

# PULSE

Volume No. 10 Issue No. 12, January 2020

## Adolescence A Journey



*Celebrating Women - Edition 01*



**GODREJ  
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# From the Editor's Desk

## Growing Up

Adolescence, puberty or teenage- though sometimes used interchangeably - are distinct aspects of the most vital phase of life for everybody.

It is the process of transition & transformation from childhood-to-adulthood. Where the importance shifts from parents to peers. From protection to freedom, from family to friends, from obedience → defiance/opposition/rebellion → responsibility. From confusion to making choices. From dreams to disillusionment/failures to achievement. Breaking & creating new idols/icons/ideals.

A phase of flux in the cauldron of hormones, creating all sorts of changes in body, mind & psyche. The myriad attractions & distractions & allurements (real & virtual) can be too much for them to handle. The first phase of the journey of Individual self-discovery, self-actualization & self-esteem. The nursery class in the 'school of hard knocks' that is the 'outside' world.

They (these present day adolescents) will be the future work force & representatives of the nation & the world. Hence, it is vital for all the caretakers (direct, indirect & remote) to handle them with a lot of care, consideration & clarity of concepts. It requires a lot of compassion, empathy, understanding, flexibility & maturity.

The effectiveness of efforts as seen in the outcomes is actually dependent on how well the nurturing & character building has happened since childbirth & as some believe - since conception. (Kaydee)

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## Growing up with Confidence

Adolescent word is derived from the latin verb "*Adolescere*" which means to grow into maturity.

Adolescence is critical link between childhood and adulthood, characterized by significant physical, psychological, and social transitions. These transitions carry new risks but also present opportunities to positively influence the immediate and future health of young people.

**Various changes occurs in this period, few are listed below :**

- ◆ **Abstract thinking** & increased ability of **introspection**,
- ◆ May feel inclined to figure out what makes one unique as a person. looking for **an identity**.
- ◆ **Associate** more with their friends than their family members.
- ◆ **Struggle** to become more **independent, of their parents and family** to fit into their world.
- ◆ **Feel uncertain**. Eventually they will grow into new roles and become more certain about them self.
- ◆ **Peer group pressure**. Many times these girls change their likes and dislikes to fit into peer group. These events can lead to a gap between what is perceived as appropriate by their parents and their friends.
- ◆ Feel **conflicted** and look for clarity.
- ◆ **Mood swings**.
- ◆ **Consciousness & complexes** about body image.
- ◆ **Sexually attraction/orientation**.

**Impacts :**

During this stage, adolescent girls experience many psychological changes that can result in

- ◆ **Self consciousness**
- ◆ **Confusion** : about their goals/aspiration & value system.
- ◆ **Identity crises** : "Who am I, where am I going, and how do I relate to all of these people in my life?"
- ◆ **Low Self Esteem** : Isolation and restrictions imposed during menstruation is one of the reason to develop low self esteem in girls and due to that they tend to avoid situations where they think there's risk of failure, embarrassment or making mistakes. Comparison with others by them self or by parents is one of the root cause of low self esteem.
- ◆ **Sense of Guilt** : Adolescence is the age when sexual feelings arise in youngsters. Feelings and thoughts about sex can trigger a sense of guilt.
- ◆ **Media / Social media** : Research has proven that social media leads to increased feelings of depression, anxiety, poor body image and loneliness. Even teen age girls may be more likely to make comparisons between themselves and others and the comparison-making, in either direction, that seems to be a cause of social media's negative effects.

**Tips for Parents - "Its all about love and relationship"**

- ◆ Need support and understanding.
- ◆ Wants to be heard and understood, not judged. boost her morale.
- ◆ Encourage to discuss their views, issues / problems with them.
- ◆ Talk about expected bodily changes and menstruation before it happens so that she knows what to expect.

- ◆ Trust their daughters & spend quality time. Make sure that her friends who are having good influence.
- ◆ Discipline, it isn't about punishment. It's about guiding towards appropriate ways to behave. You can use limits and boundaries to help her learn independence, take responsibility for her behaviour and its outcomes, and solve problems.
- ◆ Discuss and form a set of rules which should be well defined, responsible and with consequences. Be consistent. Both parents must be on same page.

Don't insult your teen age daughter in-front of others and even don't patronize her in-front of others.

