

# Brigham and Women's Family Care Associates

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## Adolescent Care and Confidentiality Policy

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Brigham and Women's Family Care Associates is dedicated to supporting the development of youth from childhood through adolescence and young adulthood.

Teenagers need to learn to be independent and to be responsible for their own health. However, they still need their parents to be involved in their healthcare.

Most teenagers are healthy, but they may have concerns they may not want to discuss with family and friends. Many surveys show that one reason teenagers don't see the doctor is because they worry about their privacy.

At Family Care Associates we like to take great care of our teenage patients. To do this, the structure of teenage visits is different from that of younger children. Additional supports are provided to youth with special health care needs.

- Each teenage visit will begin with the parent and teenager in the room together. This gives the parent a chance to ask questions and share important information about their child's health.
- Starting around age 13, after meeting together, the parent will be asked to leave the room for part of the visit. The time alone with the doctor gives the teenager a chance to ask questions or deal with issues that are considered private and to develop more confidence in managing their own health.
- For the physical examination, the teenager may choose to have a parent, a nurse, or just the doctor in the room.
- The information discussed by the teenager and doctor or nurse practitioner is considered confidential and will not be shared with anyone.
  - If important medical issues come up, we will encourage the teenager to discuss them together with his or her doctor or nurse practitioner and parents.
  - The only time that we would talk to a parent about a private issue is in the rare case a teenager's health or life is in danger. We will always let the teenager know before we do this.
- We routinely perform confidential testing on all of our adolescent patients as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics and Center for Disease Control. You may see this testing on your insurance. By Massachusetts law we cannot discuss these test results with parents
- At age 18 years youth become legal adults. We encourage all of our patients age 18 and older to designate a Health Care Proxy, to give permission for another family member or loved one to share in health care decisions as needed. Please ask anyone on our team for a Health Care Proxy form.

