



Tips for parents of young adults 18–21

Now that your child is a young adult

This can be an exciting, but stressful, time for parents and their young adult children. Whether children are still living at home at this age, moving out on their own, or going away to school, they will want to exercise their independence. They'll want to make some important decisions on their own.

Letting go can be hard. Children need to pull away from their parents in order to become independent, self-sufficient adults. But your son or daughter still needs to know you're there and can be relied upon for love and support.

If your young adult is moving away from home

If your son or daughter is going away to college or moving away from home, help to prepare a first-aid kit, along with a supply of medicines he or she needs to take. Make sure he or she knows how to refill prescriptions and has access to up-to-date personal medical history information, including immunizations, medications, and any health conditions that need ongoing care. Check with your health care plan to understand coverage while your young adult is living away from home.

Staying up to date with well visits

Remind your young adult to come in for a well-care visit every year until the age of 21. This gives your son or daughter a chance to ask questions and talk to members of his or her health care team about any health concerns he or she might have. Your son or daughter's doctor will also make sure he or she stays up to date on immunizations and tests.

Taking charge of health care needs

Starting at age 18, your son or daughter can access the online services that are available to Kaiser Permanente adult members. With member access, your son or daughter can refill prescriptions and fill out a Health Profile to get an online report with health recommendations tailored just for him or her.

Kaiser Permanente members over 18 who receive primary care at a Kaiser Permanente medical office may exchange secure e-mail messages with their health care teams. They can also make appointments and view their medical records, including immunizations and lab results, online.

Encourage your young adult to take charge of his or her own health care by signing up for access to our services on our secure member site at kp.org/wa.

Healthy behaviors

Even though your young adult is making lots of decisions and taking charge of many parts of his or her life, your advice and guidance is still important. Continue to talk to your young adult and encourage healthy behaviors.

- **Tobacco:** If your son or daughter uses tobacco and needs help quitting, contact Quit for Life® at 1-800-462-5327 or visit quitnow.net/kpwa.
- **Alcohol and drugs:** Remind your young adult about the dangers of using alcohol and drugs. If you think your son or daughter has a substance abuse problem, Kaiser Permanente Behavioral Health Services can help. For an appointment, call 1-888-287-2680.
- **Screening for cervical cancer:** Your daughter should get a first Pap test when she turns 21, and continue having Pap tests every 3 years.
- **Safer sex:** If your son or daughter is sexually active, remind him or her to use a condom every time. If your daughter is sexually active, remind her that she ALSO needs to use other forms of birth control if she might become pregnant. Sexually active women 25 and younger should be tested every year for chlamydia (a common sexually transmitted disease).
- **Violence:** Tell your son or daughter not to carry a weapon of any kind. Help young adults learn to solve conflicts without violence. Teach them to talk it over or walk away.
- **Safety on the road:** Remind your son or daughter always to wear a seat belt and never to drive after drinking alcohol or using any drugs. Tell your son or daughter to stay out of a car if the driver's been

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drinking or using drugs. Encourage him or her to call you or another family member, a friend, a cab, or to use public transportation, instead.

- **Helmet use:** Stress the importance of wearing a helmet when on a motorcycle, bicycle, or skateboard.
- **Vitamins and minerals:** Your young adult needs 1,300 mg (milligrams) of calcium and 400 IU (international units) of vitamin D every day to build strong bones. Young women should take a multivitamin that has folate and iron in addition to taking a calcium and vitamin D supplement.
- **Stress:** Encourage your young adult to get some physical activity every day, eat regular meals, and get enough sleep to help deal with the stresses of work, school, and social life.

Know the signs of depression

Depression can be treated. Know these signs so you can help your son or daughter get treatment right away if he or she is depressed:

- Crying a lot, feeling hopeless or sad
- Lack of energy and loss of interest in friends or hobbies
- Changes in sleeping or eating habits
- Irritability or anger
- Trouble concentrating
- Low self-esteem
- Complaints of headaches or stomachaches
- Talk of hurting or killing oneself
- Problems getting along with others; disruptive behavior at home, work, or school
- Talk of dropping out of school

If you notice these signs, and they last 2 weeks or longer, encourage your son or daughter to make an appointment right away with his or her doctor. Depression can be treated.

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS OF YOUNG ADULTS

Quit for Life (to help you quit tobacco): 1-800-462-5327

Kaiser Permanente Behavioral Health Services:

– Call 1-888-287-2680

Kaiser Permanente Consulting Nurse Service:

– Call 24 hours a day, 1-800-297-6877

Kaiser Permanente Resource Line: 1-800-992-2279

Kaiser Permanente's website: kp.org/wa