



Adolescent Health Toolkit for Teens

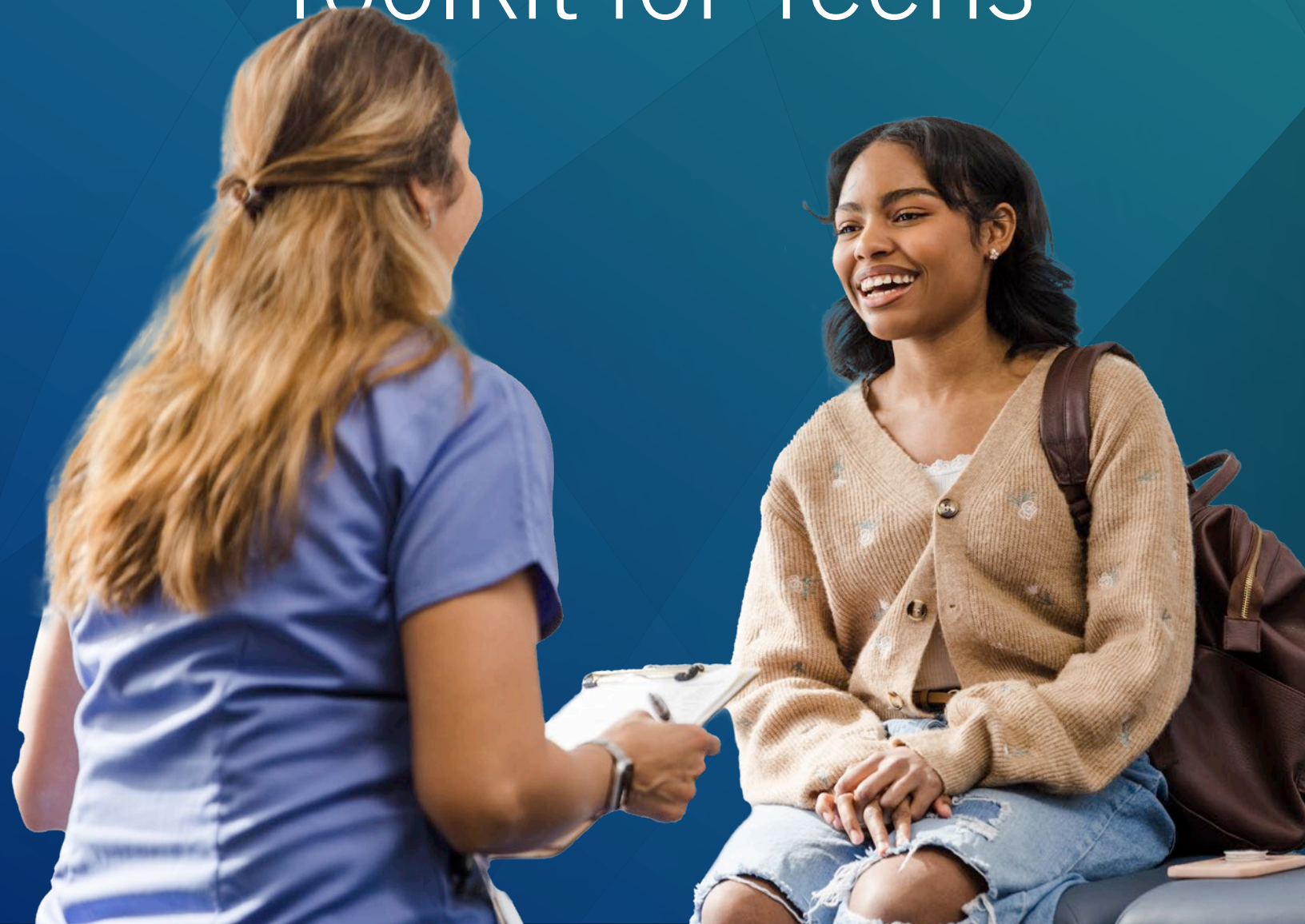


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INTRODUCTION

LETTER FROM JENNIE PINKWATER, ICAAP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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The Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (ICAAP) makes it a priority to address the needs of children and families through advocacy and education. When it comes to addressing health issues and behavior change, focusing specifically on adolescent health needs is a must. The transition from childhood to adulthood is one of the most dynamic and best times for engagement in human development. The rate to which physical, emotional, and intellectual changes are occurring during the adolescent stage provides an opportunity to positively impact health outcomes. It is essential to adolescents' health that their independence is built upon a strong foundation to invest in their future as healthy adults.

As part of a four-year project, ICAAP was awarded funding from the Illinois Department of Public Health, Adolescent Health Program, to address the state's adolescent health needs through educational resources and tools. Through this grant, we developed this educational guide for providers, parents, and teens to utilize. We are proud to serve those in Illinois working towards optimal health outcomes for children and youth!

Best Wishes,

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ABOUT

The Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics was awarded funding from the Illinois Department of Public Health, Office of Women's Health and Family Services from 2018 to 2022 to support adolescent health services in Illinois. The purpose of the Illinois Adolescent Health Program is to empower adolescents to adopt healthy behaviors and improve the overall health of adolescents by increasing the rate and quality of adolescent well-care visits.

The American Academy of Pediatrics and Bright Futures recommend annual well-care visits during adolescence. Annual well-care visits during adolescence promote healthy behaviors, prevent risky ones, and detect conditions that can interfere with physical, social, and emotional development.

ICAAP developed this two-part toolkit for pediatric providers, adolescents, and parents/caregivers to improve the effectiveness of adolescent well visits. This toolkit includes tools and resources on adolescent health issues, health equity, the pandemic impact, and implementation strategies to empower youth to take control of their health care.

Funding provided in whole or in part by the Illinois Department of Public Health.

PROJECT WORK GROUP INVOLVEMENT

ICAAP wishes to thank members of the Adolescent Health project planning group for their knowledge and expertise on this project, including:

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Taking Charge of Your Health

This toolkit is intended to help teens learn more about taking charge of their physical, mental, and emotional health. Explore guidance, resources, and information on key topics affecting your health today!

