



Statistics:

- Recent survey data shows that American children, ages 8 to 15 years, rate “bullying” as a greater problem than racism or pressure to have sex or use alcohol and other drugs.

— *Childhood Bullying: Implications for Physicians*, American Family Physician, 2004

- Children who are bullied are more likely than other children to be depressed, have lower self-esteem, feel lonely, anxious, and think about suicide. They are also more likely to report that they feel unwell and have more migraine headaches.

— *School-Based Health Professionals and Bullying Prevention*, National Assembly on School-Based Health Care, Susan Limber, PhD, 2003

- Young people who bully are more likely than those who do not to skip school and drop out of school. They are also more likely to smoke, drink alcohol and get into fights.

— *Nansel et al, 2003; Olweus, 1993*

What is “bullying?”

“Bullying” occurs when someone hurts or scares another person on purpose, and the person being bullied has a hard time defending himself or herself. Bullying can also happen online or electronically. “Cyber bullying” occurs when children or teens bully each other using the Internet, mobile phones or other cyber technology. Girls are about twice as likely as boys to be victims and perpetrators of cyber bullying (Kowalski et al., 2005). “Bullying” affects children directly through punching, shoving, spreading bad rumors about people, keeping certain people out of a group, teasing people in a mean way, sending mean text, e-mail or instant messages, or posting nasty pictures or messages about others in blogs or on Web sites.

— *Stop Bullying Now, U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)*, www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov

“Bullying” can happen to anyone.

Some bullies pick on people who seem different, whether it is the color of their skin, the way they talk or dress, their size, or their name. Some people are bullied because they have a disability. Sometimes bullies are mean for no apparent reason we can see.

— *American Academy of Family Physicians, 2004*, www.aafp.org

How can children handle bullies?

- Walk away
- Join clubs or take part in activities
- Tell a trusted adult
- If it feels safe, stand up to the bully
- Stay in a group

— *Stop Bullying Now, U.S. Health Resources and Services (HRSA)*, www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov

How can children handle cyber bullies?

- Count to five and relax; then decide to respond or to not respond
- Save instant messages or chat transcripts and report them to adults or service provider
- Remove yourself from the situation by signing off
- Block the person from sending messages
- Change account, screen name and phone number; and seek legal action

— *Stop Bullying Now, U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)*, www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov

Where to go for more information on bullying:

- www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov – the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services sponsors this site to educate children and adults on how to identify, prevent and intervene with bullying in schools.

AMA Alliance

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- www.aafp.org – the American Academy of Family Physicians is a professional medical member organization dedicated to preserving and promoting the science and art of family medicine and to ensure high-quality, cost-effective health care for patients.
- www.aap.org – the American Academy of Pediatrics is a professional organization committed to the attainment of optimal physical, mental, and social health and well-being for all infants, children, adolescents and young adults.
- www.csn.org – the Child Safety Network is a professional organization dedicated to making America a safer place for children to live.

The AMA Alliance, Inc. is a national health advocacy network committed to promoting better health. The Stop America's Violence Everywhere (SAVE) program assists victims of abuse, teaches children about bullies and conflict resolution and educates the public about child health and safety. All resources, including health-focused coloring books and bookmarks for children, are available at www.amaalliance.org.



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Statistics:

- 83.4 percent of youth who ride bicycles reported rarely or never wearing a bicycle helmet.
— *Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance- United States, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2005*
- Proper usage of child safety seats decreases the risk of death in passenger cars by 71 percent for infants and by 54 percent for toddlers, ages one to four years.
— *National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2005*
- 10.2 percent of youth reported rarely or never wearing a seatbelt when riding in a car driven by someone else.
— *Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance- United States, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2005*

Recommendations to parents and guardians:

- Make sure your child always wears a helmet while riding a bike.
— *The American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org*
- Always use a car safety seat, starting with your baby's first ride home from the hospital, until your child weighs at least 40 pounds.
— *The American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org*
- All infants should ride rear-facing until they have reached at least one year of age or weigh at least 20 pounds. Once your child reaches these marks, they can ride forward-facing.
— *The American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org*
- The safest place for children to ride in an automobile, ages 12 and under, is in the back seat due to weight.
— *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), www.cdc.gov*
- Never let your child swim in any body of water without an adult watching and close by.
— *U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, www.cpsc.gov*

