

# Adolescent Well-Visits

Adolescence is a crucial period with marked physical, emotional, and intellectual changes, as well as changes in social roles, relationships and expectations, all of which are important for the development of every young person and provide the foundation for adulthood. Establishing healthy behaviors is a vital part of this foundation and high quality preventive care can play a critical role in providing the support adolescents need as they enter into adulthood.

## What is an adolescent well-visit?

An annual well-visit is more than a physical exam. The visit, sometimes called a checkup, also includes discussion of other health related topics, including healthy eating, physical activity, substance use, sexual behavior, violence, and motor vehicle safety.

## Who should get one?

It's important for all adolescents and young adults to receive an annual well-visit. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends an annual well-visit for everyone up to age 21.

## Why is this important?

An annual well-visit offers the opportunity for health care providers to talk about adopting or maintaining healthy habits and behaviors, avoiding health-damaging behaviors, managing chronic conditions, and preventing disease. During the adolescent years, habits and behaviors are established and, for some youth, chronic conditions may emerge. High-quality preventive care can play a critical role in providing the support adolescents need as they enter into adulthood.

## What is the difference between an adolescent well-visit and a sports physical?



Iowa high schools require athletes to provide proof of an annual physical exam in order to participate in high school sports. A sports physical is simply an exam that helps determine if it is safe for the athlete to participate in a particular sport. An adolescent well-visit gives physicians a chance to perform not just a thorough physical exam and health assessment, but an opportunity to address many other topics that adolescents face in their transition to adulthood. A sports physical can be completed as part of an adolescent well-visit.

**For more information on how you can become involved, contact Mary Greene or Addie Rasmusson:**

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