WHAT TO EXPECT AT YOUR WELL VISIT

What is a well visit?

A well visit is a routine visit to your health care provider to assess your health that happens once a year. This visit is a great time to discuss any health concerns and goals with your provider and assess health needs.

What should I expect at my well visit?

Your health provider (includes a pediatrician, other physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner) will:

- ▶ Conduct a physical exam which includes a height, weight and blood pressure check
- ▶ Discuss any life stressors, mental health issues, or substance use, which can impact your overall health and wellbeing, and your provider can help and in many cases, things you discuss can remain confidential
- ▶ Provide guidance and support on healthy habits such as eating a balanced diet, ways to stay active, stress management and positive relationship building
- ▶ Discuss and give immunizations as needed
- ▶ Discuss any health concerns you may have

Why is it important to have a well visit annually even if you are feeling 'well'?

- ▶ An opportunity to discuss your overall health with your provider
- ▶ Develops the skills needed to advocate for and manage your own health
- ▶ Learn to navigate the healthcare system.
- ▶ Build a positive relationship with your health care provider
- ▶ Confidentially discuss any concerns you may have

OTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

Q: If I just had a sports physical, do I still need a well visit?

A: YES! A sports physical assesses and examines if your health will prevent you from playing a sport. A well visit examines your overall health concerns and health goals. Both can be done at the same time, just let your provider know that you need a sports physical form completed.

Q: How will I know what I say will be kept private?

A: Each state has rules about confidentiality for adolescent health, and if you have questions about what will be shared with parents or guardians, you can always ask your provider. In general, your conversation will be kept private unless you are in a situation that will cause harm to you or others.

Q: How will I be able to communicate with my provider?

A: Many practices offer confidential email, texting and messaging through a patient portal. Ask your provider how you should contact the office before and after your visit to ensure access to confidential care.



FINDING A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

Figuring out where to go for healthcare can feel confusing, especially if you're doing it on your own for the first time. Whether you're looking for a doctor, mental health support, or a place to get checked out, there are trusted places in Illinois where you can get care, even if you don't have insurance or aren't sure what you need.

These tools can help you find the right place for you, no matter your background, your budget, or where you're starting from.

HRSA Find a Health Center

Use this map to find low-cost or free community health centers near you. Just enter your ZIP code to see nearby options. These clinics can help with general checkups, mental health, birth control, and more. You don't need insurance, and if you need help in another language, free language support is available by calling 1-301-443-5636.

Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights – Health Center Map

This map shows health clinics across Illinois that are welcoming to everyone — including people without insurance or legal immigration status. It's a safe place to start if you or your family are new to the country or worried about your rights when seeking care.

Dial 2-1-1

Not sure where to start? Just call 2-1-1 from any phone. You'll get connected to someone who can help you find a clinic nearby, explain what services they offer, and even connect you to support for things like food or housing. It's free and available 24/7.

Get Care Illinois

This site breaks down how to apply for health insurance in Illinois — step-by-step, with no confusing jargon. It includes helpful guides in Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, and Polish, so you or your family can understand your options in your preferred language. Great if you're not sure what type of insurance you qualify for or how to get started.

Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

CHIP gives low-cost health coverage to teens and kids whose families make too much to qualify for Medicaid. If you're pregnant, you might also be covered under CHIP in Illinois. This can help with doctor visits, prescriptions, and more.

Need help applying? Call 1-800-318-2596 to talk to someone who can walk you through it.

LET'S TALK, LET'S LIVE, LET'S GROW— FOR TEENS



LET'S TALK HEALTH

Why are you here?

Taking charge of your health is more than just going to the doctor. Use these questions to help you plan ahead and get the most out of your appointment.

Are there any specific things that I want to make sure to talk about with my provider?

Is there someone I should bring to my appointment to help me advocate for myself or listen to the information from the provider?

What current difficulties might my provider need to know about?

What motivates me to take care of my health?

Who can I contact for help?

(Examples: Parent, relative, friend's parent, clergy member, teacher, coach, therapist.)
Write their name and contact info below so you've got it all in 1 place if you ever need it.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What do I do when I'm feeling down, stressed, or worried? (Examples: Exercise, deep breathing, listening to music, drawing, writing.)

What will I do today:

What will I do this week:

What will I do by next appointment:

IDENTIFY CREDIBLE SOURCES

There's a lot of information online about health, but not all of it is accurate. When you look for resources online, make sure they come from a reliable source, like the American Academy of Pediatrics, Centers for Disease Control, World Health Organization, and US Department of Health and Human Services. Your doctor is always there to answer questions, too!



OVERALL TEEN HEALTH⁵⁰

KidsHealth, from the Nemours Foundation, provides information on children's health, behavior, and development from before birth through the teen years. KidsHealth gives families and children information that is easy to understand and free of "doctor speak" and includes articles, animations, games, and videos designed just for children.

TeensHealth, also from the Nemours Foundation, gives teens the information they need on health issues such as maintaining healthful weight, managing stress, and staying motivated. Information on TeensHealth is reviewed by a team of doctors and experts.

Healthy Foster Care America provides information on enrolling in Medicaid health insurance coverage for teens who have left foster care at 18 but are younger than 26.

Let's Move! is dedicated to solving the problem of childhood obesity within a generation so that every child born today grows up healthy. The site offers a downloadable action plan that includes five activities to do every day to improve health.

REFERENCES

50 American Academy of Pediatrics, Bright Futures, [Resources for Children and Teens](#)

GirlsHealth.gov offers girls ages 10 to 16 information on hundreds of health-related topics, including bullying, getting fit, and body image.

BAM! Body and Mind is produced by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and offers young people ages 9 to 13 information on diseases, food and nutrition, physical activity, and other topics related to healthful living in a colorful and kid-friendly way.

Kids' Quest, by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, offers entertaining ways of exploring disabilities such as ADHD, autism, and Tourette's syndrome.

ChooseMyPlate.gov, by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, has health and nutrition information for children. For children older than 5, there is the interactive "Blast Off" game, coloring pages, activity sheets, and healthful eating tips for both kids and parents.

