

# TIP CARD FOR DADS OF TEENS



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Administration for Children and Families  
Office of Family Assistance



**HMRF**  
HEALTHY MARRIAGE & RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD

**DID YOU KNOW?**  Adolescence can be a confusing time for teens and parents alike. But there's plenty you can do to nurture your teen and encourage responsible behavior.

-  Adolescents often seek more independence, spend more time with peers, and grapple with self-esteem.
-  Some amount of conflict with their parents is normal, but teens still rely on parents to provide emotional support and set limits.

## THEY MAY ENGAGE IN RISKY BEHAVIOR.

- Deaths and serious injuries from accidents are more common for teens than younger children.

Approximately 30% of teens have been the victim of cyberbullying and 16% admit to cyberbullying others.



## TEENS NEED 9.5 HOURS OF SLEEP EVERY NIGHT.

- Lack of sleep can lead to moody behavior.
- Coffee and screen time can interfere with sleep.



**Effective and open communication can make a big difference:**

1. Positive father-adolescent relationships are associated with more positive self-esteem for teens and lower midlife stress for fathers.
2. Adolescents who can openly communicate with their parents do better in school and are less likely to engage in risky behaviors.

## REFERENCES

- *Aha! Parenting*  
<http://bit.ly/38EbT6E>
- *Cyberbullying Research Center*  
<https://cyberbullying.org>
- *DHHS Office of Population Affairs*  
<http://bit.ly/2u7onVM>
- *Pickhardt, C., The journey of adolescence (website)*  
<http://bit.ly/37o9EUA>

# WHAT YOU CAN DO

## REMEMBER HOW YOU FELT AS A TEEN

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- Teens are on their journey to independence; they may experience difficult times on the way.
- Be supportive and accessible while also providing limits and boundaries.
- Listen when they talk and respect their feelings.
- Be aware of their online activity and the possibility of cyberbullying.
- Encourage a healthy diet and 9.5 hours of sleep every night.

## BE A GOOD ROLE MODEL

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- Encourage them to be kind, considerate, and honest through your own words and actions.
- Show how to cope with stress in positive ways.

## PRIORITIZE RULES AND AGREE ON CONSEQUENCES

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- Be reasonable in the rules you set for your teens, based on their age and maturity.
- Be clear and concise. Rather than saying “don’t stay out late,” set a specific curfew.
- Be flexible, but don’t negotiate restrictions imposed for safety reasons, such as drinking and substance use.

## STAY CONNECTED

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- Get to know their friends and their friend’s parents.
- Eat meals together and find other times to “check in.”
- Even though they may not show it, teens need to know that caring adults are there to support them and are trying to connect with them.

## NRFC RESOURCES:

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- Safety tips for dads to keep teens safe (ages 15-19)  
<https://bit.ly/2JgnJYI>
- Helping fathers manage their children’s screen time  
<http://bit.ly/2TPQHGy>

## OTHER RESOURCES:

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- Child Find of America: Online safety and substance abuse prevention  
<http://bit.ly/3azvSVE>
- Child Development Institute: Parenting teenagers  
<http://bit.ly/2RIwWOU>
- National Institutes of Health: Tips for parenting teens  
<http://bit.ly/2t0nqOs>
- New York Times: Why teenagers reject parents’ solutions to their problems  
<https://nyti.ms/2vdgRZJ>

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