

# Health and Wellness: 18 to 20 Years

## Development

- You should be in school or employed, live independently or contribute to the family home, manage your personal life and finances, and spend time with friends in person.

## Healthy Eating

- Eat three meals each day at regular times. It is important to eat breakfast and minimize snacking. Avoid processed foods as much as possible.
- Keep healthful foods and beverages on hand. Choose fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. Drink milk or water. Limit other beverages including juice, soft drinks, and sports and energy drinks.
- Menstruating females need extra iron in their diet. Good sources of iron are lean beef, iron-fortified cereal or oatmeal, soybeans, spinach and tofu.

## Physical Activity

- You need 30 to 60 minutes of vigorous physical activity several times each week.

## Sleep

- Good sleep habits are important. You need about 8 hours of sleep per night.
- Turn off electronics and screens at least 1 hour before bedtime.

## Safety

- Always wear a seat belt when driving or riding in a car.
- Do not talk or text on your cellphone while driving. Do not drive while under the influence of alcohol, drugs or other substances. Never accept a ride from someone who may be drinking or doing drugs.
- When you are outside, use sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15. Use a brand with the active ingredients titanium dioxide or zinc oxide. Avoid any that contain oxybenzone.
- Only take prescription medicines that were prescribed for you. Do not share medicines with or accept medicines from other people. Expired medicines should be disposed of properly. Drug abuse problems may start with misusing pain medicine.
- Avoid alcohol, drug and tobacco use. If you abuse prescription medicines, illegal drugs, alcohol or tobacco, there is help. Be honest with your health care provider.
- Understand personal safety and how to avoid being a target for crime. Consider taking a self-defense class.
- Protect yourself from dating violence. Most victims of sexual assault know their attacker.

**(over)**

- If you are sexually active use birth control. It is important to use condoms to help avoid getting or giving sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. You should be tested every year for chlamydia and you may need to be tested for other infections as well. Talk to your health care provider about these topics.
- Lock and store guns and ammunition in separate locations.

## Life Skills

- Part of becoming an adult is gaining independence from your parents. It is still important to maintain strong family relationships.
- Responsibilities may include continuing your education, having a job, or both. You may still rely on your parents or other trusted adults for advice and support.
- Consider the risks and dangers of using alcohol, drugs, smoking and vaping.
- This is an age when mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, and eating disorders are still very common. Signs to be concerned about are your inability to keep up with work, school or both, pulling away from family, friends, or activities you usually enjoy. Tell your health care provider right away if you have any thoughts of harming yourself.

## Dental Care

- Make regular dental appointments for cleanings and checkups.

## Community and Health Information Resources

- **Healthy Children**  
— [healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org)
- **Poison Control**  
— 1-800-222-1222 or [poison.org](http://poison.org)
- **Common Sense Media**  
— [commonsensemedia.org](http://commonsensemedia.org)
- **Change to Chill**  
— [changetochill.org](http://changetochill.org)

## Minnesota

- **MinnesotaHelp.info**<sup>®</sup>  
— [mnhelp.info](http://mnhelp.info)
- **United Way**  
— [211unitedway.org](http://211unitedway.org)  
— dial 211 or 651-291-0211

## Wisconsin

- **211 Wisconsin**  
— [211wisconsin.communityos.org](http://211wisconsin.communityos.org)  
— dial 211 or 1-877-947-2211

## Your Next Well Checkup

- Your next well checkup will be in 1 year.
- If you are currently seeing a pediatrician, talk about transitioning your care to an adult or family medicine provider.
- You may need these vaccinations:
  - influenza
  - meningococcal group B

Information about the Vaccines For Children (VFC) program is available if you are eligible for the program. VFC is a federally funded program that offers vaccines at no cost.

Talk with your health care provider about talking acetaminophen (Tylenol<sup>®</sup>) after your immunizations.