

ADOLESCENCE

WHAT IS IT?

Adolescence is the transitional phase between childhood and adulthood that generally occurs between the ages of 10 and 19 years. Adolescents will experience rapid growth and development, including significant physical, emotional, social, and cognitive changes.

GENTLE NUTRITION SUGGESTIONS

Follow as you are able.

- Trust in your child's ability to self-regulate their feeding by recognizing their own hunger and satiety cues. Adolescents' appetites may increase as their bodies rapidly grow, and it is normal for some adolescents to 'jump' channels on the growth chart during this time.
- As your child gains independence, it can still be supportive to make family meals a priority and use mealtimes for connecting. Some find it helpful to create a schedule for sit-down family meal and snack times.
- Iron and calcium are two nutrients that are important as adolescents grow and develop. Food sources of iron include dark leafy greens, beans and legumes, fortified grains, and meat. High calcium sources include dairy, dark green vegetables, tofu, and beans. Talk with your dietitian if you would like to learn more about food sources of these nutrients.
- Allow your teen access to all types of foods. Regularly providing an unrestricted variety of food at meals and snacks can help your child develop a relaxed and competent attitude about all foods.
- Adolescents may become more preoccupied with body image during this time as their body rapidly changes. You can help your child develop a healthy relationship with their body by listening to their concerns, focusing on them as a whole person, and being a positive role model.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- Help your teen explore movement options that they enjoy. Movement can help strengthen bones, support mood, and boost confidence.
- The Ellyn Satter Institute (<https://www.ellynsatterinstitute.org>) has additional information for parents, families, and teens on building healthy relationships with food and movement through the Division of Responsibility.

*Do not engage in any of these suggestions if they are harmful to other aspects of your health.

REMEMBER

We are imperfect beings and each day is new and different. Some days it may be easier to follow the suggestions than others. Be gentle with yourself.

GOAL

Self-compassion and kindness towards your body.

EVERY BODY IS DIFFERENT

There are a spectrum of symptoms and reactions. If any food or movement recommendations do not feel right for your body, trust that! It may be helpful to talk more about this with your dietitian.

TOTAL HEALTH

Health is complex and is influenced by many factors. Not all factors are within your control.

It is important to consider all these factors, not just individual behaviors, when exploring ways to address your health.

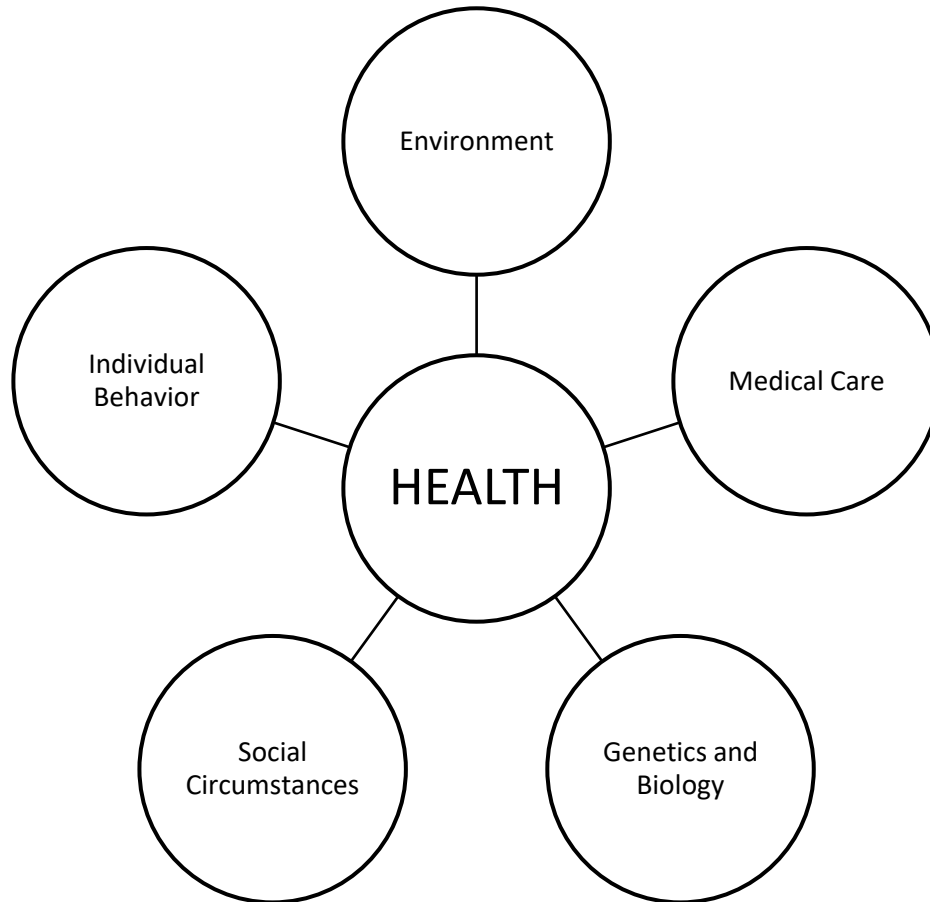


Image Description: A series of circles with Health labeled in the center circle. There are five additional circles surrounding the center circle each one connected to the center with a line. The surrounding circles are labeled: Environment, Medical Care, Genetics and Biology, Social Circumstances, and Individual Behavior.

REFERENCES

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DISCLAIMERS

Handout created by Carly Renner, Bastyr University Dietetic Intern and reviewed by Meghan Cichy, Registered Dietitian. Template design by Elisabeth Kelsey, Bastyr Dietetic Intern.

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