

Your Body. Your Health. Your Voice.

A starter guide for high-school-age teens, approximately ages 13-18. For all genders; period information applies to teens who menstruate.

You deserve accurate information, respect, and support. Learning about your body helps you ask questions, make informed decisions, and recognize when to seek care.

RECOGNIZE: Notice changes and questions

Puberty can bring changes in growth, skin, body hair, periods, erections, and emotions. Bodies develop at different times. Bring worries about pain, development, or a sudden change to a healthcare professional rather than comparing yourself with social media.

Periods: keep a simple record

Write down the first and last day of bleeding, flow, pain, and any missed school or activities. A cycle is counted from the first day of one period to the first day of the next. Early cycles can be irregular, but symptoms that disrupt your life deserve attention.

Arrange a healthcare visit if you have no first period by age 15, go more than 3 months between periods, bleed longer than 7 days, regularly soak a pad or tampon within 1-2 hours, or have cramps that interfere with daily life. Do not wait for a perfect tracking record before seeking help.

REASON: A symptom is not a diagnosis

Missed periods and other hormone concerns can have several causes. Ask your clinician about persistent changes. An online checklist cannot diagnose you; your history and examination guide the next steps.

Get urgent help: heavy bleeding with fainting or marked weakness, severe sudden pelvic or testicular pain, or immediate danger needs prompt medical assessment. Call 911 for a medical emergency.

Boundaries and Healthy Relationships

You can choose to wait. Your values matter. Respect must go both ways.

RECOGNIZE: Respect versus pressure

A respectful person listens to your boundaries and accepts your decision. Repeated demands, threats, guilt, controlling behavior, or pressure to send intimate images are reasons to seek support.

REASON: Consent is an ongoing choice

Consent means a freely given agreement to a specific activity. Pressure, threats, silence, or a previous yes are not permission. A person can change their mind. Someone who is asleep, unconscious, or too impaired to decide cannot consent. Laws also set age and other limits; a verbal yes does not remove those limits.

RESPOND: Practice words you can use

"I am not ready."

"That does not fit my values."

"I said no. Please respect that."

"I am leaving. I need someone to pick me up."

You do not owe anyone an explanation. If speaking up feels unsafe, focus on reaching a safe place and getting help. It is never your fault if another person ignores your boundaries.

Make a support plan

Choose a trusted adult, a backup adult, and a safe way to get home. A parent, caregiver, counselor, or healthcare professional can help. If the first person does not help, tell someone else. Avoid sending intimate images; if someone threatens you, seek help rather than handling it alone.

If someone hurt or forced you: you deserve support and prompt medical care. Some care after an assault is time-sensitive. In the U.S., RAINN: 800-656-4673. Call 911 for immediate danger. Ask the support service what its privacy limits are.

RECOGNIZE • REASON • RESPOND

Learn the WHY, not just the answer. — Dr. Miry Fear

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Sexual Health and Getting Care

Questions are welcome. You do not need to be sexually active to learn about reproductive health.

Know what prevention can and cannot do

Choosing to avoid sexual activity is a valid decision. Avoiding vaginal, anal, and oral sex and sexual genital contact prevents the STI exposure associated with those activities. STIs can spread through several kinds of sexual contact, and many cause no symptoms.

For people who are sexually active, correctly using condoms every time lowers STI risk, but does not eliminate it. Other birth control methods can prevent pregnancy but do not protect against STIs. Ask a clinician which testing and prevention options fit your situation.

Ask whether your HPV and hepatitis B vaccines are up to date. HPV vaccination is routinely recommended at ages 11-12 and can start at age 9; teens who missed doses should ask about catching up.

Start a healthcare conversation

"I have a question that feels embarrassing."

"Could I talk with you alone for part of the visit?"

"What information can stay private, and what must you share?"

"Can you explain that in simpler words?"

Privacy and consent rules depend on your age, location, the type of care, and safety concerns. Ask the clinic who can see portal messages, results, visit notes, bills, and insurance notices. Do not assume a website message or social-media comment is private.

When help should not wait

Contact a healthcare professional promptly after a possible STI exposure, sexual assault, or pregnancy risk. Some preventive treatments are time-sensitive. Pain, sores, unusual discharge, burning with urination, or a missed period also deserve assessment. Do not use leftover antibiotics or someone else's medicine.

Use BCE for learning. Bring personal symptoms and treatment questions to your healthcare team. Keep personal details out of public comments and general topic requests. BCE is not an emergency service or a private clinical consultation.

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Trusted Sources and Next Steps

Use the worksheets with your healthcare team. Save or print these resources somewhere you consider private.

Your next step: choose one question to ask, complete the visit worksheet, or begin a period record if relevant. Share only what you feel comfortable sharing; you never need to share a personal story in a classroom or public discussion.

Sources used for this starter set

These are specialty and public-health educational resources, not a new BCE clinical guideline. Publication dates vary; online resources were reviewed October 11, 2026. Click a title to open the source.

[AAP: Menstrual Disorders in Teens \(2026\)](#)

[AAP: Privacy in Health Care: Information for Teens \(2026\)](#)

[AAP: Birth Control Options for Teens \(2025\)](#)

[CDC: How to Prevent STIs \(2024\)](#)

[CDC: HPV Vaccination](#)

[AAP: Your Checkup Checklist: 13 Years Old \(2025\)](#)

[RAINN: Contact and support](#)

[RAINN: Consent 101](#)

For families and educators

Discuss health facts alongside family values, faith, and respect for others. This public starter set is intended for high-school-age teens. Classroom use should follow school review, parent communication, and the school's safeguarding procedures. Adapt materials before using them with younger children.

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