#### Tips for Adolescents - "Its all about rediscovering yourself."

- ◆ Accept the bodily changes and respect the nature. Focus on your capabilities, stay informed.
  - ◆ **Don't compare, If you have any concern, ask your parents / doctor for proper health advice.** Stay clean and organized.
  - ◆ Eat properly, Keep your body healthy and Exercise. ◆ Make good, reliable friends.
  - ◆ You don't have to be best, but it's about having common sense and knowing what's best for you.
  - ◆ Obey your parents, talk to them when you have problems or concerns. they've already been through everything you're dealing with, and their wisdom can be invaluable. Having a good relationship with your parents will make a huge difference in how much you enjoy being a teenager.
  - ◆ Don't try to hide things from your parents which will make situation difficult for you to handle. You are not alone.
  - ◆ Learn to **say NO** firmly when found necessary. Do not cross the boundary and don't allow others too. Don't ever get pressured by others.
  - ◆ Keep positive talk with yourself to keep your moral high. Be confident and believe in yourself.
  - ◆ Pay attention to your studies and always listen to what your teacher says.
  - ◆ No one is perfect.
  - ◆ Give priority to your hobbies and pass your time creatively. Like read motivational books, trekking, yoga class or gym.
- Keep realistic expectations from yourself and make small goals to achieve your ambition.

**Be sociable! The most popular girl in the room isn't the one with the thinnest waist or fairest face. It's the one who has self-confidence and is happy with herself ! It isn't that hard at all.**

**Ms. Hemangi Neginhal**  
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### Teenage Girls

If one searches the net about the adolescent problems, we see many articles about how to get your girl teen to clean their rooms or be more responsible, how to handle rebellious, defiant, out-of-control, aggressive teens... but not much is written from the **teenager's perspective**.

This got me thinking that what we need today is to look at the problem from a different perspective and this is what I found.

1. They have a **negative body image**.
  2. They **long for global acceptance** from communities beyond their family.
  3. They **fail in time management**.
  4. They have a lot of **pressure from peers**, parents, and society to conform to conflicting expectations.
  5. They are **at risk** of mental and physical health issues.
  6. They **lack good role models** and heroes.
  7. They are tempted towards **drugs and alcohol, experimentation & misadventures**
  8. They are exposed to **unhealthy social media - uncontrolled and uncensored**.
  9. They **face bullying or harassment** everywhere.
  10. They may indulge in **risky sexual activity**.
1. **Issues With Body image** Teens feel pressure to conform to many unhealthy expectations regarding their bodies, behavior, and appearance. Eating disorders (including anorexia, bulimia, binge-eating, etc.) typically start just before and during adolescence, and 95% of people with eating disorders are between 12 and 25 years old. (SAMHSA). Eating disorders can affect a teen's health, mood, relationships, and day-to-day functioning.

**2. Teenagers struggle to find a place in society, wanting to be recognized by their peers** and accepted for what they are. This is one of the most important tasks of their lives at this juncture and they are faced with a lot of anxiety and insecurity as they work around this. When teens get the message that they don't fit in and don't belong here, it can lead to feelings of isolation, disconnect, and depression. The social media contents marketed to this age group normalize bullying, premarital sex, aggressive and violent behavior, and rule-breaking. You are "cool" only if you own all the brands. What is a teen to do? Is it their fault if they are confused, defiant, or out-of-control?

Take an example of an ideal daughter. She is brought up to be respectful, helpful, kind, gentle, tolerant, follow moral and biblical principles of honesty, integrity etc., but in the world, she gets the message that these values are passé. Even her friends don't accept her, though they know that when they are in trouble they can turn to her for help.

She is like most teenagers who haven't yet found a group of friends that accepts and loves them the way they are. This feeling of not-belonging is prevalent and affects all aspects of a teen's life.

Teenagers want to feel like they belong to a community, but many teens have trouble finding acceptance.

**3. Time-Management Stress** Stress increases at school and the older they get, the number of projects to be done, tests to cope with, and social drama increases, not to mention sports and other extracurricular activities. On the social front, a new and tantalizing horizon opens up—dating, sleep overs, camping, partying, and hanging out with friends. Meanwhile, they are constantly distracted by social media. A teenager learning to juggle all of these expectations is under a lot of stress.

The teen is suddenly expected to act like an adult. They are expected to manage their work independently, make and follow through on the right decisions. Though most parents complain about filthy bedrooms, untidy shelves and cabinets, smelly socks, missing stuff, I wonder... where is the time!? They simply can't do it all, and the pressure makes them more prone to anxiety and depression.