StopBullying.gov provides anti-bullying information for both teens and kids, including interactive videos and articles on cyberbullying, the first day of school, and standing up for others.

Take Charge of Your Health: A Guide for Teenagers, by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, is for teens who are ready to take charge of their own health-related decisions. The guide is divided into sections that describe things like how the body works, how to eat healthy, and how to be physically active in fun ways. The Guide is also available in Spanish.

NIMH Teen Depression Brochure, helps teens understand depression and how it differs from regular sadness. It describes symptoms, causes, and treatments, with information on getting help and coping. This newly revised publication from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) is available online and in print.

Read the Label Youth Outreach Campaign, by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, gives information on how to read the Nutrition Facts labels on food packages. The Campaign provides activities and tip sheets that cover topics like serving size, calories, and nutrients, and even offers a "Dishin' the Nutrition" rap song!

YOUR RIGHTS

- ▶ You have the right to have your options for care explained to you
- ▶ You have the right to review your health center records

If you have questions about your rights or feel you have been mistreated, please inform the health center staff

TIPS

Ask questions about consent and confidentiality. Find out who your provider will share your information and records with. Don't stop asking questions until you understand the confidentiality rules.

If you feel that you need confidential services, make sure you tell your provider.

Read and understand written documents before signing them. Be sure to ask for help if you do not understand.

Know your rights in the mental health care system and speak up for your rights.





Mental & Behavioral Health

MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Whether you're going through a tough time right now or have an ongoing mental health condition, we can all use some extra help sometimes. Here is a list of resources to support you in managing your mental health.

MOBILE APPS FOR DOWNLOAD

Stop, Breathe, and Think: Web and mobile app for youth, with meditations for mindfulness and compassion.

Calm.com: Free website and mobile app with guided meditation and relaxation exercises.

Insight Timer: Free mobile app with virtual "bells" to time and support your meditations, and access to lots of guided meditations by many different meditation teachers.

MindShift: Free mobile app for teens, with mindfulness and other coping skills for anxiety.

Smiling Mind: Free mobile mindfulness app for young people, from Australia.

Headspace: "Meditation made simple." This app has a free introductory period, after which it requires a paid subscription to continue to use.



Mindfulness in Education Network

A network whose purpose is to "facilitate communication among all educators, parents, students and any others interested in promoting contemplative practice (mindfulness) in educational settings."

KNOW THE MYTHS & HOW TO STOP THE STIGMA ⁵¹

MYTHS

The **FALSE** belief that mental and behavioral disorders are personally controllable and if individuals cannot get better on their own, they are seen to lack personal effort, are blamed for their condition, and seen as personally responsible.

The **FALSE** belief that those with mental disorders are frightening, unpredictable, and strange.

The **FALSE** labeling of individuals with mental and behavioral illnesses as unequal or inferior.

The **FALSE** judgment of individuals with mental and behavioral illnesses which leads to discrimination, avoidance or mistreatment.

WAYS TO REDUCE STIGMA INCLUDE

- ▶ Educate yourself on mental health issues; separate the facts from the stigmas
- ▶ Become more empathetic; try to understand the struggle of those experiencing mental health issues
- ▶ Be an advocate for your friends, family and co-workers so they know they can speak to you without judgment if they are experiencing tough times or mental health issues
- ▶ Do not equate people suffering with mental health issues as their mental illness; for example, instead of “he is bipolar,” “he is struggling with bipolar disorder”
- ▶ Learn the warning signs of mental illness and help loved ones, and yourself, get help when they need it
- ▶ Make an effort to make genuine connections; people can hide their problems behind happy-looking social media posts if no one is willing to really ask how they are doing

REFERENCES

51 Rethink Mental Health Incorporated, [What is the Stigma and Know the Risks.](#)



Tobacco, Alcohol, & Substance Use

TOBACCO, ALCOHOL, & SUBSTANCE USE

As consuming tobacco products and substance use during your times as a teen can be tempting, learning the basic facts about such harmful products should be undertaken.

SUBSTANCE USE

Substance use among youth can lead to problems at school, negatively impact physical and mental health, and lead to lifelong issues.⁵²

The most commonly used substances among youth include:

- ▶ Alcohol
- ▶ Tobacco/E-Cigarettes
- ▶ Cannabis



Risk Factors & Negative Effects of Adolescent/Teen Substance Use (Tobacco/E-Cigarettes, Cannabis, & Alcohol)^{53,54,55,56}

Brain development:^{54, 55, 56}

- ▶ The human brain continues to grow and develop until age 25; substance use interferes with this process and can affect the structure/function of the brain.
- ▶ Youth substance use can cause harm to the parts of the brain that control attention, learning, mood, impulse control, memory/concentration.

REFERENCES

52 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, [Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs](#).

53 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [Alcohol Use Basics](#).

54 National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, [Underage Drinking](#).

55 American Academy of Pediatrics, Healthy Children, [Is Cannabis Harmful for Children & Teens?](#)

56 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [Quick Facts on the Risks of E-Cigarettes for Kids, Teens, and Young Adults](#).

Impaired judgement:

- ▶ Poor decision-making, risk-taking behavior, lack of impulse control ^{57,60,61}
- ▶ Impaired coordination, delayed reflexes/reaction-time ^{57,60,61}
- ▶ Accidents/injuries can happen under the influence of drugs or alcohol and contribute to deaths caused by car crashes, overdoses, falls, etc ^{57,60,61}

Mental health problems: Research links youth tobacco/e-cigarette, alcohol, and cannabis use to depression, anxiety, and mood disorders ^{57,60,61}

Leads to other problems: Using other substances; developing addiction/substance use disorders in adulthood ^{57,60,61}

ALCOHOL USE

U.S Standard Drink Sizes by ABV (Alcohol by Volume) ⁵⁷

- ▶ 12 oz or 1 bottle/can of Beer—5% ABV
- ▶ 5 oz or 1 Glass of Wine—12% ABV
- ▶ 1.5 oz or 1 shot of Liquor/distilled spirits (vodka, whisky, rum, etc)—40% ABV

Intoxication: Drinking excessively to the point at which alcohol depresses the central nervous system, altering ones mood and physical/mental abilities⁵⁸

Factors that affect intoxication⁵⁹

Food: Having food in your stomach will help slow the processing of alcohol, especially foods high in protein

Strength of drink: The higher the alcohol content of the drink, the more it accumulates in the blood

Mood: Stress emotions such as depression, anxiety, and anger prior to drinking can increase or become exaggerated during and after drinking— these feelings can also change the enzymes in your stomach, affecting how your body processes alcohol

Time between drinks: The body can only metabolize one standard drink per hour

Illness: If you are sick, there is a good chance you are dehydrated, which can affect how alcohol interacts with your body

CANNABIS⁶⁰

Cannabis/Marijuana is a psychoactive drug that contains close to 500 chemicals, including THC, a mind-altering compound that causes harmful health effects.

