

Adolescent Health Confidentiality Policy

The teenage years are a time of many changes in your child's body and feelings, made more difficult by peer pressure. Patience and care are needed to offer good health care to teens. It is good for parents to come with their teens to health care visits and stay active and involved in their health care. However, parents must understand that teens need to take more responsibility for their health care. Doctors or nurses may ask to spend some time with your child alone.

As your child begins to take a bigger role in his/her own health care, he/she will be in charge of:

- Learning and being aware of his or her own health needs.
- Talking openly with their health care provider about medical concerns.
- Following treatment plans as agreed on.
- Keeping appointments.

There are some times when state law allows teens to give permission for his/her own care. In these cases the records from those services will be kept from parents unless there are safety issues. For example, teens that have or think they have a sexually transmitted disease (STD) may see the doctor and be treated for that STD without a parent knowing. The medical records for these services are confidential (kept secret). However, there are times when a teen's life or well-being would be at risk without family help, and if that happens the information would be shared with the parents.

Parents with questions or concerns about this policy are asked to share their concerns with their teen's doctor or health care provider.

Adapted with permission from Spokane Regional Health District and Spokane County Reproductive Health Initiative