences – and worth the wait!

## Getting the Right Answers

Sometimes you have questions about things you don't feel comfortable even asking your girlfriends about. Sure, everyone at school talks about these things, but are you getting the right information?

What does it mean to be gay or lesbian? The term **homosexual** refers to a person who is sexually attracted to people of the same sex. Girls and women who are homosexual are called **lesbians**. The term **gay** usually refers to men who are homosexual, but it's sometimes used to refer to both men and women. Some people are **bisexual**, meaning that they are attracted to members of both sexes.

No one fully understands why some people are homosexual. But different studies suggest that 2% to 10% of the population is gay or lesbian. (Childhood sexual experimentation with a member of the same sex is not unusual and does not necessarily mean that the person will grow up homosexual.) The important thing to remember is that people are people, no matter what their sexual orientation.

Are the stories true about masturbation? Will you go blind, break out in pimples, go crazy, or even become addicted? First of all, **masturbation** is a normal thing... some people do it and others don't. Masturbation is touching or stroking your genital area in a way that may be pleasurable. It will not cause any of the problems mentioned. It is a safe way to learn about your body and your sexual feelings and may be one of a girl's (or boy's) first sexual experiences.

## Second Virginity

Some girls think that just because they've already had sex, they need to remain sexually active. Not true! You can choose abstinence or postponement at any time. This is sometimes referred to as a "second virginity."

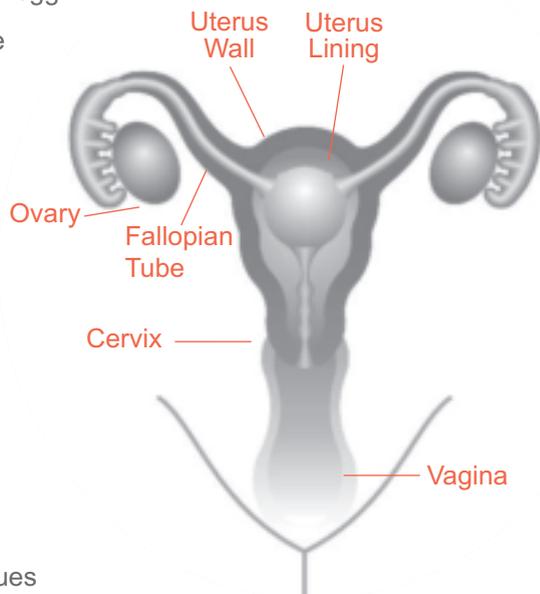
## Abstinence and Birth Control

Abstinence is the only 100% effective way not to get pregnant or a sexually transmitted disease. But if you have chosen to be sexually active, here are some important points to consider:

1. Each year, more than 1 million teenage girls become pregnant.
2. Each year, 1 out of every 5 sexually active teens becomes pregnant.
3. One-fifth of teen pregnancies occur within the first month of becoming sexually active.
4. One-half of teen pregnancies occur within the first six months of sexual activity.

Need a quick refresher on how pregnancy happens? Each month one of your two ovaries (see illustration below) releases an egg (a process called **ovulation**). Ovulation usually occurs around the midpoint of your menstrual cycle – about Day 14 if you have a 28-day cycle. (The day you started your last period is counted as Day 1 of your cycle.) The egg travels down the **fallopian tube** toward the uterus. Meanwhile, the lining of the uterus thickens with spongy, blood-filled tissue in preparation to receive and nourish a fertilized egg.

If you have sexual intercourse around this time, and your partner **ejaculates**, the **semen** (which contains millions of **sperm**) enters the vagina. Sperm can then swim into the uterus and up the fallopian tubes. If a sperm meets the egg in the fallopian tube, the egg is fertilized. The egg continues down the tube and into the uterus. If it successfully implants in the lining of the uterus, the fertilized egg (embryo) continues to develop into a baby.



## Birth Control Methods

Here are brief descriptions of some of the **contraceptive** (birth control) methods commonly used by teens. No matter which method of birth control you choose, you need to use a **condom** every time you have intercourse. That's because only condoms reduce the risk of sexually transmitted diseases. The other methods do not.

It's important to understand that **NO** contraceptive method is 100% effective. Even when girls and women **NEVER** miss a pill, **ALWAYS** use a condom, and use the method **CORRECTLY**, a certain percentage of users will get pregnant.

- **Male condoms.** Male condoms are made of materials like latex or sheepskin that are placed over an erect penis before intercourse to prevent sperm from entering the vagina and uterus. Male condoms reduce the risk of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. They are available in drug stores, convenience stores, gas stations, and occasionally school clinics. (Never use a condom that appears old or damaged – i.e., one that is yellowed or cracked.) Failure rate: 15%

- **Birth control pills.** Oral contraceptives contain hormones that alter your cervical secretions (preventing sperm from entering the uterus) and inhibit ovulation (release of an egg). The “pill” is a highly effective method when used correctly. It requires a doctor or clinic visit and a prescription. Failure rate: 8%

- **Spermicides.** Spermicides are sperm-killing chemicals in gel,

## Birth Control Myths

You hear a lot of things about getting pregnant that simply are **NOT** true. You **CAN** get pregnant if:

- You have never had a period. (You may have ovulated for the first time but didn't know it.)
- You are having sex for the first time.
- You have sex during your period.
- You don't have an orgasm (a sexual climax).
- You have sex standing up.
- Your partner withdrew **BEFORE** ejaculation. (Small amounts of semen are released before orgasm.)
- You didn't actually have intercourse. (When semen is released in the genital area, it's possible for sperm to enter the vagina.)
- You douched after intercourse.



foam, or suppository form that are inserted into the vagina before intercourse. They are available in drug stores and some convenience stores. Failure rate: 29%

- **Depo-Provera.** Depo-Provera (“the shot”) is a very effective method of birth control. To use Depo-Provera, you must visit the doctor or health clinic every three months for an injection. The

doctor or nurse injects a synthetic form of the female hormone progesterone into your arm or buttocks. The hormone suppresses ovulation and causes changes in your cervical secretions that prevent sperm from entering the uterus. Failure rate: 3%

- **Female condom.** The female condom is a “vaginal pouch” that covers the inside of the vagina, blocking sperm from entering the cervix. It reduces the risk of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases and is available mainly in drug stores. Failure rate: 21%
- **IUD.** An **intrauterine device (IUD)** is a small device that is inserted into the uterus. Depending on the type of device, it can remain in place for a year or more. An IUD must be inserted and removed by a doctor. This option usually isn’t recommended for teens. Failure rate: 1%
- **Diaphragm.** A **diaphragm** is a flexible rubber device that you insert into your vagina each time you have intercourse. The device covers the cervix, preventing sperm from entering the uterus. A diaphragm must be coated with a spermicide (to kill any sperm that make it past the barrier) before it is inserted. Failure rate: 16%
- **The Patch.** This is a thin, beige plastic skin patch containing hormones that

### Oral Sex: Safer But Not Safe

Oral sex is defined as the contact of one person’s mouth or tongue with the genitals of another person. Some teens don’t think of oral sex as “having sex,” and they consider it to be safe. But sexually transmitted diseases CAN be contracted through oral-genital contact. These include gonorrhea, syphilis, chlamydia, genital herpes, HIV (AIDS), and human papilloma virus (HPV).

