

## Normal Development: 12 to 14 Years Old

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.

### 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.

If you have any concerns about your teen's development, check with your healthcare provider.

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