REFERENCES

57 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [Alcohol Use Basics](#).

58 University of Notre Dame, Center for Student well being, [What is Intoxication](#).

59 University of Notre Dame, Center for Student well being, [Absorption Rate Factors](#).

60 American Academy of Pediatrics, Healthy Children, [Is Cannabis Harmful for Children & Teens?](#)

61 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [Quick Facts on the Risks of E-Cigarettes for Kids, Teens, and Young Adults](#).

E-CIGARETTES⁶²

E-cigarettes are battery-powered devices that can deliver nicotine and flavorings to the user in the form of an aerosol. Some e-cigarettes look like regular cigarettes, cigars, or pipes. Some look like USB flash drives, pens, and other everyday items that are easy to conceal.

Dangers of E-Cigarettes:

- ▶ The aerosol that users inhale and exhale from e-cigarettes can expose both themselves and bystanders to harmful chemicals that are not safe to breathe
- ▶ Some of the ingredients in e-cigarette aerosol could also be harmful to the lungs in the long-term
- ▶ Defective e-cigarette batteries have caused some fires and explosions, a few of which have resulted in serious injuries
- ▶ Children and adults have been poisoned by swallowing, breathing, or absorbing e-cigarette liquid through their skin or eyes

TIPS & RESOURCES FOR QUITTING VAPING^{63,64}

- ▶ **Choose a date to quit:** Give yourself time to get ready but don't put it off for too long—choose a date to quit that is no more than a week or two away

- ▶ **Learn your triggers and what to avoid:** Which people, feelings, or situations that make you want to vape?
- ▶ **Prepare for cravings and withdrawal symptoms:** Knowing what to expect and having strategies for handling uncomfortable feelings will help you succeed
- ▶ **Ask for help, you don't have to do it alone:** If you feel comfortable, tell your friends and family that you're quitting vaping and that you will need their support
- ▶ **Talk to a doctor:** Ask about what support/resources your doctor or health care professional offers and talk with them about how to quit vaping
- ▶ **Talk to a tobacco cessation counselor:** Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW or 1-877-44U-QUIT
- ▶ **Download an app or sign up for text:** Try the quitSTART app or SmokefreeTXT by signing up online or texting QUIT to 47848
- ▶ **Truth Initiative: This is Quitting Program:** Anonymous text messaging program that provides evidence-based tips and strategies to quit and incorporates messages from other young people who have quit—join for free by texting DITCHVAPE to 88709

REFERENCES

62 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [Quick Facts on the Risks of E-Cigarettes for Kids, Teens, and Young Adults](#).

63 Truth Initiative, [This Is Quitting](#).

64 National Cancer Institute, Smokefree, [How To Quit Vaping](#).

SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION

WHAT TO SAY TO RESIST PRESSURE TO TRY DRUGS⁶⁵

- ▶ A firm but friendly “No, thanks!”
- ▶ Change the subject: “No, thanks. Hey, what did you think of that test yesterday in social studies?”
- ▶ Suggest a change of plan: “I was hoping to get you guys to shoot some hoops down at the school. How about it?”
- ▶ Say “No, thanks” repeatedly
- ▶ Give excuses: “No, thanks, I don’t drink. Besides, the girls’ swim team has a meet tomorrow, and I need to be in top shape.” or “My parents would kill me if they found out that I got high, and they always manage to find out!”

REFERENCES

65 American Academy of Pediatrics, Healthy Children, [Helping Teens Resist Pressure to Try Drugs](#).



Sexual Assault

SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual assault can take many different forms, but one thing remains the same: **it's never the victim's fault.**

WHAT IS SEXUAL ASSAULT?^{66,67}

The term sexual assault refers to sexual contact or behavior that occurs without explicit consent of the victim. Some forms of sexual assault include:

- ▶ Attempted rape
- ▶ Fondling or unwanted sexual touching
- ▶ Forcing a victim to perform sexual acts, such as oral sex or penetrating the perpetrator's body
- ▶ Penetration of the victim's body, also known as rape

WHAT IS RAPE?

Rape is a form of sexual assault, but not all sexual assault is rape. The term rape is often used as a legal definition to specifically include sexual penetration without consent. For its Uniform Crime Reports, the FBI defines rape as "penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim." To see how your state legally defines rape and other forms of sexual assault, visit [RAINN's State Law Database](#).

REFERENCES

66 Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, [Sexual Assault](#).

67 Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, [Safety Prevention](#).

WHAT IS FORCE?

Force doesn't always refer to physical pressure. Perpetrators may use emotional coercion, psychological force, or manipulation to coerce a victim into non-consensual sex. Some perpetrators will use threats to force a victim to comply, such as threatening to hurt the victim or their family or other intimidation tactics.

WHO ARE THE PERPETRATORS?

The majority of perpetrators are someone known to the victim. Approximately eight out of 10 sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the victim, such as in the case of intimate partner sexual violence or acquaintance rape.

The term "date rape" is sometimes used to refer to acquaintance rape. Perpetrators of acquaintance rape might be a date, but they could also be a classmate, a neighbor, a friend's significant other, or any number of different roles. It's important to remember that dating, instances of past intimacy, or other acts like kissing do not give someone consent for increased or continued sexual contact.



