



# BRIGHT FUTURES HANDOUT ► PATIENT

## 15 THROUGH 17 YEAR VISITS

Here are some suggestions from Bright Futures experts that may be of value to you and your family.

### ✓ HOW YOU ARE DOING

- Enjoy spending time with your family. Look for ways you can help at home.
- Find ways to work with your family to solve problems. Follow your family's rules.
- Form healthy friendships and find fun, safe things to do with friends.
- Set high goals for yourself in school and activities and for your future.
- Try to be responsible for your schoolwork and for getting to school or work on time.
- Find ways to deal with stress. Talk with your parents or other trusted adults if you need help.
- Always talk through problems and never use violence.
- If you get angry with someone, walk away if you can.
- Call for help if you are in a situation that feels dangerous.
- Healthy dating relationships are built on respect, concern, and doing things both of you like to do.
- When you're dating or in a sexual situation, "No" means NO. NO is OK.
- Don't smoke, vape, use drugs, or drink alcohol. Talk with us if you are worried about alcohol or drug use in your family.

### ✓ YOUR FEELINGS

- Be proud of yourself when you do something good.
- Figure out healthy ways to deal with stress.
- Develop ways to solve problems and make good decisions.
- It's OK to feel up sometimes and down others, but if you feel sad most of the time, let us know so we can help you.
- It's important for you to have accurate information about sexuality, your physical development, and your sexual feelings toward the opposite or same sex. Please consider asking us if you have any questions.

### ✓ YOUR DAILY LIFE

- Visit the dentist at least twice a year.
- Brush your teeth at least twice a day and floss once a day.
- Be a healthy eater. It helps you do well in school and sports.
  - Have vegetables, fruits, lean protein, and whole grains at meals and snacks.
  - Limit fatty, sugary, and salty foods that are low in nutrients, such as candy, chips, and ice cream.
  - Eat when you're hungry. Stop when you feel satisfied.
  - Eat with your family often.
  - Eat breakfast.
- Drink plenty of water. Choose water instead of soda or sports drinks.
- Make sure to get enough calcium every day.
- Have 3 or more servings of low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk and other low-fat dairy products, such as yogurt and cheese.
- Aim for at least 1 hour of physical activity every day.
- Wear your mouth guard when playing sports.
- Get enough sleep.

### ✓ HEALTHY BEHAVIOR CHOICES

- Choose friends who support your decision to not use tobacco, alcohol, or drugs. Support friends who choose not to use.
- Avoid situations with alcohol or drugs.
- Don't share your prescription medicines. Don't use other people's medicines.
- Not having sex is the safest way to avoid pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- Plan how to avoid sex and risky situations.
- If you're sexually active, protect against pregnancy and STIs by correctly and consistently using birth control along with a condom.
- Protect your hearing at work, home, and concerts. Keep your earbud volume down.

# 15 THROUGH 17 YEAR VISITS—PATIENT



## STAYING SAFE

- Always be a safe and cautious driver.
  - Insist that everyone use a lap and shoulder seat belt.
  - Limit the number of friends in the car and avoid driving at night.
  - Avoid distractions. Never text or talk on the phone while you drive.
- Do not ride in a vehicle with someone who has been using drugs or alcohol.
  - If you feel unsafe driving or riding with someone, call someone you trust to drive you.
- Wear helmets and protective gear while playing sports. Wear a helmet when riding a bike, a motorcycle, or an ATV or when skiing or skateboarding. Wear a life jacket when you do water sports.
- Always use sunscreen and a hat when you're outside.
- Fighting and carrying weapons can be dangerous. Talk with your parents, teachers, or doctor about how to avoid these situations.

Consistent with *Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents*, 4th Edition

For more information, go to <https://brightfutures.aap.org>.

American Academy of Pediatrics

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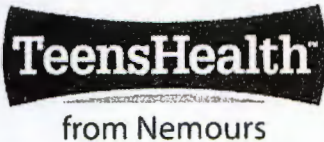


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**TeensHealth.org**

A safe, private place to get doctor-approved information on health, emotions, and life.

