

## Talking with Your Teen about Healthy Relationships

It's never too early to start teaching your teen about healthy relationships including both friendships and intimate relationships. Relationships during the teen years are an important part of life and can affect their physical, emotional and mental wellbeing. Parents, guardians and caregivers can have a positive influence on their teens and their decisions. A good starting point is to reflect on your own values and what values you want to pass along. You can then lead by example and teach your teen by showing them positive social behaviours such as honesty, respect and openness. With your help, your teen will be better able to recognize healthy and unhealthy relationships. By talking to your teen, you can help them stay healthy and make responsible choices as they grow up.

What makes a healthy or unhealthy relationship? Healthy relationships include shared respect, support, equality and fun. It is also important to maintain separate identities and establish clear boundaries based on personal values. Not all unhealthy relationships are abusive. Unhealthy relationships may also be identified by issues such as lack of trust, stress, bribes, jealousy and lying. Abuse may come in many forms including emotional, physical, sexual, or financial.

Alberta Health Services developed the website [www.teachingsexualhealth.ca](http://www.teachingsexualhealth.ca) to help you find the information you need to have conversations with your teen. You will find webisodes, factsheets, FAQs and more. The parent section provides you with:

- Tips and conversation starters for discussing relationships with your teen.
- Suggestions for topics to talk about such as dealing with pressure, healthy and unhealthy relationships and sexual decision making.
- Links to reliable resources and community agencies in your area.

Bring the conversation of healthy relationships into your home for the benefit of your teen's health and development. We encourage you to check out what [www.teachingsexualhealth.ca](http://www.teachingsexualhealth.ca) has to offer!



## Cooking – Fun at Any Age

Mealtime is perhaps the best time to bring families together to eat, relax and enjoy. One challenge that many families face is finding time to plan and prepare meals. Make it easier and involve your family. Older kids can be a big help in meal planning and preparation. Not only will it make meals easier for you, it will help your teen learn cooking and food preparation skills. Developing these skills will help them for the rest of their lives. Here are some ideas to get your teen started in the kitchen:

- **Ask for their input.** Teens will have lots of great ideas for meals and snacks. With their help, planning ahead will save time and trips to the grocery store.
- **Let them help with groceries.** They can add items to the grocery list, choose items in the store and help put the groceries away after shopping.
- **Tasks** such as washing and cutting vegetables, making salad, setting the table, washing dishes and filling the dishwasher are easy tasks to do on a regular basis and teens will need little assistance.
- **Help them learn kitchen safety.** See [Being Safe in the Kitchen](#) for tips.
- **Teach them** how to use appliances like the microwave, toaster oven, blender, hand mixer and crock pot if you haven't already. With supervision, a teen can also start to use the oven and stovetop. They can stir things like soups, sauces, meat, and stir-fries.
- **Talk about food with them!** You can explain different cooking techniques, how to tell if a fruit/vegetable is ripe, how to know when meat is thoroughly cooked, and how to make an entire meal. Food is always a great conversation starter at meal times.
- **Have them make their own lunch.** Have them including a serving from each of the food groups on [Canada's Food Guide](#) or have them help in making the entire family's lunches.

Try some of these simple steps to get everyone involved in the kitchen. You will be helping your teen form positive and lasting food preparation skills and healthy eating habits.