

What's Typical for Adolescents and What's Cause for Concern?

Typical

1. Increased moodiness
2. Increased self-consciousness, of feeling "on stage," increased focus on body image
3. Increased dawdling
4. Increased parent–adolescent conflict
5. Experimentation with drugs, alcohol, or cigarettes
6. Increased sense of invulnerability (may lead to increased sensation seeking or risk taking)
7. Stressful transitions to middle and high school
8. Increased argumentativeness, idealism, and criticism; being opinionated

Not Typical: Cause for Concern

Intense, painful, long-lasting moods; risky mood-dependent behavior, major depression, or panic attacks; self-injury or suicidal thinking

Social phobia or withdrawal; perfectionism and unrealistic standards; bingeing, purging, or restricted eating; obsessive about or neglectful of hygiene

Multiple distractions to point of not being able to complete homework or projects, lack of focus that interferes with daily work or tasks, regularly late for appointments

Verbal or physical aggression, running away

Substance abuse, selling drugs, substance-using peer group

Multiple accidents; encounters with firearms; excessive risk taking (e.g., subway surfing, driving drunk or texting while driving), getting arrested

School refusal; bullying or being bullied; lack of connection to school or peers; school truancy, failure, or dropout

Rebellious questioning of social rules and conventions; causing trouble with family members, teachers, or others who attempt to assert authority over the adolescent

(continued)

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Typical

9. Increased sexual maturation; sexual interest or experimentation
10. Becoming stressed by everyday decision making
11. Increased desire for privacy
12. Strong interest in technology; social media
13. Messy room
14. Sleep cycle shifts later (urge to be a "night owl" and to sleep late on weekends)

Not Typical: Cause for Concern

- Sexual promiscuity, multiple partners, unsafe sexual practices, pregnancy
- Becoming paralyzed with indecision
- Isolation from family; breakdown of communication, routine lying, and hiding things
- Many hours per day spent on computer, on high-risk or triggering websites; casually meeting partners online; revealing too much (e.g., "sexting," overly personal posts on Facebook, Tumblr, Instagram, in blog)
- Old, rotting food; teen not able to find basic necessities; dirty clothes covering floor chronically
- Often up nearly all night; sleeps almost all day on weekends; routinely late (or missing school) because of sleep schedule