Violence & Injury Prevention



VIOLENCE AND INJURY PREVENTION

RECOGNIZING DATING ABUSE⁶⁸

Dating abuse is a pattern of assaultive and controlling behaviors that one person intentionally uses against another in order to gain or maintain power and control in the relationship¹

TYPES OF DATING ABUSE⁶⁹

Emotional and verbal abuse: yelling, name-calling, bullying, isolating you from your family and friends, saying you deserve the abuse or are to blame for it, and then giving gifts to “make up” for the abuse or making promises to change

Sexual assault and rape: forcing you to do any sexual act you do not want to do or doing something sexual when you’re not able to consent, such as when you’ve been drinking heavily

Physical abuse: hitting, shoving, kicking, biting, throwing objects, choking, or any other aggressive contact

REFERENCES

68 Planned Parenthood, [4 Types of Dating Abuse Behaviors](#)

69 Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, [Dating Violence and Abuse](#)

SIGNS YOU ARE IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP⁷⁰

- ▶ Calls, texts, or messages you all the time asking you where you are, what you're doing, or who you're with
- ▶ Checks your phone, email, or social networking messages without your OK
- ▶ Tells you who you can or can't be friends with
- ▶ Threatens to "out" your secrets, like your sexual orientation or gender identity
- ▶ Stalks you or keeps track of what you're doing on social media
- ▶ Pressures you to sext
- ▶ Says mean or embarrassing things about you in front of other people
- ▶ Acts jealous or tries to stop you from spending time with other people
- ▶ Has a bad temper and you're afraid of making them mad
- ▶ Accuses you of cheating or doing something wrong all the time
- ▶ Threatens to kill or hurt themselves, or hurt you if you break up with them
- ▶ Hurts you physically

If you think you may be in an abusive relationship, there are people you can talk to and resources that can help.

If at any time you feel that you are in immediate danger, you can call 911. Other hotlines that are confidential and can help you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline

866-331-9474

866-331-8453 TTY

www.loveisrespect.org

National Domestic Violence Hotline

800-799-SAFE (7233)

800-787-3224 TTY

www.ndvh.org

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network

(RAINN) Hotline

800-656-HOPE (4673)

www.rainn.org

There are other resources and violence support groups that can help you—your doctor can be a resource too! Remember, you have the right to a violence-free relationship and abuse is never your fault.

REFERENCES

70 Planned Parenthood, [Abusive Relationships](#).

STAYING SAFE FROM OTHER VIOLENCE OR INJURIES^{71,72}

- ▶ Don't carry a gun or weapon and don't hang out with people who carry weapons.
- ▶ Leave or walk away from tense situations to calm down.
- ▶ Decrease stress by exercising or doing relaxing activities.
- ▶ Speak truthfully about how you feel without blaming, yelling, or fighting.
- ▶ If you are having conflict; listen carefully to the other person's point of view. Then explain why you are upset and find a fair solution together.
- ▶ If you feel uncomfortable about something, talk to someone you trust.

REFERENCES

71 Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, [Dating Violence and Abuse](#)

72 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [Strategies and Approaches to Prevent Youth Violence](#)



NEED TO TALK?

HERE'S WHERE TO REPORT VIOLENCE OR GET HELP SAFELY

If you or someone you know is in danger — at home, school, or anywhere in between — there are safe, judgment-free places you can reach out to. You don't have to wait for a trusted adult to step in. These resources are here to help you feel safe, supported, and heard.

Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline

If you're in an unsafe situation at home or in a relationship, you can call or text **877-863-6338 (877-TO END DV)** 24/7 to talk to someone who's trained to help. They can connect you with emergency shelter, safety planning, and support — and they offer help in over 240 languages. You can also reach out if you're worried about a friend or someone else in danger.

Safe2Help Illinois

Don't know who to talk to at school? Safe2Help is a private, 24/7 program where you can report serious issues like bullying, threats, violence, or mental health concerns using their website, free app, text line, or social media. You don't need an adult to use it — just a phone or device. Their goal? Helping students "Seek Help Before Harm." You can also check out their Mental Health Toolkit for ways to take care of yourself and help change school culture.



Sexual Health

SEXUAL HEALTH TERMS & DEFINITIONS⁷³

Sexual Consent: An informed, voluntary, and mutual agreement that occurs between sexual partners about the behaviors they both give permission to engage in during a sexual encounter. Sexual consent cannot be given when an individual is impaired by alcohol, drugs, or other conditions that affect one's ability to understand and agree to engaging in a behavior.

Sexual Behavior: Acts that include, but are not limited to: vaginal sex, oral sex, anal sex, mutual masturbation, genital rubbing, or masturbation. (See also Anal Sex, Masturbation, Oral Sex, and Vaginal Sex)

Sexual Intercourse: Sexual intercourse may mean different things to different people, but could include behaviors such as vaginal sex, oral sex, or anal sex. (See also Anal Sex, Oral Sex, and Vaginal Sex)

Abstinence: Choosing to refrain from a behavior. Sexual abstinence refers to refraining from certain sexual behaviors for a period of time. Some people define sexual abstinence as not having penile-vaginal intercourse, while others define it as not engaging in any sexual behaviors.

Contraception: Any means used to reduce the risk of pregnancy, including, but not limited to, abstinence, barrier methods (e.g., external condoms and internal condoms), hormonal methods (e.g., pill, patch, injection, implant, IUD, and ring), and other nonhormonal methods (e.g., sterilization and nonhormonal IUDs). Contraceptive methods may also be known as birth control methods, though the former is the preferred term.

Emergency Contraception: A safe, legal, and effective way to reduce the risk of pregnancy up to five days after unprotected sex and/or failed contraception. Commonly referred to as "the morning after pill," emergency contraception can be sold over the counter in pharmacies.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)
Common infections caused by bacteria, viruses, or parasites that are transmitted from one person who has the infection to another during sexual contact that involves exchange of fluids or skin-to-skin contact. STDs are often referred to as sexually transmitted infections or STIs in an effort to clarify that not all sexually transmitted infections turn into a disease.

