



IDEAS FOR PARENTS
WITH TEENAGERS



TEENAGERS, THEIR BRAINS AND HORMONES



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It's easy to see teenagers as being moody and difficult. They can be, but not because they're bad, it's because of all the changes they're going through.

BRAINS

Research shows changes in teenage brains cause some of their behaviour. Increases in a substance called myelin speeds up brain processing. At the same time parts of the brain that aren't used are pruned.

DIFFERENT PARTS

What a teenager does with their time can influence the way their brain develops. The part of the brain that develops when lying around watching TV all day or playing computer games is different from the parts that will develop when they study, do sport or art, or play music.

CLEAR RULES

Set clear rules about alcohol that they have to follow when you're not there to supervise. Explain the risks of alcohol and drugs.

HELP THEM PLAN

The part of the brain that manages organisation, planning, decision-making and impulse control is still developing. Getting angry when your child isn't managing their time isn't fair and will not help your relationship. Instead you could help them learn to plan and prioritise while they develop these skills themselves.

IMPULSE CONTROL

Some teenagers are very impulsive. They have to do things in order to learn and find out about things.

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

At this age the brain is more likely to be affected by alcohol and drugs. Binge drinking and smoking marijuana can affect memory and attention, and young people's ability to manage the transition to adulthood.

HORMONES

CHANGING

Reproductive hormones—oestrogen in girls and testosterone in boys—are released. This leads to changes in body shape and the development of sexual organs. Teenagers also have an increase in the hormone melatonin which changes their sleeping patterns.

DEVELOPMENT

Help them understand that everyone develops differently and at different ages. Help them understand that what they are going through is normal.

You're their parent not their friend. Keep them safe and talk through the boundaries you set for them.

SLEEPING IN

Growth hormones work when teenagers are asleep. That's why teenagers need lots of rest.

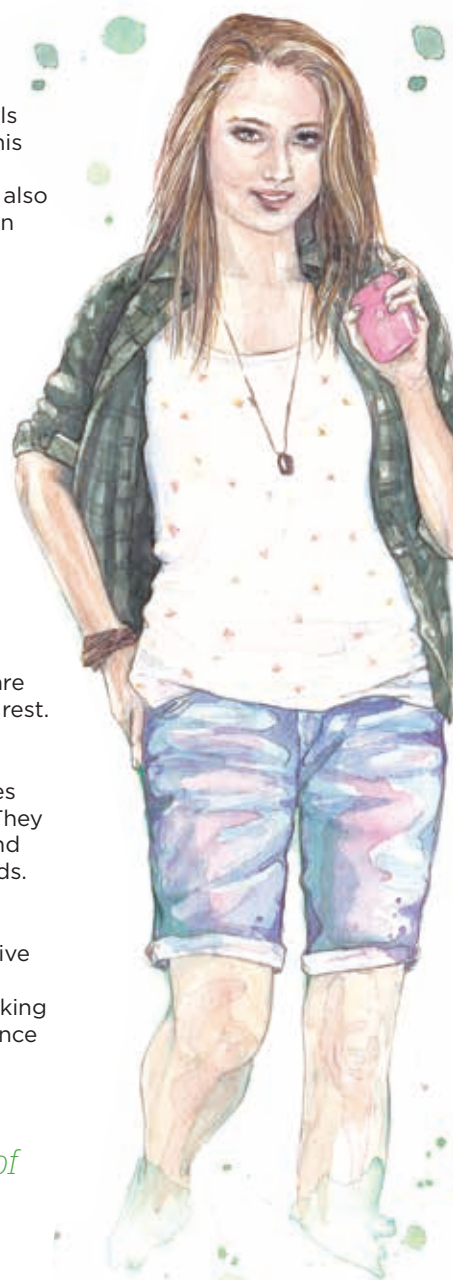
SELF AWARENESS

As these hormones make all these changes teenagers think about themselves more. They get self conscious about how they look and worry if they are different from their friends.

GET OUT OF THE HOUSE

Hormones can lead to bursts of energy. Give them time and space to burn this off. You don't have to drive them everywhere. Walking or biking to school gives them independence and exercise.

Set an example in the way you drink and limit the availability of alcohol.



For more information and resources, go to
www.familyservices.govt.nz/parentingteens

For helpline support, phone Youthline on
0800 376 633 or free txt **234**

For email support, go to
parenttalk@youthline.co.nz



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