

# Tips for parents of young adults 18–21

Once your child reaches young adulthood, they will want to exercise their independence and make some important decisions on their own. Letting go can be hard to do, but your child still needs to know that you're there for them and can be relied upon for love and support.

## How can you help?

**Well-care visits.** Encourage them to get a well-care visit once a year. This is a chance for them to talk to their health care team about their questions or health concerns, and make sure they are up to date on immunizations and tests.

**Online services.** Remind them that they can manage their health care online. Starting at age 18, young adults can access online services available to Kaiser Permanente adult members:

- Exchange secure emails with their health care team\*
- Schedule appointments\*
- View their medical records, including immunizations and lab results\*
- Refill prescriptions and get free shipping to their home

To register for online services, they can go to [kp.org/wa](https://kp.org/wa) and follow the instructions.

**Moving away from home.** Help them prepare to take responsibility for their health care as they leave home. It's a good idea for them to:

- Find out what their health plan covers and who they can see for health care if they are moving to a different area. They can call Member Services at **1-888-901-4636**, or they can check online if they have access to services on our secure member site.
- Prepare a first-aid kit with a supply of any medicines they take and a complete, up-to-date medical history. They will need a complete list of their immunizations, medications, and any conditions they have that need ongoing care.
- Make sure Kaiser Permanente has a complete list of their immunizations on record.

\*If they get primary care at a Kaiser Permanente medical office.

**Signs of depression.** Stay alert for these symptoms:

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

**Depression can be treated. If signs of depression last two weeks or longer, encourage your son or daughter to make an appointment with their doctor right away.**

**Healthy choices.** Encourage them to:

- **Avoid tobacco products.** Not only can tobacco kill them, it's expensive, it stains their teeth, and makes them smell bad. If they need help quitting, they can contact Quit for Life® at **1-800-462-5327** or visit [quitnow.net/kpwa](https://quitnow.net/kpwa).
- **Avoid alcohol and drugs.** Using alcohol or drugs puts their life and health at risk. If they'd like to talk with someone about alcohol or drug use problems, they can make a confidential appointment with Kaiser Permanente Behavioral Health Services by calling **1-888-287-2680**.
- **Practice safe sex.** If your young adult is sexually active, remind them to use a condom every time they have sex. Women who might become pregnant should also use other forms of birth control. Sexually active women 25 and younger should be tested for chlamydia every year.

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- **Women: Get screened for cervical cancer.** Women should have their first Pap test when they turn 21, and continue having Pap tests every 3 years.
  - **Stay safe on the road.** Remind them to always wear a seat belt, and always wear a helmet when they're on a motorcycle, bicycle, or skateboard. They should never drive if they've had any alcohol to drink or used any drugs. They should never ride in a car with a driver who's been drinking or using drugs. Urge them to take a cab or ridesharing service such as Lyft or Uber, use public transportation, or call a friend or family member for a ride.
  - **Prevent violence.** Tell them not to carry or use a weapon of any kind. Help them learn how to solve conflicts without violence. Teach them to talk it over or walk away, and to ask for help if they need it.
  - **Use safe online practices.** Remind them not to share personal information about themselves or your family over the Internet. The things they post on social networking sites (such as Facebook) can stay there forever. They should never communicate with anyone who invites them to meet in person.
  - **Manage stress.** Encourage your young adult to get physical exercise every day, eat regular meals, and get enough sleep.
  - **Keep immunizations up to date.** By age 18, young adults should have had the following:
    - Hepatitis B: 3 doses to protect against disease that can cause serious liver damage.
    - HPV: 3 doses to protect against 4 types of genital human papillomavirus (HPV).
    - IPV: 4 doses to protect against polio.
    - MCV4: 1 dose to protect against meningitis.
    - MMR: 2 doses to protect against 3 diseases – measles, mumps, and rubella (also known as German measles).
    - Tdap: 1 dose to protect against 3 serious diseases – tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis.
    - Varicella: 2 doses to protect against chickenpox. If they have already had chickenpox, they might be immune and may not need to be vaccinated. They should discuss this with their doctor or nurse.
- Young adults can check their immunization record online by registering for secure services at **kp.org/wa**. If they've missed some immunizations, we can catch them up.

- **Get enough vitamins and minerals.** Young adults need 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.
- **Confidentiality.\*\*** Remember that everything your young adult discusses with their health care team is private – including stress, depression, sex, birth control, and drug or alcohol issues.

## Need help?

Quit for Life® (for help quitting tobacco):

**1-800-462-5327**

Kaiser Permanente Behavioral Health Services:

**1-888-287-2680**

Kaiser Permanente Consulting Nurse Service:

**1-800-297-6877, 24/7**

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

Kaiser Permanente website: **kp.org/wa**

\*\*The physicians of Kaiser Permanente maintain the confidentiality of patient health information in accordance with the law.