



Adolescent Privacy & Confidentiality Policy

As patients become adolescents, they take more responsibility for themselves and for their own health care. We want both patients and their parents to understand this increased independent role of the adolescent, and that our primary concern responsibility is for them and for their needs.

We encourage our adolescent and young adult patients to speak with us directly, and to feel free to discuss with us any concerns that they may have about their health. As such, we will ask the parent to step out of the room for a portion of the visit, so that the patient can express themselves. This also helps teens learn to communicate with their health care providers, and learn to advocate for themselves as they become adults.

On some occasions, there will be issues, such as sexuality and substance abuse issues, that our patients discuss with us that will be kept confidential. We encourage this type of honest discussion and it is our policy to keep this type of information confidential, with the exception of issues that might be life-threatening.

Our policy is consistent with [Massachusetts law](#), the American Academy of Pediatrics and Society for Adolescent Medicine.

Key elements of our Adolescent Care Policy include:

- ✓ In the adolescent years, we will begin to ask the patient if they would like to have a parent present for the full visit, otherwise, we will ask the parent to step out of the room for a portion of the visit.
- ✓ When we see teens and young adults or speak to them by phone, information discussed is considered private and confidential. This means that it will not be shared with the parents without permission from the patient.
- ✓ A parent may also wish to share information with us, and of course we will listen to what they want to share and provide guidance.
- ✓ Sometimes a visit may include things that should be shared with a parent, in those cases, we will work with the teen to support them in communication with the parents, or explain to them what information we need to share for their safety.
- ✓ In Massachusetts, teens may attend a medical visit without a parent starting at age 16 years old. They may also seek care for substance abuse issues, sexually transmitted diseases, and questions of pregnancy at any age.

We know that the transition from childhood to adolescence to adulthood is a big step for both patients and parents. We are here to guide and support you both through all of the ups and downs of your babies becoming adults!