## Hard Facts About Teen Pregnancy

- Teen mothers are more likely to have complications during pregnancy.
- Babies born to teen mothers are more likely to be too small or born prematurely.
- Babies of teen mothers are more likely to die within the first year of life.
- Teen mothers are more likely to drop out of high school. Half of teen mothers age 15–17 don't finish high school with their classmates.
- Teen marriages have a very high divorce rate. Teenage girls who marry because of pregnancy are three times more likely to get divorced than are young women who wait to have children.
- Teenage parents are more likely to have low-status, low-paying jobs or to be unemployed than are those who wait to have children.
- Teenage mothers go on to have more children and have them closer together than women who wait to have children.
- Teenage mothers have a high rate of depression.
- About 60% of girls who have a baby before age 17 will have another one before age 19.

prevent pregnancy. The hormones are gradually released into the body through the skin. A new patch is placed on the skin of the buttocks, stomach, upper outer arm, or upper torso each week for the first 3 weeks of your menstrual cycle. (No patch is used during the 4th week.) You must use a new patch each of the 3 weeks, and it should be applied on the same day each week. Failure rate: 8%

- **The Ring.** The vaginal ring is a small flexible ring that is inserted into the vagina once a month. It gradually releases hormones that prevent pregnancy. The ring is left in place for the first 3 weeks of your menstrual cycle and then removed for the 4th week. A new ring is inserted each month. Failure rate: 8%

- **Other methods of contraception are available.** If you are not satisfied with one method, try another. But always use some form of protection. Using no birth control, you have a 90% chance of becoming pregnant. The so-called **rhythm method** (in which a couple tries to abstain from sex during the woman's most fertile period) has a failure rate of 20%. The **withdrawal method** (in which a man tries to pull his penis out of the vagina before he ejaculates) has a failure rate of 19%.

Plan B (the “morning after pill”) is used strictly as an emergency contraceptive if unprotected sex has occurred. It must be taken within 72 hours of intercourse; a second pill must be taken 12 hours later. Plan B is available without a prescription for people age 18 or older. People younger than 18 must have a prescription or have an older person, like a parent, purchase it for them.

Choosing to have sex is a big responsibility, with potentially serious consequences for everyone concerned (see “Hard Facts About Teen Pregnancy” on page 71). The problems associated with teen pregnancy are too great not to take that responsibility very seriously.

## Pregnancy

If you think you might be pregnant (see “Signs of Pregnancy” below), it’s important to have a pregnancy test right away. Many pregnant teens try to deny their pregnancy, even to themselves. They find excuses not to take a pregnancy test, blame their symptoms on something else, or simply hope that the problem will go away if they don’t think about it. It won’t – and every week that you go without medical care puts you and your baby at higher risk.

Your baby will develop all of its organs within the first three months of pregnancy. To have the healthiest baby possible, you need to start eating right, taking special vitamins, and abstaining from alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs **IMMEDIATELY**. Lack of certain vitamins (such as the B vitamin folic acid) can cause severe birth defects. Alcohol and drugs can have devastating effects (see “For Your Baby’s Sake...” on page 73). Even some non-prescription medicines, such as aspirin, and certain anti-histamines can cause seri-

### Signs of Pregnancy

- Missed period, especially if your periods have been regular. (However, some pregnant women have a light period or spotty bleeding.)
- Breast tenderness or feeling of fullness.
- Tingly sensation or darkening nipples.
- Morning sickness (nausea).
- Increased urination or feeling like you “have to go” all the time.
- Increased vaginal discharge.
- Fatigue.
- Weight gain.
- Changes in food preferences, especially sudden dislike of certain foods.

## For Your Baby's Sake...

- Don't deny a pregnancy.
- Seek medical care immediately.
- Take your prenatal vitamins as directed.
- Follow your pregnancy diet carefully. Don't leave out milk, orange juice, or other recommended foods.
- Gain the recommended amount of weight.
- Engage in moderate physical activity, such as walking.
- Don't smoke. Smoking contributes to premature delivery, low birth weight, and behavior problems in children.
- Don't drink. No level of alcohol consumption is safe. Heavy drinking can cause fetal alcohol syndrome, which includes facial deformities and mental retardation.
- Don't do illegal drugs (which can cause devastating birth defects) and don't take any medication without checking with your doctor first.
- Limit your intake of caffeine (coffee, tea, colas).
- Avoid unnecessary X-rays. If you must have an X-ray, be sure to tell the technician that you are pregnant.
- Reduce exposure to chemicals. Try to avoid household cleaners, dry cleaning fluids, bug sprays, weed killers, and other toxic substances.
- If you have a cat, let someone else change the litter box. (Handling cat feces can expose you to toxoplasmosis, an infection that can damage the baby.)
- If you are infected with HIV, early prenatal care and medication can prevent spreading the infection to your baby.



**Telling your parents may be one of the most difficult things you'll ever have to do. But most girls find that their parents are surprisingly supportive.**

ous problems in the developing baby. Topical creams such as Icy-Hot contain aspirin-like ingredients and should not be used during pregnancy. You also will need to be tested for sexually transmitted diseases that can harm your baby.

Home pregnancy tests are quite accurate if used correctly. (Be sure to read the instructions all the way through at least twice and follow them exactly.) If the test is positive, you should talk with someone you trust, ideally your parents. Most importantly, however, you need to go to a doctor or free health clinic immediately. (If your home pregnancy test is negative but pregnancy symptoms continue, have another test performed by a doctor or clinic.)



These decisions will affect your life and future as well as the lives of others.

Telling your parents may be one of the most difficult things you'll ever have to do. But most girls find that their parents are surprisingly supportive, once the initial shock has worn off. Your mom or dad (or perhaps another relative or trusted adult) can help you find good medical care and help you work through the many decisions you will have to make in the coming months.

Making responsible choices that are right for you and your baby can be difficult. That's why it's so important to get help from your family or through professional counseling. You will need to consider your options for an unplanned pregnancy carefully.

Some of these choices include: giving birth and raising the baby or giving birth and placing the baby for legal **adoption**. Adoption can be a loving option for your baby. Today, many adoptions allow the birth-mother to maintain contact with her child through letters and photos. In an "open adoption," birthparents and adoptive parents meet each other,

## Five BAD Reasons to Get Pregnant

Some girls believe that having a baby will solve their problems. In reality, of course, it creates many new problems and challenges. Don't decide to have a baby because:

1. You want to prove your love to your boyfriend.
2. You want to hang on to your boyfriend – or force him to marry you.
3. You want to rebel against or “get back at” your parents.
4. You want to escape an abusive home.
5. You are lonely and want a baby for love and companionship.

and the birthmother often gets to select her baby's parents. If you would like to learn more about adoption, look in the Yellow Pages of the phone book under Adoption.