**4. Societal and Parental Pressure** Many times, parents live through their children and expect their kids to achieve everything they wanted but did not have.

When the entire world surrounding the teenager is attempting to mold him/her into a different shape, the pressure builds. Parents, teachers, family elders, siblings, friends, schoolmates, and social groups all play a part and pull the teenager in different directions.

**5. Mental and Physical Health Issues** All of these things affect a teenager's health:

**Poor nutrition.**

**Lack of sleep** In an effort to do and be it all, the teen sacrifices sleep. They require about nine hours of sleep but on average, teens get roughly seven hours. This means that every day, they are running into a deficit.

**Depression and anxiety:** Hormonal changes, added to the chaos and strain of scheduling, prioritizing, achieving, and fulfilling expectations, put a teen under considerable emotional pressure. This is reflected in mood swings, aggression, depression, anxiety, and sometimes even a complete breakdown.

**6. A Lack of Positive Role Models and Heroes**

Often the biggest bullies, richest spoiled brats, and the most self-destructive kids are held up as the most enviable and popular. The media glorifies these people, and bad behavior is applauded in movies, sports, and music. Wherever they go, our children are fed on a diet of lousy role models and are imbibing the depraved values of those "heroes" portrayed in the media.

**7. Drugs and Alcohol.** Although the data about Indian scenario is limited, World over, Almost 10-30% teens reported drinking alcohol within the past month. The story of "UDTA PUNJAB" isn't fictitious but scary.

Both alcohol and drugs like cocaine, nicotine and marijuana can damage a teenager's developing brain. It's so important to talk to them to find out what is happening in their school and peer group, discover what they're exposed to, and educate your kid about the dangers.

**8. On-Screen Violence and Unhealthy Social Media.** When used responsibly, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Twitch, Snapchat, YouTube, and other social platforms can be great ways for teens to connect with the world, but when used irresponsibly, they are problematic. Violent video games promote aggression and violence. Going online exposes teens to bad characters, pornography, violence, and sexual content. No matter what you do, there's no way to protect them entirely. It's up to parents to know what kids are doing online and teach them how to interact with the internet safely.

**9. Bullying ( actual online)** Approximately 30% of teens are affected by bullying/ragging—either as a victim or as a perpetrator.

**10. Risky Sexual Activity and Behavior** Out of 20 million new STD diagnoses each year, more than half of those affected are between the ages of 15 and 24. Despite the facts, surveys consistently show that most parents don't think their children are sexually active. Again, it's so important to talk to your kids about sex, even if you don't think they're having it.

**Helping Teens Deal With the Problems They Face**

Teens today are forced to live at a very superficial level, on the edge of society, with no acceptance and very little positive affirmation. They are expected to learn how to live from the internet and television, where they find little emphasis on moral

value or personal excellence. What a paradox, the life of a teenager is today!

In 2016, the global rate of suicide for 15- to 24-year-olds was 14%.

### **What Can Parents Do to Help Their Teenagers?**

What we need is a paradigm shift of who our teens are and a clearer view of our role as parents.

1. We need to look at ways to help teens, amp up our parenting skills, stop complaining, and take responsibility for our teens to right now.
2. We cannot ignore our parental duties. Even though they're in their teens, they still need us, just as they did when they were little. Cell phones, computers, and other gadgets that they spend time with cannot give them the nurturing they need.
3. Provide a healthy and complete meal whenever you pack it or put it on the table. Make vegetables and fruits interesting.
4. Build lines of communication that are so strong that your children always look to you as allies instead of enemies. Communicate positively and avoid commands and I-told-you-sos.
5. Discuss and establish rules for chores, homework, dating, sex, and drug and alcohol use. Keep talking about all these issues.
6. Let them know that you don't always have all the answers and you are not always right. Listen to their opinions and offer help whenever needed.
7. Be graceful enough to thank, appreciate, and love them at every possible occasion.
8. Punishing teenagers does not really work, but disciplining teenagers does. Make sure your policies are helping instead of hurting.
9. Be willing to listen to their point of view. Give it a good thought before you trash it. An encouraging and supporting attitude goes a long way.
10. Fear of failure is one of the greatest reasons for stress, so help them manage their anxiety and build self-esteem.
11. Look out for signs of stress, anxiety, lack of concentration, poor eating habits, poor oral and personal hygiene, disturbances in sleep, and plummeting of interest in social activities, and address them immediately.
12. If your teen shows any signs of anxiety or depression, get them help immediately.