REFERENCES

73 Advocates for Youth, [Appendix: Glossary: Sex Education Terms](#).

GUIDELINES FOR SAFER SEX⁷⁴

Limit your sexual activity to only one partner who is only having sex with you. This helps reduce exposure to disease-causing organisms. Follow these guidelines for safer sex:

- ▶ Think twice before starting sexual relations with a new partner. First, discuss past partners, history of STIs, and drug use.
- ▶ Use condoms every time you have sex. Choose a male condom made of latex or polyurethane—not natural materials. Only use polyurethane if you are allergic to latex. Female condoms are made of polyurethane.
- ▶ For oral sex, help protect your mouth by having your partner use a condom (male or female).
- ▶ Women and girls should not douche after intercourse. It does not protect against STIs. And it could spread an infection farther into the reproductive tract. It may also wash away spermicidal protection.
- ▶ Have regular Pap tests, pelvic exams, and periodic tests for STIs.



- ▶ Check your body frequently for signs of a sore, blister, rash, or discharge. You should also be aware of your partner's body. Look for signs of a sore, blister, rash, or discharge
- ▶ Consider sexual activities other than vaginal, oral, or anal intercourse. These are techniques that do not involve the exchange of body fluids or contact between mucous membranes.

CONSEQUENCES OF UNPROTECTED SEX⁷⁵

How can sex lead to STDs? Anybody who has sex may be at risk for sexually transmitted infections and/or pregnancy. Some infections are spread through body fluids like semen, vaginal fluids, and blood. Others can be passed when the skin of your mouth or genitals rubs against the skin of someone else's genitals.

REFERENCES

74 Advocates for Youth, [Appendix: Glossary: Sex Education Terms](#).

75 Planned Parenthood, [STDs, Birth Control, and Pregnancy](#).

How can sex lead to pregnancy?

Anytime semen from a penis gets into a vagina, pregnancy can happen. Pregnancy can also happen if semen gets on a vulva or near the vagina (like if you had wet semen on your fingers and touched a vagina).

What's the best way to protect myself from STDs and pregnancy?

Using safer sex barriers (like condoms and dental dams) every time you have oral, anal, or vaginal sex helps protect you from STDs. Using birth control (including condoms or the pill) every time you have penis-in-vagina sex helps prevent pregnancy.

Condoms are the only type of birth control that helps prevent pregnancy and STDs at the same time. But if you have penis-in-vagina sex, the best way to protect yourself is to use condoms PLUS another birth control method.

How do I get birth control?⁷⁶

You can get some types of birth control, like condoms, at drugstores or convenience stores. Anybody can buy condoms, and you don't need to show your ID. You need to see a doctor or nurse to get the types of birth control that work best to prevent pregnancy. You can get these kinds of birth control from your regular doctor or gynecologist, or at your nearest [Planned Parenthood health center](#).⁷⁶

SEXUAL HEALTH RESOURCES FOR TEENS

- ▶ [Read more about birth control](#)
- ▶ [How to put a condom on](#)
- ▶ [Tips on talking to your parents about sex](#)
- ▶ [Facts about abortion](#)



REFERENCES

76 Planned Parenthood, [What do I need to know about birth control?](#)



Gender Identity

SEXUALITY & GENDER IDENTITY

DEFINITIONS TO ENCOURAGE CONVERSATION⁷⁷

Affirmed gender: When a person's true gender identity, or concern about their gender identity, is communicated to and validated from others as authentic.

Biological sex: The distinct biological and physiological attributes of females, males, or intersex persons such as chromosomes, hormones and reproductive organs.

Bisexual: A person who is attracted to both people of their own gender and other genders.

Cisgender: Individuals whose current gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth.

Gay: A person who is attracted primarily to members of the same gender. Gay is most frequently used to describe men who are attracted primarily to other men, although it can be used for men and women.

Gender: The cultural roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes expected of people based on their sex.

Gender diverse: An umbrella term to describe an ever-evolving array of labels people may apply when their gender identity, expression, or even perception does not conform to the norms and stereotypes others expect.

Gender dysphoria: A clinical symptom that is characterized by a sense of alienation to some or all of the physical characteristics or social roles of one's assigned gender; also, gender dysphoria is the psychiatric diagnosis in the DSM-5, which has focus on the distress that stems from the incongruence between one's expressed or experienced (affirmed) gender and the gender assigned at birth.

Gender identity: One's internal sense of who one is, based on an interaction of biological traits, developmental influences, and environmental conditions. This may be male, female, somewhere in between, a combination of both or neither.

Gender nonbinary: Individuals who do not identify their gender as man or woman. Other terms to describe this identity include genderqueer, agender, bigender, gender creative, etc.

Heterosexual or straight: A man who is primarily attracted to women or a woman who is primarily attracted to men.

Lesbian: A woman who is primarily attracted to other women.

REFERENCES

⁷⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [Health Considerations for LGBTQ Youth Terminology](#).

LGBTQ+: Acronym that refers to the greater community of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning and “plus,” which represents other sexual identities including pansexual, asexual, and omnisexual.

Sexual orientation: One’s sexual identity as it relates to who someone is attracted to.

Transgender: Usually used when gender diverse traits remain persistent, consistent, and insistent over time.

Queer: An umbrella term sometimes used to refer to the entire LGBT community.

Questioning: For some, the process of exploring and discovering one’s own sexual orientation, gender, identity, or gender expression.

RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES

- ▶ [Gender Identity Development in Children](#)
- ▶ [Gender-Diverse & Transgender Children](#)
- ▶ [Support Resources for Families of Gender Diverse Youth](#)

SEXUAL IDENTITY RESOURCES

- ▶ [I Think I Might Be Bisexual, Now What Do I Do?](#) Brochure from Advocates for Youth
- ▶ [I Think I Might Be Gay, Now What Do I Do?](#) Brochure for young men from Advocates for Youth
- ▶ [I Think I Might Be Lesbian, Now What Do I Do?](#) Brochure for young women from Advocates for Youth
- ▶ [I Think I Might Be Transgender, Now What Do I Do?](#) Brochure from Advocates for Youth



Nutritional Health



NEED HELP GETTING FOOD?

YOU'RE NOT ALONE! THESE RESOURCES CAN HELP!

