

# Normal Development: 12 to 15 Years

## Physical Development

- May have growth spurt (girls usually develop 2 years earlier than boys)
  - girls: changes in fat distribution, pubic hair, breast development; start of menstrual period
  - boys: testicular growth, voice changes, pubic hair, "wet dreams"
- May try to experiment with body (masturbation).

## Emotional Development

- May be moody.
- Struggles with sense of identity.
- Is sensitive and has a need for privacy.
- Worries about increased social and school stresses.
- May have strong opinions and challenge family rules and values.
- May try to "show-off."

## Social Development

- Becomes more self-sufficient.
- Usually seeks out friends with beliefs and values similar to those of his or her family.
- May think about appearance all the time
- Starts to look outside of family for love and relationships.
- Influenced by peers about clothes and interests.
- May be influenced by peers to try risky behaviors (alcohol, tobacco, sex).

## Mental Development

- Mostly judges based on concrete rules of right and wrong, good or bad.
- Thinks in terms of the present rather than the future.
- May start to think abstractly and about complex issues.

Some attitudes, behaviors, and physical milestones tend to occur at certain ages. It is perfectly natural for a teen to reach some milestones earlier and others later than the general trend. The following are general guidelines for the stages of normal development. If you have any concerns about your teen's development, check with your healthcare provider.

Developed by RelayHealth.

Pediatric Advisor 2012.2 published by RelayHealth.

Last modified: 2009-09-23

Last reviewed: 2011-09-20

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References

Pediatric Advisor 2012.2 Index

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