**Abortion** may be suggested to you as an alternative. Abortion is a procedure that ends a pregnancy. It generally is performed only in the early

stages of pregnancy. A number of social service agencies can help you explore the advantages and disadvantages of each option. These agencies also will make sure that you and your baby get the health care you need (see Hotline numbers and resources in the back of the book).

**A**ll the emotions, decisions, and physical changes that go with an unplanned pregnancy may be overwhelming at first. But focusing on your baby's health and well-being will give you direction and purpose during the months ahead.

Whatever you do, do NOT abandon your baby. Baby abandonment is a crime. A new law allows you to take your newborn baby to an Emergency Medical Technician at a fire station. These professionals can help you and protect your baby. If you have questions or need help, call this toll-free number: 1-877-904-SAVE.

resource: Baby Abandonment: 1-877-904-SAVE

## Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are SERIOUS business. Some can make you infertile (unable to have children) or cause cancer of the cervix. HIV infection (AIDS) is incurable and usually fatal. If you have an STD and get pregnant, your baby can suffer serious health problems, including blindness or mental retardation.

Each year one out of every four sexually active teens catch an STD. In one study, nearly one-third of sexually active teenage girls examined at family planning clinics tested positive for **chlamydia** infection, an STD that can lead to infertility and **tubal pregnancy**. Many times, you can have an STD and notice no changes in your body for some time.

The only way to absolutely avoid an STD is to abstain from sex, including oral sex. You can reduce your risk of infection by 1) using a condom and spermicide every time you have intercourse and 2) avoiding multiple sex partners. As your lifetime number of sex partners increases, so does your risk of contracting an STD. Always ask about your partner's sexual history.

### Diseases and Symptoms

- **Human papilloma virus.** **Human papilloma virus (HPV)** infection is widespread among people who are sexually active. It is believed to be the most common STD in the U.S., with more than 6 million new cases reported each year. More than 100 types of HPV exist, and about 30 of these cause genital HPV infection.

About 3 out of 4 people between the ages of 15 and 49 have been infected with HPV. The virus is spread through skin-to-skin contact in the genital area. This includes vaginal or anal sex, and possibly oral sex. The infection may produce **genital warts**, or it may produce no symptoms at all. This makes it very difficult to know if a person is infected with the virus.

When genital warts occur, they usually appear several weeks or months after the sexual contact. They are soft, moist, or flesh-colored

bumps that appear singly or in clusters that have a cauliflower-like appearance. The warts may be raised or flat, large or small. Condoms offer some protection from HPV. But they can't prevent all infections because a condom doesn't cover all the skin in the genital area.

Genital warts often disappear on their own. Persistent warts can be treated with medication, laser treatment, or surgery. It's important to remember, however, that getting rid of the warts doesn't mean that the virus has been eliminated.

A few types of HPV can lead to cancer of the cervix (the opening to the uterus). That's why it's important for sexually active women (and all women age 21 or older) to have regular Pap smears. A Pap smear is a painless procedure in which the doctor takes samples of cervical cells and examines them for pre-cancerous changes associated with cervical cancer. Today, a vaccine called Gardasil® can be given to girls or women between the ages of 9 and 26 to help prevent HPV-related cervical cancer.

- **Genital herpes.** **Genital herpes** is another incurable disease caused by a virus – **herpes simplex virus (HSV)**. Genital herpes is the second most common STD. More than 30 million people in the U.S. are infected. Symptoms include sores (typically small painful blisters in clusters in or around the vagina or penis), vaginal discharge, itching, fever, muscle aches, and fatigue. The symptoms can be treated, but the virus never goes away. **Herpes** flare-ups may occur several times a year. Genital herpes can infect a baby during birth, sometimes causing blindness, mental retardation, nervous system problems, or death.
- **Chlamydia.** Chlamydia is one of the most common STDs among teens. It is caused by a bacterium called *Chlamydia trachomatis*. The disease often has no symptoms, and it is spreading rapidly among teens. Chlamydia can be cured with antibiotics. Left untreated, it can cause infertility, infect newborns, increase the risk of tubal pregnancy, and lead to chronic pelvic pain. Symptoms (when present) include itching or burning during urination, vaginal discharge, and pelvic pain.
- **Gonorrhea.** **Gonorrhea** is a bacterial infection and can be cured with antibiotics. Symptoms include pelvic pain, vaginal discharge, and burning during urination. However, females may have no symptoms. Left untreated, gonorrhea can lead to infertility, arthritis, and blindness.

## HIV/AIDS: Teen Girls Are at Risk

Many girls mistakenly believe that they are not at risk of contracting the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which causes AIDS. That is a very dangerous myth. In reality, about half of new cases of HIV infection occur in GIRLS age 13–19. Most girls are infected through sex. Multiple sex partners (including oral sex partners) dramatically increase the risk of infection. Because HIV infection has no symptoms in the beginning, it's impossible to know if a sex partner has the disease. If you have had multiple sex partners, you should have an HIV test. See the Hotline numbers in the back for HIV information and counseling.

If you experience any of the STD symptoms listed, seek medical treatment and tell your partner immediately. Any unexplained itching, vaginal discharge, fever, lower back or pelvic pain, painful intercourse, or burning or pain during urination needs to be checked out.

- **Syphilis.** **Syphilis** is a bacterial infection that can cause serious health problems. These include damage to the heart and blood vessels, blindness, brain and nervous system damage, mental disorders, and even death. Syphilis causes severe damage or death to an unborn baby. Symptoms include a sore in the vagina, mouth, or anal area; fever; sore throat; and rashes. The disease can be cured with antibiotics.
- **HIV/AIDS.** **AIDS** is a group of symptoms caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). HIV damages the immune system and leads to pneumonia, cancer, and death. HIV/AIDS cannot be cured and usually is fatal. New AIDS treatments are prolonging patients' lives, but that does not make the disease any less deadly. HIV infection has no symptoms in the beginning. Later, the symptoms include night sweats, fever, weight loss, repeated infections, diarrhea, chronic cough, and breathing difficulties.
- **Pelvic inflammatory disease.** Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) is not an STD itself but refers instead to a more severe pelvic infection associated with gonorrhea or chlamydia. The symptoms include abdominal or pelvic pain, vaginal discharge, and fever. Symptoms often begin after a menstrual period but may occur at any time during the cycle. PID is associated with infertility, chronic pelvic pain, and a greater risk of tubal pregnancy.

## CHAPTER SEVEN • GUYS

## Understanding Guys

Guys can be hard to figure out. They act all grown up and in control one minute and silly and immature the next. Sometimes they look cool and calm and self-confident. Other times they don't show any emotion at all.

