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Dear Parent,

Your child is approaching (or has already entered) adolescence. In addition to the physical changes that are (or will soon be) occurring, there are significant changes in attitude and feelings at this age. We hope to ensure that your future interactions in our office are positive for you and your child.

We request that a parent be present at all routine sick or well visits. This will allow us to obtain any pertinent medical history from you about your child, and also to get your consent for any recommended vaccinations, bloodwork, or other testing. In the event that you cannot accompany your child to a visit, we would ask that they be accompanied by a responsible adult who can give consent/information in your absence (and with your written permission ideally). Teenagers who have reached the legal age of consent (18 years) may come to their visits unaccompanied.

We believe that teenagers should have the opportunity to speak privately with their health care providers about feelings and concerns that arise as they go through this difficult time of life. While we always encourage our patients to share their concerns with their parents, it is important that they have the ability to speak to their doctor alone for part or most of their visits here. They are becoming more mature and independent; please try to encourage your child to bring up important health concerns with a professional who can help.

In particular, there are subjects that may remain confidential between your child and us (his/her healthcare providers). Our adolescents always have access to appropriate care through our office. New Jersey law allows health providers to maintain confidentiality with teenagers in the areas of sexuality (pregnancy, sexually-transmitted diseases, contraception), mental health, and drug abuse. We will always inform parents if there is a life-threatening issue. We strongly encourage all teenagers to discuss their visits here with their parents.

Please feel free to ask us questions about these issues at any time. We look forward to many more years of caring for your child, and we appreciate your understanding of the special nature of the doctor/patient relationship during adolescence.

Sincerely,

The Physicians of Princeton-Nassau Pediatrics