



Can We Talk?

News and Information for Teen and Young Adult TENNderCare Members

Welcome!

Welcome to the third quarter 2008 edition of **"Can We Talk?"** a quarterly newsletter on health tips for teens and young adults who are TLC members. **Here's to a happy, healthy life!**

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So, you're feeling great. No need to go to a doctor, right? **WRONG!** Consider a yearly TENNderCare checkup as a tune-up for your body to make sure you keep running in tiptop shape. You take your

car in for a regular tune-up. You should do no less for your body! Like machines, our bodies need proper care to keep running.

Even if you think your body machine is doing great, you should still see your doctor or nurse for a checkup every year. The doctor or nurse who is your primary care provider (PCP) knows your health better than anyone. Your PCP is the main person you should go to for your care. Your primary doctor or nurse should be able to take care of most of your medical needs. This includes preventive care and treatment for new medical problems. Your PCP is your **"medical home."**

However, you may choose to go to one of the public health department clinics for your TENNderCare exam. You might also be able to have your checkup at your own school, if the exam is offered there.

The good news is that the checkup is FREE if you are a TennCare member under the age of 21. When you call to schedule a checkup, make sure you say it is for a TENNderCARE or EPSDT well-care checkup. This lets the PCP know how much time to set for your appointment so you get a complete exam.

Your PCP can help keep you healthy. He/she can find little problems and treat them before they become big problems. Going to the doctor or nurse may not be on anyone's "favorite things to do" list, but it is a lot better to get a checkup when you are well than wait until you have serious problems.

KEEP ON TOP OF YOUR HEALTH: Get FREE Checkups Every Year



Do you think that you are too old to get a regular annual checkup?

The answer should be **“No.”** Your body is changing, and a doctor's visit gives you the chance to ask questions about anything, including sex, peer pressure and getting along with your family.

What to Expect at a TENNderCARE Checkup

Here's what happens at a TENNderCare checkup (sometimes called a well-care

checkup, a yearly physical or an EPSDT exam):

- Expect to answer questions about your family history and any health problems you may have. (Make a list of things you want to discuss with your doctor or nurse.)
- A staffperson will give you a gown to change into.
- Your weight and height will be measured.
- You will be given a hearing and vision test.
- Your finger may be pricked for a blood sample.
- Or you may get a shot.

You Deserve It!

You deserve to live a healthy life. Preventive health goes a long way. Get active in basketball, dance, football, cheerleading, baseball, hiking, scouts, wrestling, swimming or other sport activities.

Go to your PCP every year for a checkup! Remember, you should never be ashamed to seek medical help.

Household Cleaners — Not for Sniffing

High Price Paid for a Cheap 'High'

Sniffing. Huffing. Bagging.

Whatever you call the practice of inhaling chemical vapors of common household items to get a mind-altering effect, the practice can be deadly.

Inhalants are very effective poisons. They enter the bloodstream quickly and are then distributed throughout the brain and body. They have direct effects on both the brain and spinal cord and the nerves throughout the body. They may be addictive.

How severely can inhalants harm you?

They can affect your ability to:

- Think
- Talk
- Remember
- Hear, and
- Walk.

In addition, they can cause convulsions and damage to the:

- Lungs
- Liver
- Kidneys
- Heart
- Bone marrow, and
- Muscles.

One Time Could Be Last Time

Just one time can be one too many with inhalants, according to the National Institute of Drug Abuse. In an otherwise healthy person, a single session of abusing highly concentrated amounts of certain inhalants can lower oxygen levels enough to cause death.

Popular inhalants include a variety of household, beauty and office products from paint thinners, to solvents in magic markers to aerosol sprays to fingernail polish, to name a few.

Nitrous oxide, also known as laughing gas, can be as dangerous as any other inhalant when abused. When used as a painkiller in a dentist office, nitrous oxide is mixed with oxygen. Nitrous oxide that fills balloons is usually in its pure form and can be dangerous when inhaled. **Another popular balloon filler, helium, can also be dangerous to inhale.** So play it safe—skip the silly voice.