But don't let the "tough guy" image fool you. Adolescent and teenage boys feel just as awkward, self-conscious, embarrassed, nervous, and confused as you do sometimes. Although they may not admit it, they worry about their hair, skin, and bodies, too. They also worry about wearing the right clothes and fitting in with the right crowd.

Society puts a lot of pressure on guys. They're supposed to be big, strong, TOUGH macho men. But today we also expect them to be kind and loving and sensitive at the same time. It can be very confusing.

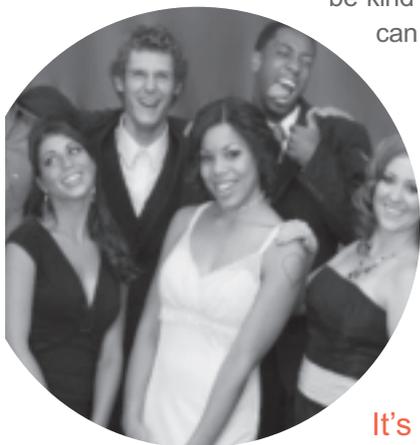
### The Ego Thing

Guys have to put their egos on the line all the time because of pressure to act like "a man." Even worse, guys can be really hard on each other. They tease and make fun of one another all the time. Most guys are scared to death of doing something uncool – and being laughed right out of the cafeteria.

### It's Physical

Then there's the physical stuff: Guys worry about not being tall enough, strong enough, athletic enough, brave enough. They can get bullied, threatened, and roughed up by another guy or by an entire group of guys. That's humiliating and frightening. And to top it all off, when a guy does get embarrassed and scared (or sad and depressed), he's not supposed to cry or show any other emotion. If he does, he gets labeled "gay" or a "wuss" and dumped on even more.

It's not easy being a guy. But it's good to know that even though boys may seem like an alien life form, they're human just like you.



## Puberty: It's a Guy Thing, Too...

Boys don't have to fool with periods and bras, but their bodies are going through major changes, too. Most guys begin **puberty** somewhere between the ages of 10 and 15. The male hormone **testosterone** is responsible for the many physical (and some mental) changes that boys go through at this time. The whole process takes, on average, about four years. Here's what happens:

- First, the **testicles** begin to grow. The **scrotum** (the sac-like structure that contains the testicles) begins to drop lower. (Adult testicles are about 1-3/4 inches long.)
- About a year or so later, the penis begins to grow larger. (For most men, the adult size will be about six inches when **erect**.)
- Pubic hair (hair in the genital area) begins to grow. Underarm hair and leg hair grow, too. (Chest hair starts a little later.)
- Sweat glands develop. Body odor becomes stronger.
- Growth accelerates rapidly (the "growth spurt").
- Voice begins to change, becoming lower (causing some embarrassing "cracking" and squeaky sounds in the process).
- Shoulders broaden. Muscles grow larger.
- Facial hair begins to grow.
- Higher levels of testosterone tend to make boys more aggressive. Hormone-charged boys may be more likely to take risks, get into fights, argue, or enjoy action-packed movies and videos than they did when they were younger.



Higher hormone levels also mean that boys are sexually aroused more easily. During this time (usually around age 14), boys begin to get more **erections**. Erections can happen just about any time – sitting in class, playing a sport, thinking about someone they like. They often happen suddenly and at the worst times (like when a guy is standing up in front of the class). Boys also have **wet dreams** – ejaculations while they are asleep.

## CHAPTER EIGHT • SAFETY

### Staying Safe at School

Violence is a fact of life in many schools. Fortunately, the deadly, large-scale random school shootings that have occurred in some high schools are very rare. School violence is more likely to involve one or two individuals or small groups of kids fighting each other or bullying another student.

But any act of violence in school is too much. That's why all students need to be alert to signs of trouble.

### Bullying Is Not OK

Bullying is a common danger sign for possible violence. This is true for both the person who bullies others and for the victim of repeated bullying. Most bullying that involves physical aggression is committed by boys. (For information on girls who bully, see "Girl Aggression" page 58.) Bullies are typically hot-tempered, physically aggressive, impulsive, and driven by a need to dominate others.

The victims of bullies often become depressed, withdrawn, and socially isolated. If they are repeatedly teased, physically attacked, or embarrassed in front of other students, victims may think about suicide or begin carrying a weapon for protection. In extreme cases, the victims of bullying may get revenge by committing violent acts against the people who bullied them. Some of the deadliest school shootings have been carried out by students who were bullied.

**If you witness repeated bullying of a student, don't participate in it or ignore it. Tell a counselor, coach, teacher, or other school official before the bullying worsens into more violence.**

### Weapons in School

Carrying a gun, knife, or other weapon on school property is a serious crime and must be reported as quickly as possible. If you see someone with a weapon, first protect yourself by quietly leaving

the scene. Take note of the type of weapon, the people involved, where the incident occurred, and whether the weapon was on the person, being shown to others, or was used to threaten someone. You must immediately tell a school official, or if you are frightened of being identified, call the school office, 911, or your school's anonymous tip line if one is available.

## Gang Violence

Gangs are responsible for much of the drug trafficking and violence in many communities. You may have one or more gangs in your school. Girls may feel pressure from the neighborhood gangs to joining the "family". Some find danger exciting, or they enjoy the money and "prestige" that may come with being a gang leader's girlfriend. For other girls, joining a gang gives them a feeling of belonging, protection, and power.

But a girl who joins a gang or hangs out with gang members is putting herself at great risk of becoming a victim of violence or being arrested for criminal activity. Also, once a girl joins a gang, she may find it difficult to get out.

Students who are not connected with gangs should avoid wearing the colors, symbols, or types of clothing worn by local gang members. They also should avoid places where gang members are known to hang out.

## Self-Defense

**The best approach to staying safe is to be alert to your surroundings and to anticipate which people or situations might be dangerous.** (See also "Defending Yourself Against Crime" on page 62.)

**Don't be alone.** Avoid areas where you would be alone or wouldn't be heard if you screamed, such as empty stairwells, parking lots, jogging trails, dark streets, or the school grounds after hours. If possible, carry a cell phone with your emergency numbers preprogrammed.

**Trust your instincts.** If you have a bad feeling about a certain person or location, pay attention! If a man looks at you inappropriately, stands too close, or "accidentally" touches you or bumps into you, stay with other people and ask someone for help.

**Act confident.** Anytime you are in a public place, stay focused and look self-confident. **Predators** look for girls and women who are distracted or who look weak or unsure of themselves.

**Resist persuasion.**

Watch out for strangers who use flattery (“You have the most beautiful eyes I’ve ever seen”) and people who claim to be something they aren’t in order to persuade you to come with them.

For example, a man may claim to be a photographer who wants to photograph you, a talent scout looking for models, or a movie director searching for “extras.” Get away from these people as quickly as possible.