## 5 Ways to Get Drivers to Stop Texting

More and more passengers are speaking up about texting and driving. If a texting driver is making you nervous but you're not sure how to bring the topic up, here are some ideas:

1. **The direct approach.** Say, "I'm sorry, but I get really nervous when people text and drive." Wait to see how the person responds. Most people will admit it's probably not a good idea or they'll at least put down the phone.
2. **The subtle approach.** If you don't feel comfortable telling a driver to quit texting outright, try hinting: "Would you like me to type for you since you're driving?" Or, since more states are handing out tickets for texting and driving, you could say, "I've seen a lot of cops out today, you might not want to text right now." Or point out things the driver has missed seeing (or narrowly missed hitting). As in, "Did you see that dog/kid/overtaken bank truck?"

If you know the person your driver is texting, ask the driver to hand over the phone so you can say something. Then send a message that says, "Driving, talk to you later."

If your driver teases you about being nervous, it's the perfect opener to say, "Yeah, texting and driving freaks me out. You never know if the person in front or behind is doing it too."

3. **The "Wow, look at that bad driver!" approach.** Point out drivers who wander into the next lane, drive 45 on the highway, run a stop sign, or stop at a green light. Then make guesses about who they're texting. Or make up a variation on the punch buggy game, awarding points each time you see a driver who seems to be texting (this has the added benefit of forcing your own driver to focus on the surroundings, not the screen).
4. **The group approach.** If your whole group thinks a driver is a hazard, make a plan together. Take away the driver's car keys: It's what you're supposed to do with drunk drivers, and studies show that texting drivers are even more dangerous. Or agree not to ride with that person. If several people boycott a driver, he or she will get the message.
5. **The life-saving approach.** If someone continues to text and drive or mocks you for worrying about it, avoid riding with that person. Let texting drivers know you're cutting them off (if you feel comfortable doing so) — a little shame makes people think twice about bad habits. Or say something like, "My dad told me I can't ride with you because he says you text and drive."

Speaking of parents: As we all know, it's not just young drivers who text. If you're stuck in a car with an adult who is texting (or tweeting or emailing) behind the wheel, be direct and tell them to stop. Most adults know that parents are constantly telling kids not to text and drive, so they should feel embarrassed enough to put down the phone.

If a driver absolutely won't stop texting or laughs at you for being nervous, don't argue. The last thing anyone needs is a road-raging, texting driver. Get out the car as soon as you can. Next time that driver offers to give you a ride, say, "no, thanks."

Reviewed by: D'Arcy Lyness, PhD

Date reviewed: July 2015

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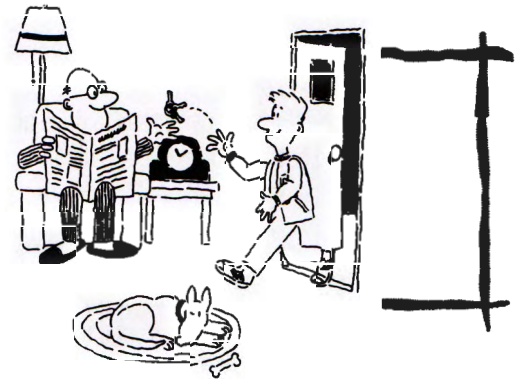
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# The Teen Driver

## Guidelines for Parents



Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for teens and young adults. More than 5,000 young people die every year in car crashes and thousands more are injured. Drivers who are 16 years old are more than 20 times as likely to have a crash as are other drivers. State and local laws, safe driving programs, and driver's education classes all help keep teens safe on the roads. Parents can also play an important role in keeping young drivers safe. This information has been developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics to inform parents about the risks that teen drivers face and how parents can help keep them safe on the roads.

### Why teens are at risk

There are two main reasons why teens are at a higher risk for being in a car crash: lack of driving experience and their tendency to take risks while driving.

