

# Ten Teen Health Issues

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Here are ten tips to help teens live healthy and stay safe.

## **1. Wear your seat belt and drive safely.**

Car accidents remain the number one cause of fatalities among young adults in the United States, but wearing a seat belt can save your life. In a recent survey, the primary cause of car crashes was found to be a sleepy driver. Other common causes of car crashes are distracted drivers and driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

## **2. Do not smoke.**

Tobacco-related health problems are a leading cause of serious illnesses in the United States. Smoking is very addicting and can lead not just to lung cancer but to heart disease, other forms of cancer, and other serious health problems. If you participate in sports, smoking can lower the level of your performance.

## **3. Exercise regularly.**

Exercise is the only thing that strengthens your heart, and that means aerobic exercise, not weight lifting. Heart disease remains a leading health concern in this country. A strong, healthy heart can mean a longer, more rewarding life.

## **4. Manage your stress.**

Everyone has stress. But quick fixes like alcohol and drugs are not the answer. If you feel that you need to drink a little more or use more drugs in order to relax or have fun, you are getting addicted. Instead, find a positive activity or hobby that you can feel passionate about and make a focus of your life!

## **5. Take steps to avoid getting HIV.**

AIDS is a serious health problem in the United States and is on the rise among teens. AIDS is life threatening, and while it can be controlled in some cases, there is as yet no cure.

## **6. Get a good education.**

Unemployment can lead to homelessness, which increases the risk of health problems. A good education can open doors to a better job and a fuller life.

## **7. Eat healthy.**

Start practicing good eating habits now before it gets too hard to change. Poor eating habits can lead to health problems in the future like heart disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure (hypertension). If you have family members with these problems, you are at a much higher risk of having the same problems in your future. Get use to eating more vegetables and fruits every day. Get enough calcium for your bones. Young women need more iron and should get extra folate each day.

## **8. Avoid accidental pregnancy.**

Yes, accidental pregnancies still happen. If you are sexually active, you need to know about pregnancy prevention, plan B, and yearly screening for chlamydia, gonorrhea, and other sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV (AIDS).

**9. Think before you act (look before you leap).**

The brain is designed to focus on the fun things first. But not everything that is fun is healthy or safe. If you develop good habits now, you will do things that are good for you without needing to think about it. If you have bad habits, it will be harder for you to change them unless you truly believe the habits are bad. Habits can take four to six weeks to change. It's easier to develop good ones from the start, and one way to do that is to **learn time management**.

**10. Enjoy life!**

The legal world treats you differently when you turn 18. While you are young, take advantage of the good advice, help, and assistance that's available. Someone has already been through what you are learning, questioning, and living through. Learn from other people's experiences and mistakes!