**Ignore sympathy tricks.** Don’t let a stranger play on your sympathy by claiming to have a stalled car or asking for help in finding a lost dog. It’s OK not to stop and help. If you are concerned about someone who appears to have a real emergency, wait until you are in a safe place and call 911 to report the need for help.

**If you do find yourself in a dangerous situation, you must decide quickly whether you should run away (toward lighted areas and people) or try to defend yourself.** Either way, you will have the best chance of preventing a rape or **abduction** if you are in good physical shape and have taken a self-defense course (offered at schools, colleges, community centers, or martial arts schools).

**If you are being robbed, let go of your purse or wallet – better yet, toss it away from you and run.** If a man grabs you by the hands, try to twist your hands free of his grip. If you can’t get away, strike him in the most sensitive areas: eyes, ears, windpipe, temples, knees, instep of foot, and base of skull. Many safety experts advise against trying to



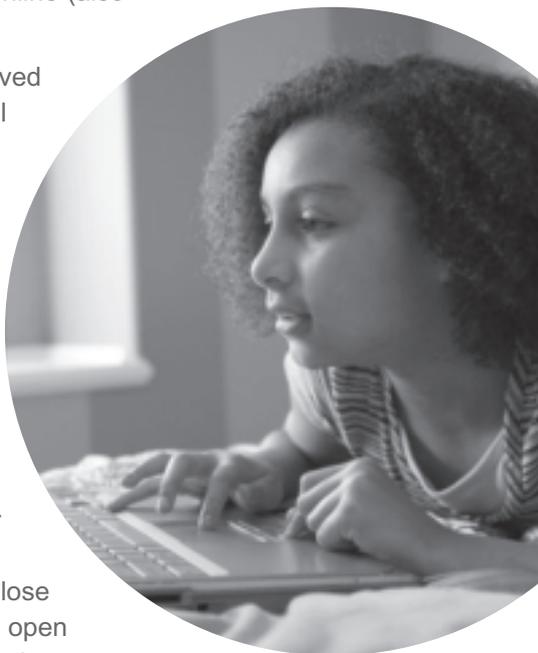
kick or knee the attacker in the groin. Most attackers expect this and can quickly grab your leg and force you to the ground, leaving you completely helpless.

## Internet Safety

The Internet is a great place to chat with friends, but it also has a dark side. It provides a place for **sexual predators** to search for victims. (Sexual predators are people looking to have sex with – or physically harm – children or teens.) The Internet also enables people you know to threaten or trash you online (also called **cyber-bullying**).

In fact, 1 in every 7 teens has received sexual solicitation (unwanted sexual attention) from a stranger online. This includes sex talk, being sent sexual material, being asked for sexually explicit photos of themselves, or being asked to meet with a stranger in person. Plus, nearly 10% of teens who chat with friends online have been cyber-bullied.

The best way to deal with cyber-bullying is to ignore the offensive or threatening messages. The sender wants to upset you and usually will lose interest in attacking you if you don't open the messages or respond. But if the threats continue or make you feel unsafe, save the messages and tell a parent or another adult. They can contact the Internet service provider or the police. If you receive sexual solicitation, tell an adult immediately. Online sexual solicitation should be reported to The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children's CyberTipline ([www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com) or 1-800-843-5678). The group works with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and other government groups to



CyberTipline: [www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com) or 1-800-843-5678

To reduce your risk of danger online:

- *NEVER give out your name, address, phone number, social security number, passwords, credit card numbers, or names of family members to people you don't know.*
- *Choose email addresses and instant message screen names carefully, using a combination of letters and numbers.*
- *Stay out of chat rooms.*
- *If you do enter chat rooms, use a nickname instead of your screen name.*
- *On social networking sites, use blocking options to prevent strangers from seeing your page.*
- *Remember that your comments to people will be seen by others. Don't give out personal details or say anything you don't want the entire world to know!*
- *NEVER agree to meet with someone you don't know unless you have a parent or trusted adult with you.*

prevent and prosecute online sexual exploitation of children and teens.

Chatting with anyone you don't know can be very dangerous. It is impossible to know whether the "16-year-old girl" you are sharing information with is really a 40-year-old sexual predator trying to find out your name and where you live. Chat rooms and gaming sites are other places that sexual predators hang out looking for unsuspecting victims. Keep in mind that it may be possible for a predator to trace your identity through your email address.

## Be Prepared for Disasters

Hurricanes, floods, and worldwide terror attacks have focused attention on the need for families to have supplies on hand and a disaster plan in place. Here are some basic measures to help you and your family prepare for a disaster... just in case:

- Keep at least a 3-day supply of food, water, and medicine at home.
- Make sure you have first aid supplies, flashlight, and batteries at home and in your car.
- Agree upon a meeting place, both in town and out of town, in case your family is separated during a disaster.
- Keep cell phones charged and program the phone numbers for family members and emergency services.
- Program "ICE" into your cell phone. ICE is your "In Case of Emergency" number that some one can call if you have a car wreck or other accident.
- Carry full identification on you, including name, address, home phone number, emergency contact people, and health insurance information.



## CHAPTER NINE • OTHER HEALTH ISSUES

### *Physical Concerns*

Here are some other health issues that can affect teens and young adults:

- **Acne.** Acne is the most common skin disorder during the teen years. In fact, 85% of teens will develop some degree of acne. Mild cases can be treated with a mild cleanser or soap and non-prescription medications containing benzoyl peroxide or salicylic acid. Moderate to severe acne may require prescription medications, such as Retin-A, Accutane, or various antibiotics. (Note that some of these medications can cause severe birth defects if you get pregnant while using them.) There is no scientific evidence that chocolate, colas, nuts, or fried foods cause acne or make it worse.
- **Asthma.** In people with asthma, the airways of the lungs become extra sensitive. The airways constrict (become narrow) when exposed to substances such as pollen, dust mites, cigarette smoke, animal dander, perfume, or cold air. Stress and exercise also can trigger an asthma attack. During an attack, the person has difficulty in breathing and in serious cases may have to be hospitalized. Several effective medications are available to treat asthma. The medicine usually is given through an inhaler device.
- **Diabetes.** There are two types of diabetes. In type 1 diabetes, the **pancreas** stops working and is no longer able to produce insulin (a critical hormone that enables our bodies to use the food we eat). Type 1 diabetes usually is diagnosed in childhood or young adulthood. People with type 1 diabetes must take insulin (through shots or an implantable pump).  
  
In type 2 diabetes, the pancreas still produces insulin, but the body becomes “resistant” to it (unable to use the hormone properly). Type 2 diabetes is increasing among teens and young adults. People who are overweight, inactive, or have a family history of the disease have a higher risk of type 2 diabetes. Type 2 diabetes usually is treated with diet, exercise, and oral medications.

Diabetes often has no symptoms. However, some people experience frequent urination, increased thirst, extreme hunger, drowsiness, nausea, blurred vision, and fatigue. Diabetes is a very serious disease. If left untreated for many years, it can damage the heart, kidneys, and nerves and lead to blindness and limb amputation.