Whether you're in school, out on your own, or supporting your family, getting enough healthy food shouldn't be something you have to stress about. From free meals to recipes on a budget, these programs are here to help you stay fueled and feel good, no judgment, no cost, and totally confidential.

WHERE TO GET FREE OR LOW-COST FOOD

WIC Program – Illinois DHS

If you're pregnant, a teen parent, or caring for a baby or young child, WIC can help with free healthy food, nutrition support, and baby supplies. It's a safe and supportive program — and you can apply online or through local clinics.

[WIC Brochure](#)

Illinois Help is Here – DHS

Not sure where to start? This page connects you to programs like SNAP (aka food stamps), WIC, and other types of support you or your family might qualify for.

Greater Chicago Food Depository – We Got You Illinois

Focused on helping teens and young adults, this campaign connects you with free food, diapers, healthcare, and even housing help in the Chicago area.

Find Free Food – Greater Chicago Food Depository

Use your ZIP code to find nearby pantries and community sites offering free meals, groceries, and supplies in Chicago and Cook County.

Find Food Illinois – Eat.Move.Save.

An easy-to-use map for finding food pantries, free meals, and SNAP help across Illinois. Just put in your location and find what's close to you.

Dial 2-1-1

Not sure where to start? Just call 2-1-1 anytime to get connected with food programs, housing help, or other local support — it's free and totally private.

NUTRITION TIPS, RECIPES & EATING ON A BUDGET

Student's Guide to Food Insecurity

In college or on your own? This guide breaks down where to find free or low-cost food, how to apply for SNAP, and what resources may be available at school.

Eat. Move. Save. – Recipes and Tips

Browse budget-friendly recipes, meal planning tips, and healthy swaps. Easy to follow, with lots of options for beginners — available in English and Spanish.

HealthyChildren.org – Nutrition Guide

A great place to learn how to eat well on your terms. Offers advice on portion sizes, smart snacking, and eating habits that support your health.

USDA MyPlate

Interactive tools that help you build healthy meals based on your favorite foods. Great for planning grocery lists or learning how to balance meals.

Oldways

Celebrates different cultures through food! Offers meal ideas and shopping guides rooted in heritage diets like Mediterranean, African, and Latin American.

Breastfeeding Resources – IPHI

If you're a new parent or supporting one, this page links to breastfeeding resources, local support programs, and answers to common questions.



NUTRITIONAL HEALTH

As you get older, you're able to start making your own decisions about a lot of things that matter most to you. You may choose your own clothes, music, and friends. You also may be ready to make decisions about your body and health.

The best way teens can maintain a healthy weight is to eat a diet rich in whole grains, fruits, vegetables, no-fat or low-fat milk products, beans, eggs, fish, nuts, and lean meats.⁷⁸

Eating healthfully means getting the right balance of nutrients. As teens grow, they need more calories and an increase of key nutrients including protein, calcium, and iron.

How much a teen should eat depends on their individual needs. In general, teens should eat a varied diet, including:

► **Fruits and vegetables every day**

Teens should eat 2 cups of fruit and 2 ½ cups of vegetables every day (for a 2,000 calorie diet).

► **1,300 milligrams (mg) of calcium daily**

Teens should eat three 1-cup servings of low-fat or fat-free calcium-rich foods every day. Good sources include yogurt or milk. One-cup equivalents include 1½ ounces of low-fat cheddar cheese or 2 ounces of fat-free American cheese.

► **Protein to build muscles and organs**

Teens should eat 5½ ounces of protein-rich foods every day. Good sources include lean meat, poultry, or fish. One-ounce equivalents of other protein. Sources include ½ cup of beans or tofu, one egg, a tablespoon of peanut butter, and ½ ounce of nuts or seeds.

► **Whole grains for energy**

Teens should get 6 ounces of grains every day. One ounce equivalents include one slice of whole grain bread, ½ cup of whole grain pasta or brown rice, 1 cup of bulgur, or 1 cup of whole grain breakfast cereal.

► **Iron-rich foods**

Boys double their lean body mass between the ages of 10 and 17, needing iron to support their growth. Girls need iron for growth too, and to replace blood they lose through menstruation. Good sources of iron include lean beef, iron-fortified cereals and breads, dried beans and peas, or spinach.

► **Limiting fat**

Teens should limit their fat intake to 25 to 35 percent of their total calories every day and they should choose unsaturated fats over saturated fats whenever possible. Healthier, unsaturated fats include olive, canola, safflower, sunflower, corn, and soybean oils; fatty, cold water fish like salmon, trout, tuna, and whitefish; and nuts and seeds.



GET MOVING!

Like good nutrition, physical activity can build muscles, bones, and lift a teen's spirits. It can also reduce a teen's risk for chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure.

Teens should be active for 60 minutes or more on most or all days of the week. Replace TV and computer time with physical activities he or she enjoys like swimming, running, or basketball, walk or bike to school, and include yard work and walking the dog in repertoire of chores.





Financial & Career Health

LOOKING FOR A JOB OR WANT TO BUILD YOUR FUTURE?



YOU'RE NOT ALONE! THESE RESOURCES CAN HELP!

Whether you're trying to find your first job, build up some savings, or figure out what comes after high school, there are programs made just for you. These tools can help you search for jobs, get help with a resume, learn money skills, or explore careers, all at your own pace.

Illinois Job Link

An easy-to-use job search site for teens and adults. Filter jobs by your location, pay, or experience level — whether you're just getting started or looking for something new. It's totally free to use and always updating.

Illinois workNet

This site is like a one-stop-shop for job prep. You'll find free training programs, career quizzes, resume tools, and even job coaches who can help you figure out what you want to do — especially if you're a teen, veteran, or person with a disability.

Illinois workNet Service Finder

Not sure where to go for help in your area? This tool helps you find local job centers, training programs, and support services near you.

Resume Builder – Illinois workNet

Never written a resume before? No problem. This free online tool helps you build one step-by-step. All you need is a free account to get started.

Illinois Financial Wellness Hub

Want to learn how to budget, save for school, or avoid credit card mistakes? This site has quick lessons and tools to help you get smart about money — now and for the future.