- Do not let young children and children who cannot swim use inflatable toys or mattresses in water that is above the waist.
— *U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, www.cpsc.gov*
- Teach children to stop at the curb, look and to never cross the street without an adult.
— *The American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org*
- Be sure children wear the protective equipment made for the sports they are playing, such as shin pads, mouth guards, wrist guards, eye protection and helmets.
— *The American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org*
- Post the poison control number, 800.222.1222, on or near every home telephone.
— *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), www.cdc.gov*
- Install and check smoke detectors in your home. Battery-powered smoke detectors last approximately one year.
— *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), www.cdc.gov*
- Make sure your children wear hats, cover-up clothing and sunglasses and apply sunscreen when participating in outdoor activities.
— *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), www.cdc.gov*
- Encourage your children to make sun safety a habit.
— *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), www.cdc.gov*

Where to go for more information on child safety:

- www.cdc.gov – The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is a federal agency protecting the health and safety of all Americans and for providing essential human services, especially for those people who are least able to help themselves.
- www.cpsc.gov – the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission is committed to protecting consumers and families from products that pose a fire, electrical, chemical or mechanical hazard or can injure children.

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- www.SAMHSA.gov – the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration’s site offers numerous resources for individuals, coalitions and communities interested in preventing all forms of substance abuse.
- www.healthinschools.org – the Center for Health and Health Care in Schools (CHHCS) is a nonpartisan policy and program resource center dedicated to strengthening health care delivery systems for children and adolescents.
- www.drugfree.org – the Partnership for a Drug-Free America is a nonprofit coalition of communication, health, medical and educational professionals working to reduce illicit drug use and help people live healthy, drug-free lives.
- www.theantidrug.com – the AntiDrug.com Web site equips parents and other adult caregivers with the tools they need to raise drug-free kids.
- www.freevibe.com – freevibe.com equips teens with the tools they need to keep friends and peers drug-free.
- www.faceproject.org – FACE is a national non-profit organization that stands for “Facing Alcohol Concerns through Education” and provides resources for individuals and organizations to take action on alcohol issues.

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Statistics:

- In 2005, 47 percent of high school students reported having had sexual intercourse, and 14 percent of high school students reported having had four or more sex partners during their life.

— *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2005*

- In 2002, 55 percent of males and 54 percent of females, ages 15 to 19 years, reported that they had engaged in oral sex with someone of the opposite sex.

— *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2005*

- Forty percent of teenage girls reported that they have experienced personal pressure about sex and relationships.

— *Henry J. Kaiser Foundation, 2003*

- Of the 19 million new sexually transmitted diseases diagnosed annually in the United States, almost half of them are among teenagers and young adults, ages 15 to 24 years.

— *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2006*

- In 2003, teenage girls, ages 15 to 19 years, gave birth to approximately 414,580 babies.

— *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2005*

Recommendations to parents and guardians:

- Seize the moment. When a TV program or music video raises issues about responsible sexual behavior, use it as a springboard for discussion.

- Keep it low-key. Don't pressure your child to talk about sex. Simply broach the subject when you are alone with your child.

- Be honest and share your parental values. If you are uncomfortable, say so—but explain that it is important to keep talking. If you do not know the answers to your child's questions, offer to find the answers or research them together.

- Be direct. Clearly state your feelings about specific issues, such as sexual intercourse. Present the risks objectively, including sexually transmitted diseases and unplanned pregnancy.

- Consider your child's point of view. Don't lecture your child or rely on scare tactics to discourage sexual activity. Instead, listen carefully and encourage dialogue.

- Invite more discussion. Let your child know that it's acceptable to talk with you about sex whenever he or she has questions or concerns.

- Be prepared for questions like these:

- “How will I know I'm ready for sex?”

Peer pressure, curiosity and loneliness steer some teenagers into sexual activity. Remind your child that it's okay to wait.

- “What if my boyfriend or girlfriend wants to have sex—but I don't?” Explain that no one should have sex out of a sense of obligation or fear. Any form of forced sex is rape, whether the perpetrator is a stranger or someone your child has been dating. Emphasize that alcohol and drugs impair judgment and reduce inhibitions.

- “What if I'm questioning my sexual orientation?” Help your child understand that he or she is just beginning to explore sexual attraction. These feelings may change as time goes on. Above all, however, let your child know that you love him or her unconditionally. Praise your child for sharing his or her feelings.

— *The Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research, from an article on Sex Education: Talking to your teen about sex, 2005, www.mayoclinic.com*

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Where to go for more information on teen sexuality:

- www.cdc.gov – the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is a federal agency protecting the health and safety of all Americans and providing essential human services.
- www.kff.org – the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation is a private foundation focusing on the major health care issues facing the nation and providing facts and analysis for policymakers, the media, the health care community, and the general public.
- www.mayoclinic.com – the Mayo Clinic is a not-for-profit medical practice dedicated to the diagnosis and treatment of virtually every type of complex illness.

- www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/teensexual-health.html – MedlinePlus brings together authoritative information from the National Library of Medicine, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and other government agencies and health-related organizations on the latest health news.

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