- **Epilepsy.** Epilepsy is caused by overactive brain cells. It is a physical disease, not a mental disorder. The overactive brain cells cause **seizures** (temporary loss of muscle control and often brief unconsciousness). Several effective medications can help keep seizures under control. Many times, seizures will stop completely by adulthood.

One of the most challenging problems with epilepsy is that seizures are frightening for everyone – for the person having the seizure and for the people who witness it. If you have epilepsy, educate your friends and classmates about the disease. That way, it won't be as frightening for them or as embarrassing for you if a seizure occurs at school.

- **Fever blisters.** Fever blisters or cold sores are painful sores on the lips or around the mouth. They usually are caused by the herpes simplex virus type 1. Fever blisters are very common and can be transmitted by kissing or by non-sexual means, such as sharing drinking glasses. Herpes viruses remain in the body, usually in an inactive state. Fever blister flare-ups can be triggered by sun exposure, fever, stress, physical illness, a suppressed immune system, and certain foods or drugs. A number of medications are available to relieve the symptoms.

**Q. If I have a fever blister, does that mean I have genital herpes?**

**A. The virus that causes oral herpes (fever blisters) is closely related to the virus that causes genital herpes. Oral herpes is not considered to be an STD. However, the herpes virus present in a fever blister can be spread to the genitals of a partner during unprotected oral sex – and once the virus is spread, the partner will have genital herpes. The opposite also is true: The herpes virus on the genitals can be spread to the mouth during unprotected oral sex, causing oral herpes or fever blisters.**

FAQ

- **Hepatitis.** Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver. The most common forms of hepatitis are caused by viruses. Depending on the type of hepatitis, the virus can be transmitted through contaminated food or feces (hepatitis A) or through contaminated body fluids, such as saliva, blood, or semen (hepatitis B and hepatitis C). Hepatitis B is often transmitted sexually or through contaminated needles. Hepatitis C rarely is transmitted sexually but can be spread through contaminated needles.

Hepatitis can cause severe liver damage. Hepatitis C may lead to liver failure and death. Symptoms of hepatitis include fatigue, anorexia (not wanting to eat), nausea, dark-colored urine, low-grade fever, abdominal pain, rashes, and muscle or joint pain. Hepatitis can be transmitted to the baby during pregnancy and childbirth. A vaccination against hepatitis B is available. Ask your doctor about it if you are at risk.

- **Mononucleosis.** Like hepatitis, mononucleosis is caused by a virus (usually the Epstein-Barr virus). The virus is transmitted primarily through saliva (that's why "mono" is called the "kissing disease"). Mononucleosis can be mild (with no symptoms), or it can cause a variety of unpleasant symptoms that last for several weeks. Symptoms of mononucleosis include: malaise (vague feeling of being ill), fatigue, sore throat, anorexia, nausea, headache, cough, fever, enlarged lymph nodes, facial puffiness, and joint or muscle pain. Mononucleosis usually causes no serious long-term problems.

- **Scoliosis.** Scoliosis is simply a curved spine. Most scoliosis that is diagnosed in adolescence has no symptoms. It typically is discovered during a school screening exam or a visit to the doctor. Treatment includes spinal braces, special exercises, and sometimes surgery.

- **Skin cancer.** Overexposure to the sun (sunburns and repeated tanning) can lead to wrinkles and skin cancer. The effects of sun exposure are cumulative. That means the effects don't go away, and they add up over the years. The sunburns and dark tans you get today will show up on your face as leathery, discolored, and prematurely wrinkled skin when you're an adult.

## The ABCDs of Melanoma

It's a good idea to examine your entire body for unusual moles or funny-looking "spots." Melanomas can arise anywhere on your body – even in areas not exposed to the sun (such as between your toes, behind your ears, or even inside your mouth). Women often develop melanomas on their legs. Cancer specialists have created the ABCDs of melanoma to help us spot these dangerous growths. Look for:

**A:** Asymmetry. One side of a mole or growth doesn't match the other.

**B:** Border. The edges are ragged, notched, or blurred.

**C:** Color. The color of the mole is uneven or multi-colored. The growth may contain shades of black, brown, or tan. You may see areas of blue, red, white, or gray.

**D:** Diameter. An existing mole has changed in size.

If you suspect melanoma, consult a doctor immediately. Early melanoma has

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Sun damage also leads to skin cancers. The most common skin cancers – basal cell and squamous cell – usually are curable. However, **melanoma** is a potentially deadly form of skin cancer that can spread to the internal organs. The number of cases of melanoma is increasing rapidly, especially among young women. Melanoma is sometimes found in teenagers and even younger schoolchildren (see "The ABCDs of Melanoma"). Sunburns during childhood and adolescence increase the risk of developing the disease.

To protect yourself from wrinkles and skin cancer, ALWAYS wear a sunscreen with an SPF (sun protection factor) of at least 30. Put on a thick layer of sunscreen and reapply it every 1-1/2 to 2 hours. Cover up with a wide-brimmed hat and, if possible, a lightweight long-sleeved shirt. Try to stay out of the sun between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. NEVER use a tanning bed. Although tanning salons advertise a "safe" tan, the light exposure you receive in these places is just as damaging as the sun. (If you absolutely have to have some color, try a "sunless" tanning product.)

## CHAPTER TEN • LOOKING FORWARD

### *Stay True to Yourself*

What a great time it is to be a girl! Today young women have options and opportunities that their grandmothers could only dream about. You are free to explore your world and to learn all you can about your body, your health, and who you are as a person.

We hope that *What About Me? A Girls' Guide to Health* has answered some of your questions about body image, self-esteem, relationships, and sexuality. We hope that you have gained new tools to cope with stress and to resist peer pressure. Most of all, we hope that you will continue to ask questions and to search for answers. By learning all that you can about yourself, you will be able to make good choices now and in the future.

As you face the challenges that lie ahead in life, remember that there are no dead ends – only detours and new paths to follow. You ALWAYS have options, no matter what life might throw in your way.

Remember, too, that you are special. No one else is exactly like you. You have your own look, your own talents, and your own dreams. Stay true to yourself and no person or circumstance in life will ever keep you down!



## Words You May Not Know

**Abduction:** Taking a person away by force and against her will.

**Abortion:** A surgical procedure or use of medication to end a pregnancy.

**Abstinence/Abstinent:** Choosing to postpone or refrain from sexual intercourse.

**Addiction/Addictive:** Physical dependence on a substance. A substance that can lead to dependence.

**Adoption:** The legal, permanent placement of a child with people who will raise the child as their own.

**Aerobic exercise:** An exercise that increases the heart rate and causes the body to use more oxygen.

**Aggression:** Hostile or violent behavior or attitudes toward another person.

**AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome):** A usually fatal immune system disorder caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

**Anemia:** A condition caused by an inadequate number of oxygen-carrying red blood cells.

**Anorexia nervosa:** An eating disorder characterized by starvation and an extreme fear of being fat.

**Anxiety/Anxious:** A state of being uneasy or worried about something.

**Binge:** Eat huge amounts of food at a time.

**Binge drinking:** Drinking several alcoholic drinks within a very short amount of time.

**Birth control pill:** An oral contraceptive.

**Bulimia nervosa:** An eating disorder characterized by bingeing and then purging.

**Caffeine:** A stimulant substance found in coffee, tea, and colas.

**Calorie:** The amount of energy produced by a food. Excess energy is

stored as body fat.