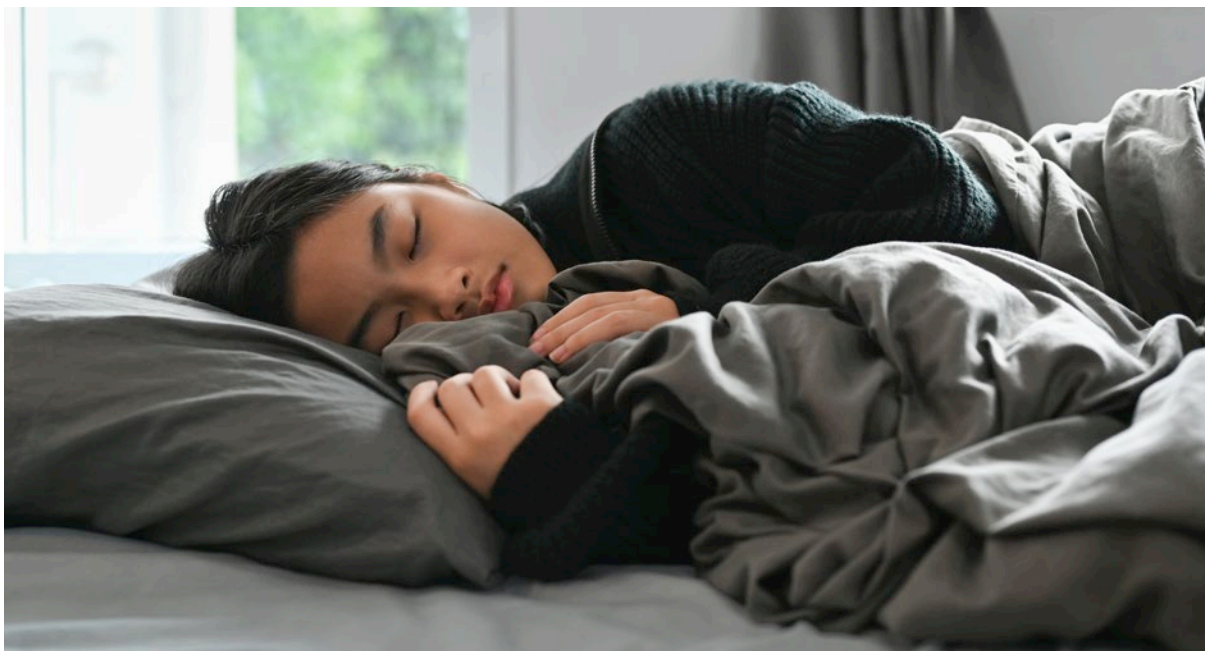
Ticket to Work Program (Social Security)

If you're a teen or young adult who receives disability benefits and wants to work, this program offers free support. They'll help you find a job, connect you to training, and make sure you keep the support you need.

Call **1-866-968-7842** or
TTY 1-866-833-2967



Finding Housing & Other Necessities



NEED A SAFE PLACE TO STAY?

THESE RESOURCES CAN HELP!

If you're dealing with housing stress, like staying on someone's couch, moving around a lot, or facing eviction, you're not alone. There are programs across Illinois that are made to support teens and young adults like you, whether you're in an emergency or just trying to figure out your next steps.

WHEN YOU NEED IMMEDIATE HOUSING OR HELP

Housing Action Illinois – Statewide Housing Referral

This tool helps you find support in your area. Just enter where you live, and it'll show you the closest housing programs and services — including help with shelter, rent, and emergency needs.

Dial 2-1-1

You can call 2-1-1 any time (day or night) to talk to someone who can help you find local shelter, food, or mental health resources. It's free and private and works anywhere in Illinois.

Emergency & Transitional Housing Providers

This program connects you with safe places to stay — whether you're currently homeless or about to lose your housing. It includes short-term and longer-term help, plus referrals to support programs.

Homeless Youth Provider Agencies

If you're a teen or young adult without a stable place to stay, this program is just for you. It offers emergency shelter, transitional housing, education, job training, and life skills support to help you get back on track.

Eviction Help Illinois

Call: **1-855-631-0811**

Text: **844-938-4280** (English) or
844-938-4289 (Spanish)

Free, confidential help if you're at risk of being evicted. They'll connect you to legal support, financial help, and other housing programs.

Illinois Housing Development Authority – Housing Help is Here

Get help with rent or utility bills, avoid eviction or foreclosure, and find free legal help if you're in housing trouble.

State Homeless Prevention

Program Providers

Need help paying rent or keeping your place? This program offers emergency financial help for people at risk of losing their housing — including utilities and other support to keep you stable.

Public Housing Resources (HUD Illinois)

Learn about government housing options like Section 8 and public housing — plus resources for those experiencing domestic violence.

Norman Services – Illinois DCFS

Helps families who are struggling with food, housing, or basic needs so kids can stay safely with their parents or reunite with family. This includes emergency cash assistance and housing support.

GETTING HELP WITH OTHER BASIC NEEDS

Meeting Basic Needs – Illinois Early Learning

A simple guide that shows where to find food, clothing, diapers, and shelter across Illinois — especially if your living situation is temporary or unstable.

Early Head Start & Head Start – For Families Without Stable Housing

If you're pregnant or have a child and don't have stable housing, you automatically qualify for Head Start or Early Head Start. These programs provide early education, meals, and family support — no matter your income or housing status.

Homeless Youth Handbook – Illinois

Know your rights. This guide is written just for young people in Illinois dealing with homelessness. It covers things like housing, school, healthcare, safety, and how to get legal help.



CONCLUSION

As it is our mission to promote and advocate for optimal child, youth and family well-being; we hope that this toolkit has provided easy access to resources in order to increase the quality and frequency of adolescent health well visits. Specially focusing on adolescents, this is a time where guidance and support of their parents, families, schools, healthcare providers and communities are important.

We recognize that adolescents need healthy, positive relationships with a trusted adult in order to begin making their own health decisions. We are proud to serve those in Illinois towards optimal health outcomes for children and youth!

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