- **Lack of experience.** Teens drive faster and do not control the car as well as more experienced drivers. Their judgment in traffic is often insufficient to avoid a crash. In addition, teens do most of their driving at night, which can be even more difficult. Standard driver's education classes include 30 hours of classroom teaching and 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training. This is not enough time to fully train a new driver.
- **Risk taking.** Teen drivers are more likely to be influenced by peers and other stresses and distractions. This can lead to reckless driving behaviors such as speeding, driving while under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and not wearing safety belts.

### Programs that help

**Graduated licensing laws.** Most teens get their driver's licenses in two stages: a learner's permit followed a few months later by a regular driver's license. The US Department of Transportation recommends "graduated licensing" so that learning to drive is spread over three stages. Each stage gives teens more driving privileges. Teen drivers have to meet certain restrictions for at least 6 months in each stage in order to move to the next stage. Driver's education classes would cover more and more complex decision-making and skills training during each stage. Twelve states have some form of graduated licensing laws.

**Minimum drinking age and zero tolerance laws.** Drunk and drugged driving are major problems for American teens. In one study, an estimated 6% to 14% of drivers younger than 21 years who were stopped at roadside sobriety checkpoints had been drinking. The misuse of alcohol and other drugs can severely hurt teenagers in many ways—especially on the road. A teen driver with a blood alcohol level (BAC) above 0.05% is more likely to be involved in a crash than is a sober teen driver.

Two types of laws exist to help lower the number of teens who drive after drinking alcohol. These are *minimum drinking age* laws and *zero tolerance* laws. Minimum drinking age laws prohibit the sale of alcohol to anyone under 21 years of age. These laws have helped reduce the number of alcohol-related crashes by 40%. But in some states, these laws have many loopholes and are hard to enforce. Many states have or will soon adopt zero tolerance laws that lower the allowable BAC limits for minors. Some states also require that licenses be suspended, sometimes for up to 1 year, after drivers younger than 21 years of age are arrested for driving drunk. These laws work. In Maryland, alcohol-related crashes decreased by at least 11% as a result of zero tolerance laws.

**Safety belt laws.** Even though all states have laws that require the use of safety belts, these laws may not apply to all passengers or all seats in a vehicle. In addition, studies show that teens do not use safety belts as often as older drivers do. Young people between 10 and 20 years old use safety belts only about 35% of the time—the lowest usage rate of any group. Strictly enforced safety belt laws, along with air bags, could greatly reduce the number of teens who are injured and killed in car crashes. In addition, teen drivers need to learn to take the responsibility of making sure all passengers are buckled up.

**Curfew laws.** Curfew laws ban teen driving during certain hours at night, such as midnight to 5 am. States with nighttime driving curfews for young drivers have lower crash rates than other states. The more strict the law, the fewer fatal crashes occur.

**Educational efforts.** Various state and national groups have programs to educate teens about unsafe driving practices, such as not wearing a safety belt and drunk driving. Pediatricians also play a role in such efforts.

There are several groups that encourage alternatives to drinking and driving by hosting social events for teens such as alcohol-free proms and parties. They also help teens and parents communicate. For example, SADD (Students Against Driving Drunk) encourages parents and teens to sign a contract in which both parties agree to avoid using alcohol or other drugs before driving and avoid riding with those who have. The contract also states that if a teen has been drinking he or she will call home for a ride. The group also encourages young people to help other teens change drinking habits and save lives on the roadways.



**Safe ride programs.** In some areas, “safe ride” programs help parents get involved by volunteering to drive to proms and other parties. Other programs give rides to teens who might otherwise have to drive home after drinking or ride with someone who has been drinking. A California program, for example, combines an educational program about alcohol abuse and an escort service for “stranded” teens on weekend nights. Teens can use this service in confidence. Teens volunteer to be drivers, but adults are also on-call in case questions or problems come up. Volunteer drivers stay in the car when they drop teens at home. They watch the teens enter their homes but do not talk with parents. Adults on-call handle any questions from parents.