**Cancer:** A serious disease characterized by abnormal cell growth and formation of tumors.

**Cervix:** The opening to the uterus.

**Chlamydia:** A common sexually transmitted disease that can lead to infertility and chronic pelvic pain.

**Clique:** A small, tightly controlled group based on social status, power, and popularity.

**Coma:** Prolonged (and sometimes permanent) unconsciousness.

**Condom:** A latex device placed over the penis (male condom) or in the vagina (female condom) to prevent pregnancy.

**Contraception/Contraceptive:** A method used to prevent pregnancy. A birth control device designed to prevent pregnancy.

**Cramps:** Uncomfortable contractions of the uterus that help move menstrual blood through the cervix.

**Date rape:** Sexual assault by someone you know. Also called acquaintance rape.

**Diabetes:** A serious disorder characterized by abnormally high levels of blood sugar.

**Diaphragm:** A birth control device that prevents sperm from entering the uterus.

**Diuretic:** A medication that removes excess water from the body.

**Domestic abuse:** Violence within the home.

**Douche:** To clean the vagina. Products called “douches” may cause vaginal irritation.

**Ejaculate/Ejaculation:** The discharge of semen (fluid containing sperm) from the penis during orgasm.

**Endorphin:** A natural calming and pain-relieving substance produced during extended exercise.

**Erect/Erection:** The stiffening and lengthening of the penis that occurs

during sexual arousal.

**Euphoria:** A giddy or silly feeling that can be caused by a drug.

**Fallopian tube:** A tube that transports an egg released from the ovary to the uterus.

**Gay:** Homosexual. Often used to refer to male homosexuals.

**Genital(s):** Sex organ(s). Pertaining to the sex organs.

**Genital herpes:** A common and incurable sexually transmitted disease.

**Genital warts:** A sexually transmitted disease caused by a virus and characterized by tiny bumps that can itch or bleed.

**Gonorrhea:** A sexually transmitted disease that can lead to infertility, arthritis, and blindness.

**Gynecologist:** A doctor who specializes in the female reproductive organs.

**Hallucinations:** Perceptions of sights or sounds that are not really there.

**Heart attack:** Serious damage to the heart muscle caused by clogged blood vessels and lack of blood flow to the heart.

**Hepatitis:** Inflammation of the liver, usually caused by a virus.

**Herpes:** See Genital herpes.

**Herpes simplex virus (HSV):** A tiny organism that can cause genital or oral herpes infections.

**HIV (human immunodeficiency virus):** The virus that causes AIDS.

**Homosexuality:** Sexual attraction to persons of the same sex.

**Hormone:** A substance produced by a gland that regulates various bodily functions. The female hormones are estrogen and progesterone. The primary male hormone is testosterone.

**Human papilloma virus (HPV):** The sexually transmitted infection that may produce genital warts or may produce no symptoms at all.

**Hymen:** A collar of tissue that surrounds the opening to the vagina.

**Infertile/Infertility:** Unable to have children.

**Intercourse:** See Sexual intercourse.

**Intrauterine device (IUD):** A birth control device that is inserted into the uterus.

**Lesbian:** A female homosexual.

**Masturbate:** To touch or stroke your genital area in a pleasurable way.

**Melanoma:** A serious form of skin cancer.

**Menstruation:** Monthly shedding of the lining of the uterus.

**Nicotine:** An addictive substance found in cigarettes.

**Nutrients:** Vitamins, minerals, and other food components that are necessary for good health.

**Oral contraceptive:** Birth control pill.

**Oral sex:** Using the mouth to stimulate a partner's genitals.

**Osteoporosis:** Excessive bone loss and "brittle bones" among older women.

**Ovary:** A female reproductive gland that produces eggs and female hormones.

**Ovulation:** The release of an egg from the ovary.

**Pancreas:** The organ that produces insulin (a hormone needed to convert food to useable energy).

**Pap smear:** A procedure in which cells are taken from the cervix and examined for abnormalities.

**Paranoia:** Extreme suspiciousness or feelings that people are attempting to harm you.

**Penis:** The male organ used in sexual intercourse.

**Perfectionist:** Someone who sets unrealistically high goals for herself and then feels shame or a sense of failure when she does not meet those goals.

**Predator:** A person who stalks or preys on others to satisfy his or her desires.

**Premenstrual syndrome (PMS):** Physical and emotional symptoms

related to monthly hormonal changes.

**Prostaglandins:** Natural chemicals that contribute to menstrual cramps.

**Psychological:** Relating to or affecting the mind.

**Puberty:** Developmental phase when a child develops adult sex characteristics and reproductive functioning.

**Purge:** Intentional vomiting.

**Rape:** Forced sexual penetration of the mouth, anus, or vagina.

**Rhythm method:** A method of birth control in which a couple tries to avoid sexual intercourse during the woman's most fertile days.

**Scrotum:** The sac or pouch that holds the testicles.

**Seizures:** Temporary loss of muscular control, often with brief unconsciousness.

**Self-esteem:** Belief in oneself and confidence in one's abilities.

**Semen:** A fluid secreted by the male reproductive organs. Semen transports sperm.

**Sex:** See Sexual intercourse.

**Sexual abuse:** Forced or coerced sexual activity by someone in a position of power – often a relative or neighbor.

**Sexual assault:** A sexual attack. See also Rape.

**Sexual harassment:** Unwanted sexual attention, including sexually oriented comments, jokes, or touching.

**Sexual intercourse:** The sexual act. Penetration of a woman's body with the penis.

**Sexual predator:** An individual who seeks frequent sexual encounters, usually with a person who is less powerful.

**Sexually transmitted disease (STD):** A disease passed through oral, vaginal, or anal sex.

**Sperm:** Male reproductive cell that is produced in the testicles.

**Spermicide:** A birth control product that kills sperm.

**Stress:** Mental or physical tension or strain.

**Stroke:** Damage to the brain caused by clogged or ruptured blood

vessels.

