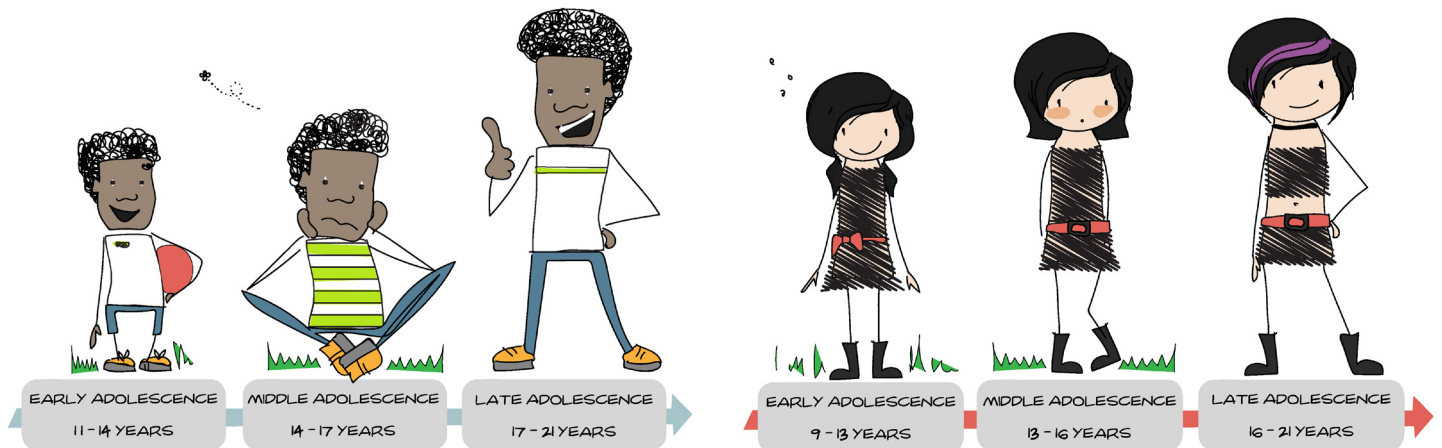


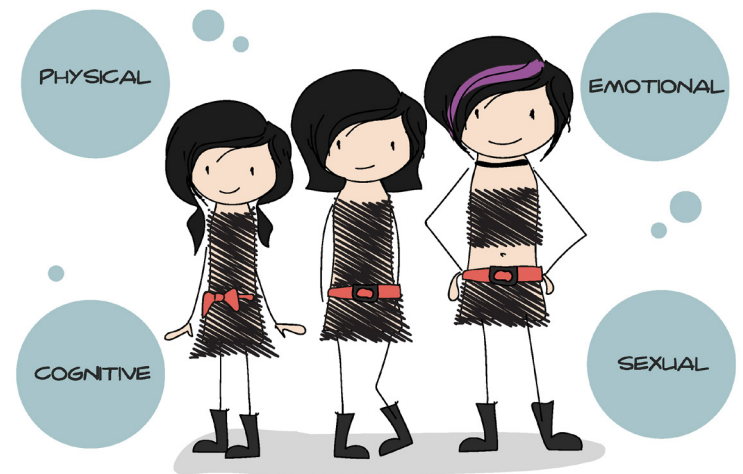
Teens are going through so much change, so quickly. Their growth in height averages 8 inches and increase in weight averages 45 pounds. Only in their first 2 years of life, will they have gone through so much change.

Understanding exactly what is happening (and why it is happening) during adolescence can help you support your son or daughter during this physically and emotionally challenging time.



### Red Flags and Things to Watch Out For During Adolescence

- Fear and withdrawal (especially in early adolescence)
- An obsessive concern about their appearance—causing them to miss school or events because they "didn't look right"
- Excessive dieting or exercise—which can quickly lead to eating disorders
- Being bullied, teased, or excluded by friends or other teens
- Too much focus or concern about their bodies
- Changes in eating or irregular meal patterns (like skipping breakfast or dieting)
- Losing sleep or trouble sleeping
- Ups and downs of social relationships that never seem to end



## Normal Development in Early Teens (Girls 9-13 and Boys 11-14)

Physical	Cognitive	Emotional	Sexual
Extreme growth of height and weight lasting 2-4 years	Concrete thinking – focus is on the present "here and now"	Rule and limit testing – challenging parental authority; argumentative; moody	Searching for new people to love in addition to parents
Increased appetite, pubic hair begins	Limited understanding of the cause and effect in situations	Risk taking behaviors may emerge (experimenting with tobacco, alcohol, not wearing a helmet)	Sexual fantasies are common and may serve as a source of guilt
Body odor and acne begins	Thoughts of the future are limited	Friendships are important – same gender friends and opposite gender group activities	Masturbation begins during this period and may be accompanied by guilt
Menstrual periods begin and hips widen for many girls	Improved ability to use speech to express themselves	Rejection of childhood things, resentment when treated like a child	Worry about being "normal"
Testicles and penis enlarge in boys; breasts enlarge and can be sore in girls	More likely to express their feelings by actions (like punching a wall when they are angry)	Preoccupation with physical changes and critical of appearance	Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth may feel different without knowing why

## Normal Development in Middle Teens (Girls 13-16 and Boys 14-17)

Physical	Cognitive	Emotional	Sexual
Full physical development continues to the end of this stage	Abstract thinking—can think about the future; Future oriented – ability to set goals	Often view themselves as invincible	Experimentation with relationships and sexual behaviors
95% of adult height is reached	Concrete thinking reemerges in times of stress	Increased need for independence and "new experiences"	Frequently changing relationships with more emphasis on physical contact
Breast, testicle and penis growth continues	Self-absorbed and denial of the consequences of their behaviors	Process of gaining independence from family can be difficult, strong support within the family is critical	Movement toward defining sexual identity, often accompanied by identity confusion and fears of homosexuality
Underarm hair appears; facial and body hair for boys	Importance is placed on setting long-term goals and their ability to follow through with them increases	Self-centered: alternating between unrealistically high expectations and low self-esteem	LGBT teens may be bullied or feel left out, which can lead to problems such as depression, substance use and other risky behaviors
Continued growth leads to waves of increased appetite and physical activity, followed by lethargy and decreased appetite	Development of ideals and selection of role models	Extremely concerned with appearance, body shape and size, and sexual attractiveness	Sexual behaviors do not always match sexual identity or orientation

## Normal Development in Late Teens (Girls 16-21 and Boys 17-21)

Physical	Cognitive	Emotional	Sexual
Physical growth leveling off and ending	Ability to think ideas through and make independent decisions	Body image and gender role definition more secured	Greater intimacy skills
	Can consider multiple points of view and multiple "right" answers to problems	Become more independent and emotionally stable	More capable of intimate, complex relationships
	Feelings are expressed using words	Choices and identity are less influenced by peers	Selection of partner based on their own preferences
	Concern for the future and thoughts of their own role in life	Greater acceptance of social institutions and cultural traditions	Sexual identity becoming more secured
	Concern for others and for societal issues	Risk taking behaviors continue to emerge (drug use, distracted driving)	Sexual behavior becomes more expressive



For more information on teen development and how to talk with teens during stages of development, pick up a copy of *Teen Speak* from [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com).