

The teenage years are a wonderful and difficult time in every life for kids **and** caregivers! Your teen is on the brink of adulthood, but is still a child in many ways. It may seem that so many parts of their life are out of your control. The truth is, there are many things you can do to safely steer your teen through these years.

The leading causes of death to teens include:

- Motor vehicle accidents.
- Homicide.
- Suicide.
- Unintentional poisonings or drug overdose.
- Other accidents. This includes drowning, injuries from guns, and pedestrian injuries.

### How can I help my teen be safe?

Take time to talk about safety. Share your views and remember what it was like to be a teen. Give your teen credit for being able to make good choices. Be a good safety role model.

#### Cars

- Always wear a seat belt. Everyone should be buckled while riding in the car.
- Visit [childrenswi.org/teendriving](http://childrenswi.org/teendriving) for help with teen driver safety. Teen drivers need support, education, and practice to keep them safe on the road.
- Reduce distractions to stay focused on the road. Put away cell phones and limit number of others in the car.

#### Water

- Remind your teen about the buddy system when swimming. Teens should never swim alone.
- Teach teens how swimming in open water is different than in a pool. Open water could be a river or lake.
- Everyone should wear life jackets when on a boat.

#### Burns

- Put smoke alarms and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms on every level and in every sleeping area of your home.
- Teach teens to unplug items like irons and hair styling tools after use. Wait for them to cool before putting them away.
- Stay at least 3 feet away from hot surfaces and open flames.

#### Concussion

- Make sure your teen wears the right safety gear for their activity. This includes a helmet.

### Lock Boxes: gun and medicine safety

- Keep any guns in your house unloaded. They should be stored in a locked spot, separate from the ammunition.
- Teens should only handle a gun when a responsible adult is closely watching.
- Keep all medicines in their original containers and locked in a cabinet. This includes any e-cigarette, vaping, and tobacco products.
- Watch your teen take their medicine. Make sure they have the right dose.
- Add the Poison help line to your phone contacts: 1-800-222-1222.

### Biking or walking

- Make sure your teen wears a helmet every time they ride a bike or anything with wheels. Visit [childrenswi.org/safetycenter](https://childrenswi.org/safetycenter) for more information.
- Find safe walking routes to and from school and friends' houses.
- Teach your teen to put away their cellphone, headphones and other electronics when crossing the street.

**For more information about health and safety, check out the online resources at:**  
[childrenswi.org/learn](https://childrenswi.org/learn).

**ALERT:** Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

**This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.**