## How parents can help

Establish and discuss “house rules” about driving even before your teen gets a license. Remind your teen that these rules are in place because you care about his or her safety. If your teen complains about the rules, stand firm. You might say something like, “I don’t care what other parents are doing—I care about you and don’t want you to get in a crash.” Remember, you control the car keys. Don’t hesitate to take away driving privileges if your teen breaks any rules. Resist the urge to break the house rules yourself and let your teen drive because it is too much trouble for you to drive. Instead, try to arrange a car pool of parents and take turns driving.

You do not need to wait for graduated licensing laws to be passed in your state to adopt your own graduated driving rules. By slowly increasing driving privileges, you can help your teen get the experience needed to drive safely and responsibly. Here are some suggestions on how you can create a graduated licensing program for your teen driver. It may not be necessary to use all of the following restrictions; choose the ones that make the most sense for you and your teen.

### Stage one

- teen must be at least 15½ years old or have a legal learner’s permit
- teen must drive with a licensed adult driver at all times, the parent if possible
- no driving between 10 pm and 5 am or no driving after sunset
- driver and all passengers must wear safety belts
- no use of tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs
- teen must remain ticket-free and crash-free for 6 months before moving up to the next stage

### Stage two

- teen must be at least 16 years old or have driven with a learner’s permit for at least 6 months
- teen must drive with a licensed adult driver during nighttime hours, the parent if possible
- teen allowed to drive unsupervised during daytime hours
- passengers restricted to one nonfamily member during daytime hours

- no use of tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs
- driver and all passengers must wear safety belts
- teen must remain ticket-free and crash-free for 12 months before moving up to the next stage

### Stage three

- teen must be at least 18 years old or have driven at least 2 years at the previous stage
  - no restrictions on driving as long as the teen driver remains ticket-free and crash-free for 6 months
  - no use of tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs
  - all passengers must wear safety belts
- Other ways parents can help:
- Require that your teen maintain good grades in school before he or she can drive. Check with your auto insurance company to see if any “good student” discounts are available.
  - Set a good driving example (no use of alcohol or other drugs, no speeding, always wear your safety belt, and require that safety belts be worn by all passengers).
  - Remind your teen how important it is to stay focused on driving, not getting distracted by excessively loud music or talking on a cellular phone.
  - Let your teen know that driving after drinking or using other drugs will not be tolerated. Tell your teen to always call you or someone else for a ride any time he or she or any other driver has been drinking or using drugs. Let your teen know that you will pick him or her up. However, if you find he or she was drinking, it may be better to wait until the next day before you discuss the incident.
  - Be alert to any signs that your teen has a drinking or other substance abuse problem. If you suspect a problem, urge your teen to talk with his or her pediatrician or school counselor. Such trusted adults can refer your teen for other help, if needed.
  - Support efforts to protect teens. These might include “safe ride” programs or Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD). Encourage alcohol-free community events.
  - Encourage schools to teach about the dangers of driving after drinking or using drugs.
  - Support showing safety films in schools. Also support efforts to promote safety belt use in all vehicles that take children and teens to and from school.

Driving is a privilege and a big responsibility. Teen drivers, because of their age and inexperience, are at a higher risk for car crashes. Licensing programs, rules of the road, and safe ride programs are designed to help teen drivers stay safe. Along with support and encouragement from parents, these programs are the best way to help teens learn to become responsible drivers.