It's important to let your friends know the dangers of sniffing toxic vapors.

For help with a drug problem, call your doctor. Or call TLC for the number of free behavioral health or substance abuse help.

Source: The National Institute on Drug Abuse



When losing your cool isn't

Note to girls

Guys aren't the only ones who get angry. You can try these tips, too!

It is totally normal to be angry sometimes—everyone gets mad at some point. And

as a teen, the changes in your body can cause you to feel mad for what seems like no good reason sometimes.

The idea is to deal with your anger in a good way. Cool down first, and then focus on positive ways to fix the problem. This will help you to deal better with the people in your life, and you can even earn more respect along the way. So, the next time something really has you fired up, try these steps:

- 1. Try to calm yourself down before doing or saying anything.** When you are afraid that your anger will get the best of you, try exercising. Taking a walk or going for a run will get your mind off the problem. Sometimes you just need to get away for a while and cool down.
- 2. Tell the other person why you're angry and how you feel.** What we say when we are angry can hurt more than anything else. So, think about what you're going to say before you say it. Make sure you're not saying something you are going to feel bad about later.
- 3. Try to think about the reason you're angry.** We often become angry because of other people's actions. But most of the time, these people didn't act out of spite. They just weren't thinking about how their actions may hurt others. Be honest with yourself and admit that you can be mean at times yourself, and then be willing to forgive.

The next time you feel really angry, ask yourself if the reason you're angry is going to be important to you years from now. If not, just let it go.

Breast Health

Good news!

Breast cancer is rare in teenage girls.

But what about all of those lumps and bumps? Not to panic. This is common as your breasts develop and grow.

Breast cancer is probably the farthest thing from your mind. However, it's a good idea to develop some good practices for good breast health in the future. If you become familiar with the normal look and feel of your breasts now, you will be able to tell if there are changes later.


You should start doing monthly self exams of your breasts at age 18 to 20, or ask your doctor when you should begin. And ask your doctor the best way to do self exams.

Do your self exam at the same time every month. About a week after your period is a good time since your breasts are less tender then. If you feel a lump that does not go away, check with your doctor.

Unless your doctor tells you, teenagers do not need to get mammograms, an X-ray of the breast.

According to the American Cancer Society, the risk of getting breast cancer increases as you get older. Plus, just being a female is the main risk factor for getting breast cancer. Men can also get breast cancer, but the disease is about 100 times more common among women than men.

Although you can't do anything about your gender or aging, you can help reduce your risks of getting breast cancer by eating a healthy diet and getting plenty of exercise.



EXERCISE

DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A PAIN

If the very thought of exercise brings images of torture and turns your stomach, read this.

Exercise does not have to be painful to give you health benefits. And the health benefits are many. Of course, some muscle soreness is common in the beginning of an exercise program. After the unused muscles get used to activity, soreness will be a thing of the past.

Being physically active may:

- ◆ Help you control your weight, build lean muscle, and reduce your body fat
- ◆ Strengthen your bones
- ◆ Increase flexibility and balance
- ◆ Improve your self-esteem and mood
- ◆ Help you sleep better
- ◆ Help you focus in school

So, You Hate to Exercise. What Can You Do?


You do not have to play a sport or go to a gym. There are a lot of things you can do to be more active:

- ✓ Do sit-ups or jump rope while watching TV.
- ✓ Lift light weights to strengthen your muscles.
- ✓ Jog around the block or walk fast around the mall a few times.
- ✓ Help carry groceries, clean the house, cut grass, do garden work, rake leaves, or wash the car.
- ✓ Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- ✓ Take your dog for a walk.
- ✓ Ride your bike instead of driving or getting a ride from your parents or a friend.

Make a list of things you like to do to be physically active. Hang it in your room as a reminder. Keep track of your progress.

