

perspective, adolescents' developmentally based sense of curiosity and movement toward autonomy provide opportunities for health promotion.

Adolescents' health-related interests and concerns include stress and anxiety, relationships with adults and peers, weight, acne, and feelings of sadness or depression. Health concerns are often consistent with the immediate developmental task that teenagers face. For example, younger adolescents have a particular interest in issues related to growth and development, whereas middle adolescents have questions and concerns related to peer-group acceptance, relationships with friends, and physical appearance. Older adolescents focus increasingly on school performance, future career and employment plans, and emotional health issues.

Among the behaviors that adolescents view as risky are substance use, sexual activity, and the use of recreational and motor vehicles. Adolescents identify health threats that primarily involve psychological issues, such as clinical depression and eating or weight problems. The availability of confidential services is particularly important to adolescents, especially when they have concerns related to sensitive issues. Adolescents are more likely to participate in health care services when services are delivered by caring, respectful providers.

Health Concerns of Adolescence

As adolescents develop, they are able to assume additional responsibility for their own health, including maintaining health practices, taking prescribed medications, keeping appointments, and performing procedures when necessary. Health professionals who work with adolescents should consider their increasing independence and responsibility while maintaining privacy and ensuring confidentiality (see [Nursing Care Guidelines](#) box). Parents should also respect their teenager's independence and move toward the role of consultant about health issues while maintaining some level of involvement throughout adolescence.

Several professional organizations have published guidelines aimed at improving and maintaining health care for adolescents and young adults. The American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Family Physicians, American Medical Association, and