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# Talk with Your Teen About E-cigarettes: A Tip Sheet for Parents



## BEFORE THE TALK

*Know the facts.*

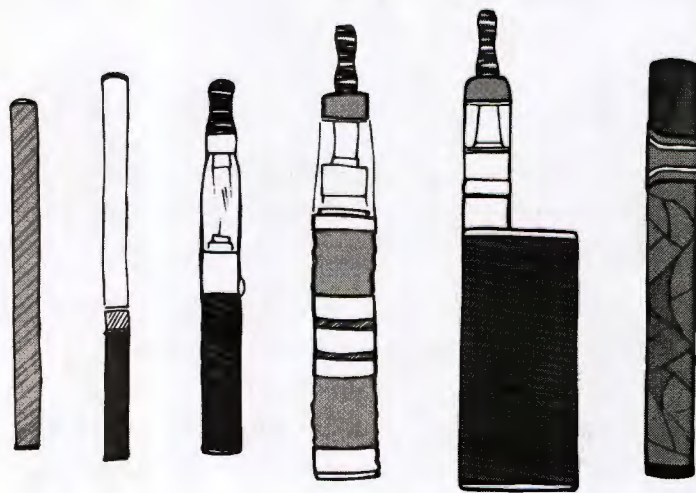
- Get credible information about e-cigarettes and young people at [E-cigarettes.SurgeonGeneral.gov](http://E-cigarettes.SurgeonGeneral.gov).

*Be patient and ready to listen.*

- Avoid criticism and encourage an open dialogue.
- Remember, your goal is to have a conversation, not to deliver a lecture.
- It's OK for your conversation to take place over time, in bits and pieces.

*Set a positive example by being tobacco-free.*

- If you use tobacco, it's never too late to quit. For free help, visit [smokefree.gov](http://smokefree.gov) or call **1-800-QUIT-NOW**.





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## START THE CONVERSATION

### *Find the right moment.*

- A more natural discussion will increase the likelihood that your teen will listen. Rather than saying "we need to talk," you might ask your teen what he or she thinks about a situation you witness together, such as:
  - » Seeing someone use an e-cigarette in person or in a video.
  - » Passing an e-cigarette shop when you are walking or driving.
  - » Seeing an e-cigarette advertisement in a store or magazine or on the internet.



### *Ask for support.*

- Not sure where to begin? Ask your health care provider to talk to your teen about the risks of e-cigarettes.
- You might also suggest that your teen talk with other trusted adults, such as relatives, teachers, faith leaders, coaches, or counselors whom you know are aware of the risks of e-cigarettes.
- These supportive adults can help reinforce your message as a parent.

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## ANSWER THEIR QUESTIONS

Here are some questions and comments you might get from your teen about e-cigarettes and some ideas about how you can answer them.

### *Why don't you want me to use e-cigarettes?*

- Science shows that e-cigarettes contain ingredients that are addictive and could harm different parts of your body.
- Right now, your brain is still developing, which means you are more vulnerable to addiction. Many e-cigarettes contain nicotine, and using nicotine can change your brain to make you crave more nicotine. It can also affect your memory and concentration. I don't want that for you!
- E-cigarettes contain chemicals that are harmful. When people use e-cigarettes, they breathe in tiny particles that can harm their lungs.

- The cloud that people exhale from e-cigarettes can expose you to chemicals that are not safe to breathe.

### *What's the big deal about nicotine?*

- Your brain is still developing until about age 25. The Surgeon General reported that nicotine is addictive and can harm your brain development.
- Using nicotine at your age may make it harder for you to concentrate, learn, or control your impulses.
- Nicotine can even train your brain to be more easily addicted to other drugs like meth and cocaine.



- I don't say this to scare you, but I want you to have the facts because nothing is more important to me than your health and safety.

### *Aren't e-cigarettes safer than conventional cigarettes?*

- Because your brain is still developing, scientific studies show that it isn't safe for you to use any tobacco product that contains nicotine, including e-cigarettes.
- Whether you get nicotine from an e-cigarette or a cigarette, it's still risky.
- Some e-cigarette batteries have even exploded and hurt people.

### *I thought e-cigarettes didn't have nicotine—just water and flavoring?*

- I used to think that too. But many e-cigarettes have nicotine. There are also other chemicals in them that can be harmful.
- Let's look at the Surgeon General's website on e-cigarettes ([E-cigarettes.SurgeonGeneral.gov](http://E-cigarettes.SurgeonGeneral.gov)) together so you can see for yourself.