Source: National Institutes of Health

Click in to New Teen Website



When should teens get a free checkup? The answer—every year from the age of 13 through age 20—is one of many answers you can find about health on a new website just for teens!

Check out the site:

You'll find information on health, food and fitness tips, school violence, dating violence and many other topics.

FREE RIDE AVAILABLE!

If you need a ride to the PCP's office for your **TENnderCare** checkup, TLC will see that you have a ride. No problem. It is free.

Just call 385-0025 if you live in Shelby County. If you live outside Shelby County, please call 888-385-4969. To schedule a ride, call at least three days before your appointment. Also, please call if you need to cancel your ride.



SMOKING HURTS

Your Teeth and Overall Health



Most of you know that smoking is bad for your health. Tobacco in all forms not only hurts your health but causes many dental problems. Smoking is the most common cause of lung cancer. Smokeless tobacco also causes mouth cancer, tooth loss and other health problems.

Using tobacco increases your risk of oral cancer, gum disease, cavities and hot/cold sensitivity. Tooth stains from tobacco can not be removed by regular brushing and can cause a build up of tartar. Staining and tartar build up could mean more dental cleanings.

Tobacco is very harmful for teens because your body is still growing and changing. The 200 known poisons in smoke affect how you grow and can cause diseases.

Did you know that tobacco causes?

- Cavities
- Bone loss
- Bad breath
- Mouth sores
- Hairy tongue
- Shrinking and bleeding gums
- Loss of taste and smell
- Clothes and hair to smell
- Teeth and fingernails to yellow
- You to look pale and unhealthy
- A hacking cough
- Your energy for sports and other favorite activities to be zapped
- Even death

If you don't use tobacco, don't start. **If you are using tobacco and want to quit here are some helpful hints to get you started:**

1. *Set a quit date.*
2. *Put it on paper.*
3. *Hang out with friends who don't smoke.*
4. *Practice saying no.*
5. *Be prepared for cravings.*
6. *Join a support group.*
7. *Consider stop-smoking medications.*
8. *Learn from your mistakes.*
9. *Talk to your parents, they can help.*

If you have TennCare, you have TENNderCare (EPSDT) dental services until you become 21 years old. These services include **FREE** regular 6-month checkups, fluoride treatments and sealants.

If you have TennCare, call Doral Customer Service at 1-888-233-5935.

Or visit

www.doralusa.com for:

- **Help finding a dentist**
- **Questions about your TennCare dental benefits**
- **Help with interpretation and translation**
- **Help with a ride to the dentist**

No one is treated in a different way because of race, color, religion, birthplace, language, sex, age, or disability.

Do you think you've been treated unfairly?

Do you have more questions?

Do you need more help?

You can make a free call to the Family Assistance Service Center at 1-866-311-4287.

In Nashville, call 743-2000.

Interpretation and translation services are free to the member.

For more information please call Customer Service at 725-7100 (Shelby County) or 800-473-6523 (outside of Shelby County).

Para pedir una información en español, por favor llame 725-7100, (condado Shelby) or 800-473-6523, (condado exterior de Shelby).

Do you need help? Is it because you have a health, mental health, learning problem or a disability? OR, do you need help in another language? If so, you have a right to get help, and TLC can help you. Call TLC at 1-800-473-6523. If you have a hearing problem, you can call TennCare on a TTY/TDD machine.

The TTY/TDD number is 1-866-771-7043.

NEED HELP MAKING AN APPOINTMENT?



Call TLC Customer Service at **725-7100** in Memphis or Shelby County, or **800-473-6523** if you live outside Shelby County.

Quotables

“Over the years your bodies become walking autobiographies, telling friends and strangers alike of the minor and major stresses of your lives.”

~ Marilyn Ferguson

“If you’re never scared or embarrassed or hurt, it means you never take any chances.”

~ Julia Sorel

“An object in possession seldom retains the same charm that it had in pursuit.”

~ Pliny the Younger (62 AD-114 AD), *Letters*