

Healthy Teens

June 2019 Parent Newsletter



Tobacco in the Media

Understanding media and its influence is an important skill for your teen. Studies have shown that youth who have good media literacy are less likely to use substances that are advertised, such as tobacco or e-cigarettes.

Although we have come a long way with advertising of tobacco products, smoking is still very present in movies. There is no restriction on smoking in movies that are rated for children and teens. This presents challenges, but also a great opportunity for building media literacy.

When smoking is shown on-screen, pause the movie or point it out. Later, have a discussion with your teen. Ask questions such as: Why was there smoking

shown? Did it add to the storyline? Who do you think decided to add it to the movie? Try to encourage your teen to think critically about who is influencing the presence of smoking in movies, and why they might want to show that specifically to young people.

Helping your teen to build the skill of questioning media can help them in areas other than avoiding smoking – it can encourage critical thinking in all areas of influence in their life!

➔ **To learn more, or for support in quitting tobacco, visit www.albertaquits.ca or call 1-866-710-QUIT (7848)**

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Tobacco in the Media

Exercise is Good for Your Mental Health

Skin cancer is largely preventable, with about 82% of melanomas linked to factors we can change. Exposure to ultraviolet radiation (UVR) is the main cause of skin cancer but other harmful effects include sunburn, premature skin aging, and eye damage. Choose sun-safety strategies that work: a broad spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher, use shade, clothing, a hat with a wide brim, and sunglasses. For more information visit <http://albertapreventscancer.ca/reduce-your-risk/limit-uv-rays/>



Exercise is Good for Your Mental Health

We know that physical activity supports our physical health, but did you know that physical activity can also improve mental health? In a world where digital devices keep social pressures constantly in their back pockets, and competing priorities from school, work, and activities demand the attention of our teens, exercise might be their best defense against stress and anxiety.

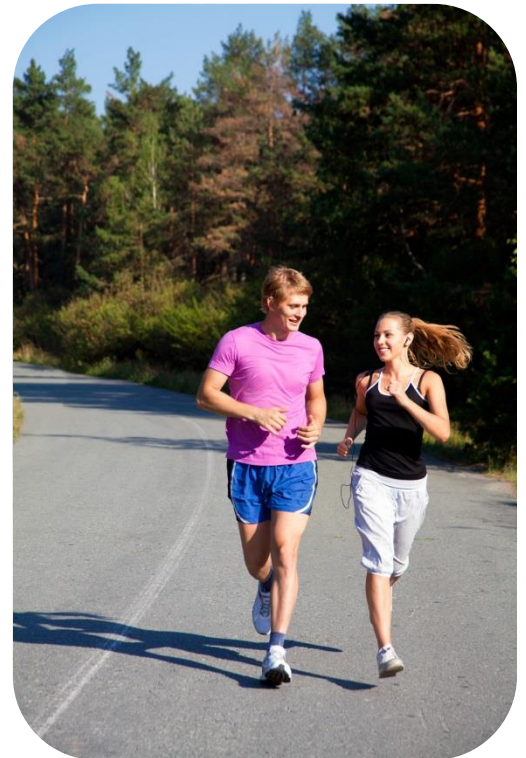
Exercise has a chemical effect in the brain that can help reduce stress, anxiety and fight depression. By stimulating the release of feel-good hormones (endorphins) and reducing levels of stress hormones (adrenaline and cortisol), exercise can do some amazing things for our mood! According to the Canadian Psychological Association, these are some noticeable benefits of exercise on teen mental health:

- Boosts academic performance.
- Increases self-reported happiness and lowers levels of sadness and loneliness, both in the short term and later in life.

- Reduces feelings of fatigue, improves sleep quality, and lowers risk of insomnia (provided physical activity is not done too soon before bed).
- Boosts self-esteem from early childhood straight through older adulthood.

So, how much exercise is recommended? The Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth recommend accumulating 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity as well as several hours of light physical activity throughout the day. Here are some easy ways to support your teen's mental health through physical activity:

- Encourage them to take 5-10 minute walking breaks during study sessions.
- Drop them off a few blocks from school or encourage them to walk home.
- Encourage them to go for a run or walk during their noon-hour break.
- Plan family outings (e.g., nature walks, tennis matches, playing catch).



Remember that all activity is good activity, and getting active for just 5 minutes can help boost your teen's mental health. Start small, and do it often.

➤ To learn more about the **Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth**, visit <http://www.csep.ca/CMFiles/Guidelines/24hrGlines/Canadian24HourMovementGuidelines2016.pdf>