



Dear PHCA Parents and Families,

If you're reading this, it's because your child has reached the age of 12 and will officially be a teenager next year. Physicals for teenagers often bring a host of new concerns, and therefore need a slightly different approach as your child matures. We wanted to inform you of a few changes that will be taking place at **next year's** physical:

1. **The questionnaires change.** You're probably used to filling out your child's questionnaires when they come in for their physical. Starting at age 13, we ask our patients to start filling out the questionnaires on their own. The questions themselves change to reflect the changing concerns that providers and parents share about teenagers. Namely, we ask about smoking, vaping, drug and alcohol use, and sexual activity. These topics are important because we need to be aware if your child is engaging in risky behaviors; only then can we properly advise them of the risks and help them to connect with helpful resources if needed. Please find a copy of the adolescent survey attached for your review. If you have any questions or concerns about items on the questionnaire, please feel free to bring them up with your provider.
2. **We may ask you to step out of the room for a moment.** Teenagers often feel more comfortable if the parent steps out of the room for their physical exam, so your provider may ask you to step out of the room for this portion. In addition, because many teens won't feel comfortable talking about sensitive subjects like smoking or sex in front of their parents, your provider may ask you to step out of the room for a moment to discuss these topics privately. This is because it's important to have honest and confidential conversations with teenagers about sensitive topics. If your child *is* engaging in any risky behaviors, we want them to be open and honest with us without fear that their parent will be made aware of the conversation. That said, your provider will inform you if there are any significant concerns for your child's safety that come up during the course of these conversations.
3. **Your MyChart access will change.** If you use MyChart to access your child's health information, you may notice that your access permissions will change after your child reaches the age of 13. This is another step to ensure that their information remains confidential. You will still have access to their immunization records as well as their well appointments & flu clinics, but you will not be able to see the provider's notes or access sick visits. Your teen will still be able to access their full record, and they should set up their own MyChart account if they have yet to do so. You can still send a message through MyChart or call the office with questions for your child's PCP
4. **Your role is still an important one.** We continue to encourage parents' participation in the annual visit. Your concerns and questions are still an important part of the physical, and may give your provider more insight into your child's health than the child alone can provide. In addition, your consent will still be required for all immunizations until your child turns 18.

As the nature of your child's medical care changes, it may take time to adjust to this new phase of your child's life. It remains an honor and a privilege for us to care for your child, and we encourage you to reach out to your child's PCP with any questions or concerns about your teenager's health.

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