### *I (or my friends) have tried e-cigarettes and it was no big deal.*

- I appreciate your honesty. In the future, I hope you (or your friends) will stay away from e-cigarettes and other tobacco products, including cigarettes. Science shows that e-cigarettes contain ingredients that are addictive and could harm different parts of your body.
- Next time we go to the doctor, let's ask about the risks of nicotine, e-cigarettes, and other tobacco products.

### *You used tobacco, so why shouldn't I?*

- If I could live my life over again, I never would have started smoking. I learned that people who smoke cigarettes are much more likely to develop, and die from, certain diseases than people who don't smoke. This was really scary, so I quit smoking.
- Quitting was really hard, and I don't want you to go through that. The best thing is to not start at all.





## KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING

Many parents find that texting is a great way to reach their teens. Here are some suggestions for text messages that might catch your teen's attention. And, you can easily share pages of the website ([E-cigarettes.SurgeonGeneral.gov](http://E-cigarettes.SurgeonGeneral.gov)) with your teen.



Share this page

Look for this symbol, click it, type in the message you want or use the message provided, and share with your teen via Facebook, Twitter, or email.

### *Connect and encourage.*

- You always liked science. Check out the science about e-cigarettes and young people: **E-cigarettes.SurgeonGeneral.gov**
- Getting off nicotine is hard but I'm so happy I quit. Don't make that mistake and get addicted. Smoking and tobacco use, including using e-cigarettes, are unsafe for young people.

### *Remind and repeat.*

- Most teenagers don't use e-cigarettes. E-cigarettes with nicotine can mess with your brain, and your brain is still developing until you are at least 25.
- You might be tempted by e-cigarette flavors, but inhaling certain flavorings that have been found in some e-cigarettes can be harmful.

### *Share facts and resources.*

- Just learned that many e-cigarettes have nicotine in them. That's the drug that makes cigarettes so addictive. Nicotine can also mess with your brain development.
- Just saw a report from the Surgeon General that e-cigarettes can mess with how your brain develops and might even affect your mood and focus. Please don't use any products that contain nicotine.
- Hope none of your friends use e-cigarettes around you. Even breathing the cloud they exhale can expose you to nicotine and chemicals that can be dangerous to your health.



Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention  
Office on Smoking  
and Health







# How to Beat Internet Addiction

Using the Internet for homework and for fun is common and normal. But, when your time online takes away from homework, time with friends and family or other things you enjoy, it's called Internet addiction. In this handout, you will learn tips to cut down on the time you spend online or on mobile apps.

## WHAT IS INTERNET ADDICTION?

Internet addiction is when you gradually (over time) lose control over how often you limit, avoid or control the amount of time you spend on the Internet. This can also include mobile apps.

For teens who have Internet addiction, going online releases endorphins (brain chemicals that trigger feelings of pleasure). This makes it very hard to control or limit how much time you spend online.

## WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF INTERNET ADDICTION?

Internet addiction is similar to other types of addictions because it interrupts your real-life relationships with friends and family. Time away from real-life relationships can cause you to be socially awkward because you haven't practiced your social skills with real people.

Internet addiction can also cause:

- Insomnia (not sleeping well)
- Not showering or keeping up with personal hygiene
- Not eating regularly
- Headaches and backaches
- Dry eyes from looking at a screen for a long time
- Carpal tunnel syndrome (numbness or tingling in your hand and arm)

### A note for your parents...

Doctors aren't sure what causes Internet addiction in teens. But, teens are more likely to have an Internet addiction if they are anxious, depressed, have low self-esteem, a poor self-image or have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

You can help your teen beat his/her Internet addiction by supervising how much time your teen spends online or on their smartphone or tablet. Use an app like Screen Time Parental Control® to track and set limits on your teen's time online.