***Most importantly, let them know that you care!***

Wishing you all success!

***"Kids go where there is excitement. They stay where there is love."***

***-Zig Ziglar***

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### **Food For Teens**

Adolescence is a period of rapid growth. Nutrition influences growth and development throughout infancy, childhood and adolescence, it is, however, during the period of adolescence that nutrient needs are the greatest.

- ◆ **Changes in height, weight and body composition during adolescence.** : The time and tempo of changes in height, weight and body composition can vary greatly between and among adolescents.
- ◆ **Changes in height:** - 15-25% of adult height is gained during adolescence. Growth spurt starts later in boys than girls and has a higher peak velocity than in girls. Linear growth can be slowed or delayed in adolescence if diet is severely restricted in energy.
- ◆ **Changes in weight:** - 25-50% of final adult ideal weight is gained during adolescence. The timing and amount of weight gain can be greatly affected by energy intake and energy expenditure.
- ◆ **Changes in body composition and skeletal mass:** - In the pre-pubertal period the proportion of fat and muscle in boys and girls is similar, and lean body mass is equal in both sexes.
  - Growing boys gain proportionately more muscle mass than fat and more lean body mass as compared to girls.
  - As adults the normal percentage of body fat is about 23% for women and 15% for men.
  - Approximately 45% of skeletal mass is added during adolescence. By the end of the second decade of life, 90% of total bone mass is gained.
  - Females with delayed puberty fail to gain bone mass at a normal rate and show lower mineral density as adults. Nutrition is one of the environmental factors that determines onset of puberty.
  - The pubertal growth can be monitored by using height-for-age, weight-for-age and body mass index (BMI)-for-age (weight/ height<sup>2</sup>).

### The following are seen as the main nutritional issues of adolescents:

- ◆ Undernutrition and associated deficiencies, often originating earlier in life.
- ◆ Iron deficiency anaemia and other micronutrient deficiencies.
- ◆ Obesity and associated cardiovascular disease risk markers.
- ◆ Early pregnancy.
- ◆ Inadequate or unhealthy diets and lifestyles.

### Functions of various food components and why it is important for adolescents:

- ◆ **Proteins** are required for body building and help in repair and maintenance of body tissues. Egg, milk, pulses, fish, meat, ground nut are some examples of body building foods.
- ◆ **Fats** are high-energy foods and provide fat-soluble vitamins. Oil, ghee, butter, cheese, egg, fat of meat, fish, ground nut oil, and mustard oil are some examples of fat.
- ◆ **Carbohydrates** form the major component of most diets and are the main source of energy. Rice, potato, sugar, banana, jaggery, sugarcane, honey are the examples.
- ◆ **Vitamins and minerals** are required in small quantities. They play an important role in growth, repair and regulation of vital body functions. Fruits and vegetables are the examples of protective food.
- ◆ **Calcium** needs during is greater in adolescence because of rapid increase in lean body mass and skeletal growth. As maximum bone growth occurs during this period adolescents are prone to calcium deficiency and increased tendency to bone fracture. Later on in life calcium deficiency in adolescence is associated with high post-menopausal bone loss. Milk and milk products, nachni, green leafy vegetables are rich source of calcium.
- ◆ **Iron is the most widespread micronutrient deficiency.**  
Deficiency is most prevalent among pregnant women, followed by pre-school children and adolescents – particularly girls. Key causes include poor dietary intake, reduced bioavailability, loss of blood in case of heavy menstrual bleeding and increased losses due to intestinal worms.
- ◆ Foods rich in iron are (i) Green vegetables and fruits (ii) Grains-wheat, jowar, bajra, sprouted pulses, ground nut, sesame, jaggery, dried fruits (iii) Liver, egg, fish, meat (iv) Vitamin C rich foods help in absorption of iron.
- ◆ Citrus fruits like oranges, lemon, amla, apple, pear are rich in vitamin C.

In our Indian diets, the absorption of iron from the diet is poor because of the presence of certain chemical substances.

### Conclusion:

Adolescence is a period of rapid growth. Nutrition being an important determinant of physical growth of adolescents is an important area that needs attention. Teens are becoming more independent and making many food decisions on their own. Many teens have a growth spurt and an increase in appetite and need healthy foods to meet their needs. Adolescents need at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity on most days for maintenance of good health and fitness and for healthy weight during growth. Therefore, focus is on adolescent nutrient requirements and food habits

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