**Substance abuse:** Overuse of or dependence on alcohol, tobacco, or legal or illegal drugs.

**Suicide:** Intentional taking of one's own life.

**Syphilis:** A sexually transmitted disease that can lead to heart or brain damage, blindness, or death.

**Testicles:** Two male sex glands contained in the scrotum. Testicles secrete sperm.

**Testosterone:** A male hormone involved in sexual maturation and functioning.

**Toxic shock syndrome:** A rare but serious infection linked to high-absorbency tampons.

**Toxoplasmosis:** An infection associated with the handling of cat feces. Toxoplasmosis can damage an unborn child.

**Tubal pregnancy:** A dangerous condition in which a fertilized egg implants in a fallopian tube instead of the uterus.

**Urination:** Discharge of urine from the body.

**Uterus:** Womb. The hollow organ where a baby develops.

**Vagina:** The pouch between the vulva (a woman's outside sex organ) and the uterus.

**Vaginal infection:** A condition usually caused by an overgrowth of bacteria or yeast in the vagina.

**Vaginal speculum:** An instrument used to examine a woman's vagina and cervix.

**Vegetarian/Vegetarianism:** A person who eats no meat. An eating style that eliminates meats.

**Virgin:** A girl or woman who has not had sexual intercourse.

**Virus:** A tiny organism associated with a variety of diseases.

**Wet dream:** Ejaculation during sleep.

**Withdrawal:** An ineffective method of birth control in which the male tries to remove his penis from the vagina before ejaculation.

## RESOURCES

### Books

- What's Happening to My Body for Girls** (3rd edition) by Lynda Madaras. Newmarket Press, 2000.
- Girology: A Girl's Guide to Stuff That Matters** by Melisa Holmes, MD, and Patricia Hutchinson, MD. HCI Teens, 2005.
- Dr. Susan's Girls-Only Weight Loss Guide: The Easy, Fun Way to Look and Feel Good!** by Susan S. Bartell, PhD. Parent Positive, 2006.
- The Right Moves to Getting Fit and Feeling Great** by Tina Schwager, PTA, and Michele Schuerger. Free Spirit Publishing, 1998.
- Stick Up for Yourself: Every Kid's Guide to Personal Power & Positive Self-Esteem** by Gershen Kaufman, PhD, Lev Raphael, PhD, and Pamela Espeland. Free Spirit Publishing, 1999.
- Too Stressed to Think? A Teen Guide to Staying Sane When Life Makes You Crazy** by Annie Fox, MEd, and Ruth Kirschner. Free Spirit Publishing, 2005.
- Fighting Invisible Tigers: A Stress Management Guide for Teens** by Earl Hipp. Free Spirit Publishing, 1995.
- The Courage to Be Yourself: True Stories by Teens About Cliques, Conflicts, and Overcoming Peer Pressure** edited by Al Desetta, MA. Free Spirit Publishing, 2005.
- Life Lists for Teens: Tips, Steps, Hints, and How-tos for Growing Up, Getting Along, Learning, and Having Fun.** Free Spirit Publishing, 2003.
- Wise Highs: How to Thrill, Chill, and Get Away from It All Without Alcohol or Other Drugs** by Alex J. Packer, PhD. Free Spirit Press, 2006.
- The Teen Survival Guide to Dating & Relating: Real-World Advice on Guys, Girls, Growing Up, and Getting Along** by Annie Fox, MEd. Free Spirit Publishing, 2005.

**High School's Not Forever** by Jane Bluestein and Eric Katz. HCI, 2005.

**When Nothing Matters Anymore: A Survival Guide for Depressed Teens** by Bev Cobain, RNC. Free Spirit Publishing, 1998.

**When a Friend Dies: A Book for Teens About Grieving and Healing** by Marilyn E. Gootman, EdD. Free Spirit Publishing, 2005.

**When Something Feels Wrong: A Survival Guide About Abuse** by Deanna S. Pledge, PhD. Free Spirit Publishing, 2002.

## Websites

### Alcohol/Drugs/Tobacco

Al-Anon/ Alateen	<a href="http://www.al-anon.alateen.org">www.al-anon.alateen.org</a>
Cocaine Anonymous-Houston	<a href="http://www.ca-texas.org">www.ca-texas.org</a>
The Council on Drugs and Alcohol-Houston	<a href="http://www.council-houston.org">www.council-houston.org</a>
Marijuana Anonymous	<a href="http://www.marijuana-anonymous.org">www.marijuana-anonymous.org</a>
National Institute on Drug Abuse	<a href="http://www.nida.nih.gov/students.html">www.nida.nih.gov/students.html</a>
Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign	<a href="http://www.abovetheinfluence.com">www.abovetheinfluence.com</a>

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### Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender

Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals	<a href="http://www.hatchyouth.org">www.hatchyouth.org</a>
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### General Health

GirlsHealth.gov	<a href="http://www.girlshealth.gov">www.girlshealth.gov</a>
Familydoctor.org	<a href="http://www.familydoctor.org">www.familydoctor.org</a> (see Teen section, under Parents & Kids)
TeenGrowth.com	<a href="http://www.teengrowth.com">www.teengrowth.com</a>
TeensHealth (Nemours Foundation)	<a href="http://www.kidshealth.org/teen">www.kidshealth.org/teen</a>
TeenHealthFX	<a href="http://www.teenhealthfx.com">www.teenhealthfx.com</a>

## Nutrition

ChooseMyPlate.gov (nutrition, food information) [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)

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## Pregnancy/Birth Control

Birthright International [www.birthright.org](http://www.birthright.org)  
 March of Dimes [www.marchofdimes.com](http://www.marchofdimes.com)  
 Planned Parenthood [www.plannedparenthood.org](http://www.plannedparenthood.org)

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## Rape/ Violence

National Youth  
 Violence Prevention  
 Resource Center [www.safeyouth.gov](http://www.safeyouth.gov)  
 PromoteTruth (sexual assault, date rape) [www.promotetruth.org](http://www.promotetruth.org)

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## Sexuality

Sex, etc. [www.sexetc.org](http://www.sexetc.org)

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## STDs

AVERT (Averting AIDS and HIV) [www.avert.org](http://www.avert.org) (see Teen section)  
 American Social Health Association [www.ashastd.org](http://www.ashastd.org)  
 Peer to Peer [www.stopthinkbesafe.org](http://www.stopthinkbesafe.org)

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## Suicide

SAVE (Suicide Awareness Voices of Education) [www.save.org](http://www.save.org)

## Hotlines

### Alcohol/Drugs/Tobacco

Al-Anon/ Alateen	888-4AL-ANON 800-356-9996
American Cancer Society Smoking Quitline	877-YES-QUIT
Cocaine Anonymous Houston	800-347-8998 713-668-6822
The Council on Alcohol and Drugs Houston	713-942-4100
Marijuana Anonymous	800-766-6779
Substance Abuse Hotline	800-662-4357

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### Cancer

American Cancer Society	800-227-2345
National Cancer Institute (Cancer Information)	800-422-6237

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### Grief Support

Bo's Place	713-942-8339
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### Homosexuality

Gay & Lesbian National Hotline	888-843-4564
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### Nutrition/Eating Disorders

Information & Referral	800-931-2237
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### Pregnancy/Birth Control

Birthright (Pregnancy Crisis Hotline)	800-550-4900
Planned Parenthood	800-230-PLAN