## HOW CAN I BEAT MY INTERNET ADDICTION?

- If you think you have an Internet addiction, talk with your doctor or your parents. They can help you come up with ways to beat your Internet addiction.
- Pay attention to when you use the Internet or mobile apps. If you're using the Internet or mobile apps for homework or work, that's okay. If your time online is taking away from friends, family and other things you enjoy, it's time to unplug.
- Turn off or silence notifications for email, games and social media. You will be less tempted to check if you can't hear the notifications.
- Use a free app to track your Internet usage. Some apps we suggest include:
  - Break Free Cell Phone Addiction®. This app lets you track and take control of how much you use the Internet or mobile apps. It also has timers that let you set how much time you spend online and tools to help you break free from Internet addiction. You can also share your accomplishments with others from the app.
  - Quality Time – My Digital Diet®. This app lets you track your Internet and app usage. It also lets you set your own time limits and breaks.
  - Screen Time Companion®. This app works with the Screen Time Parental Control® app. Your family decides how long you can spend on different apps and the Internet. You can also track your Internet and app usage.
- Do something you enjoy that doesn't involve the Internet. Play a sport or get outside. Read a book, draw or paint. Spend time with friends and family. Cook a healthy meal or take your dog for a walk.
- Talk to others about Internet addiction. Ask others about ways they have cut down on time spent online. This builds a relationship and trust between you and the other person.



# A Message to Parents of Teen Drivers

Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for teens and young adults. More than 5,500 young people die every year in car crashes and thousands more are injured. Parents can play an important role in reducing these numbers and keeping their teens alive.

**The following are ways you can help keep teens safe on the road:**

- **Be a role model.** If you expect your teen to drive safely, you need to drive safely, too.
  - Always wear your seat belt.
  - Don't drink and drive. Never allow any alcohol or illegal drugs in the car.
  - Don't eat, drink, talk or text on your cell phone, or do anything else that could distract you from your driving.
  - Stay within the speed limit and obey all traffic signals.
- **Know the laws in your state.** It is important that you know and understand the graduated driver licensing (GDL) laws where you live. Specifically, you need to know the restrictions and limitations on teen drivers who have permits and provisional licenses. You must also learn about your own legal responsibilities for providing a good supervised driving experience for your teen.
- **Set specific rules.** Before you let your teen drive, set specific rules that must be followed (see Parent-Teen Driving Agreement handout).
  - At first, the restrictions you set should be strict. You can gradually relax the rules after your teen has demonstrated safe driving. And the rules you set should depend on the maturity level of your teen.
  - Because so many crashes occur in the first 6 months of unsupervised driving, your teen shouldn't drive teen passengers or drive after 9:00 pm at first. And don't ask your teen to give rides to younger siblings until he or she has had extensive driving experience.
  - After your teen has demonstrated safe driving for 6 months, you might allow 1 passenger and a later curfew (for example, 10:00 pm). Before allowing more passengers, keep in mind that more passengers may make it more likely that your teen will have a crash. Studies show that 1 passenger increases the risk of a crash by 40%, 2 passengers doubles the risk, and 3 passengers almost quadruples the risk.
- **Enforce strict penalties.** Generally, penalties for breaking the contract should match the seriousness of the rule broken. Punishments for reckless driving, such as speeding or drunk driving, should be strict and may involve loss of driving privileges.

- **Take your teen on the road.** The 6 hours of driving practice in many driver education programs is not enough. Your teen needs a lot more supervised driving practice, and some nighttime driving is important, too. Some states require 50 hours of supervised practice. There are books, videos, and classes for parents on how to teach teen drivers. Remember that you'll probably need a lot of patience.
- **Contact the doctor if your teen is taking medicine** for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The doctor can discuss with you and your teen the possible benefits of taking a short-acting medicine prior to driving at night. Evidence shows that medicine helps the teen driver with ADHD stay better focused and less distracted.
- **Check out the car.** Make sure the car your teen is driving is safe and in good condition. If your teen is buying a car, help your teen research safety ratings and find a mechanic to inspect the car. Air bags and lap-shoulder belts in the rear seat are important safety features.
- **Make a tough decision.** If you're concerned that your teen may not be ready to drive, you can prevent your teen from getting a license. All states allow parents to block their teen from getting a license if the teen is thought to be immature or reckless.

