

A Room of your Own

As children become teens and young adults, our approach to their healthcare changes with them. After all, the care of an adolescent should be quite different from the care of a younger child!

Starting at age 12-13 years, we will invite parents and teens into separate rooms. There are many reasons for this:

- Privacy permits both the parent and the teen to talk about their concerns or questions more freely
- Privacy allows an opportunity for the pediatrician and the teen to discuss matters related to drugs, alcohol, sexuality, body image, mood and safety. It is extremely important for the teen to understand that the pediatrician values their trust and assures their confidentiality. We promise to keep their questions and answers confidential unless there is urgent and immediate threat to life.
- Privacy permits the teen to be more comfortable with the physical exam. (Nurse chaperones are always available)
- Working to help teens share important information with parents is part of our approach.
- This feature of care for teens is recommended by experts in adolescent care, such as the American Academy of Pediatrics

Of course, this all depends upon mutual trust. The pediatrician has particular expertise in adolescent medicine and is especially well suited to provide teens with a medical home. We hope that we have earned the trust of both your teen and your family. We pledge to work *for you* and *with you* to help teens become caring, competent, accomplished adults.

Not everyone is ready by age 12-13 for time alone with the doctor. Teens always have the option to ask for a parent to be present for the entire visit. This is absolutely fine!

Please also visit our website at www.hunterdonpediatrics.org for resources related to adolescence under “Ages and Stages”.

If you have concerns about being separated during your visit, just ask!