## For more information

### American Academy of Pediatrics

[www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org) and [www.HealthyChildren.org](http://www.HealthyChildren.org)

### AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety

[www.aaafoundation.org](http://www.aaafoundation.org)

### National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

[www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov)

### National Safety Council

[www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org)

### Network of Employers for Traffic Safety

[www.trafficsafety.org](http://www.trafficsafety.org)

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The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 60,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults.

American Academy of Pediatrics  
Web site—[www.HealthyChildren.org](http://www.HealthyChildren.org)

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## Parent-Teen Driving Agreement

I, \_\_\_\_\_, will drive carefully and cautiously and will be courteous to other drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians at all times.

### I promise that I will obey all the rules of the road.

- Always wear a seat belt and make all my passengers buckle up.
- Obey all traffic lights, stop signs, other street signs, and road markings.
- Stay within the speed limit and drive safely.
- Never use the car to race or to try to impress others.
- Never give rides to hitchhikers.

### I promise that I will make sure I can stay focused on driving.

- Drive with both hands on the wheel.
- Never eat, drink, or use a cell phone to talk or text while I drive.
- Drive only when I am alert and in emotional control.
- Call my parents for a ride home if I am impaired in any way that interferes with my ability to drive safely.
- Always take my medicine on time (if I am taking medicine for ADHD) and not drive if I am unable to focus my attention completely on driving.

### I promise that I will respect laws about drugs and alcohol.

- Drive only when I am alcohol and drug free.
- Never allow any alcohol or illegal drugs in the car.
- Be a passenger only with drivers who are alcohol and drug free.

### I promise that I will be a responsible driver.

- Drive only when I have permission to use the car and I will not let anyone else drive the car unless I have permission.
- Drive someone else's car only if I have parental permission.
- Pay for all traffic citations or parking tickets.
- Complete my family responsibilities and maintain good grades at school as listed here: \_\_\_\_\_
- Contribute to the costs of gasoline, maintenance, and insurance as listed here: \_\_\_\_\_

### I agree to the following restrictions, but understand that these restrictions will be modified by my parents as I get more driving experience and demonstrate that I am a responsible driver.

For the next \_\_\_\_\_ months, I will not drive after \_\_\_\_\_ pm.

For the next \_\_\_\_\_ months, I will not transport more than \_\_\_\_\_ teen passengers (unless I am supervised by a responsible adult).

For the next \_\_\_\_\_ months, I won't adjust the stereo or air conditioning/heater while the car is moving.

For the next \_\_\_\_\_ months, I will not drive in bad weather.

I understand that I am not permitted to drive to off-limit locations or on roads and highways as listed here: \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to follow all the rules and restrictions in this contract. I understand that my parents will impose penalties (see below), including removal of my driving privileges, if I violate the contract. I also understand that my parents will allow me greater driving privileges as I become more experienced and as I demonstrate that I am always a safe and responsible driver.

### Penalties for contract violations

Drove after drinking alcohol or using drugs

No driving for \_\_\_\_\_ months.

Got ticket for speeding or moving violation

No driving for \_\_\_\_\_ months.

Drove after night driving curfew

No driving for \_\_\_\_\_ weeks/months.

Drove too many passengers

No driving for \_\_\_\_\_ weeks/months.

Broke promise about seat belts (self and others)

No driving for \_\_\_\_\_ weeks/months.

Drove on a road or to an area that is off-limits

No driving for \_\_\_\_\_ weeks/months.

### Signatures

Driver \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Parent promise: I also agree to drive safely and to be an excellent role model.

Parent (or guardian) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent (or guardian) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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