



# Medical Professionals

## Are We Almost There Yet?



By: SALVATORE A. CARFAGNO DO,  
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**T**he TEENAGE YEARS is a new chapter in "How am I going to get through this and raise them?" First, it is not your teenage child's fault. This is a time in their lives when the body changes rapidly. To lay the groundwork, your little girl is about to blossom into a young woman. Her hormones both female and male are increased in production. This causes changes in her body. The skin may become oily with increased pimples, and there may be increased hair growth in many body areas. Breast tissue will start to develop more rapidly. The body contour will change as the body deposits additional fat in the hip and thigh areas. Yes parents, ESPECIALLY Dad, the dreaded PERIOD will start. You and your child may be scared. Take a deep breath, it will be ok! Now that we are past the period part and you have not passed out, we can move ahead. As you read through the rest of this article remember, this time in her life is as difficult for her as it is for Mom and Dad. Be patient with her and yourselves as everyone goes through this stage.

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Your daughter's period (menses) may or may not be regular (monthly). This can be normal as her hormones may be produced in an irregular manner. This causes irregular period bleeding. This pattern will continue until these hormones are being produced at a constant level.

The time it takes to become regular can vary from no time to several months. If there are concerns of excessive bleeding, contact your doctor.

Her skin may become oily. This is caused by hormonal changes. Try to have your daughter keep it simple. Avoid chemicals, soaps and the temptation to make the face less oily. This may result in the skin becoming red, irritated and more oily. I would suggest using a warm moist washcloth. A mild soap can be added if the washcloth alone does not work. Stay away from antibacterial, heavily scented, perfumed soaps. Birth control may help to decrease acne and oily skin changes. The birth control will help to stabilize hormone production and avoid or limit these skin changes. In fact, there are birth control pills that have FDA approval to treat this. It can make a world of a difference in your daughter's life, level of self confidence and save money on skin care products.

Your daughter may experience pain at any point before, during, and after her period or menses. Use of a heating pad may help with menstrual or period associated pain.

Acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin) as directed can be added if needed. If the pain or discomfort seems out of the norm, have her seen by a physician. Do not just let this go unattended. There can be other more serious problems that need to be addressed. If the pain is diagnosed as period pain, birth control medication will usually offer her significant relief.

When should your daughter be seen by a gynecologist? The current recommendations are for women to have a gyn exam and

and greet to allow her to become familiar with the notion of a gynecologist. At this meeting, I have the chance to talk with your teen, and with you, the parents. I cover many difficult and challenging topics from body changes, psychological changes, routine health maintenance issues (breast exams, STDs, pregnancy prevention, contraception,

keep her out of trouble.

The HPV vaccination is a hot topic. This is a vaccination program to prevent infection with Human papillomavirus (HPV). HPV is an infection that is transmitted by close personal contact. This means coital and noncoital sexual activity. In English, just having skin to skin genital contact not necessarily

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vaginal penetration can cause this infection. HPV is associated with genital warts, cervical abnormalities, and cervical cancer. The FDA has approved a vaccine for females aged 9 to 26 years. This is a strategic time to discuss this with a health care provider. The vaccine is a preventive tool and is not a substitute for cancer screening.

I consider this to be a pivotal point in her young life. This is a scary and exciting moment in her life. Be patient, caring and supportive. Do not let your personal bias get your daughter into trouble. Choose a Gynecologist that can help your little girl be well informed and aware of beneficial options that are available to her.

Pap test (cervical cancer screening) approximately three years after the onset of vaginal intercourse (sex to most of us) or no later than age 21. After the first screening, annual cervical cytology screening (pap) should be conducted for women younger than 30 years old. In my practice, I encourage parents to bring their daughters into my office for a consultation. A sort of meet

etc...), I also attempt to establish a doctor/patient relationship, and fortify the parent/child relationship. It is important that your daughter can come to you to discuss birth control, sex, and sexual activity without fear. Let's face it, the notion of our little girls being intimate much less having sex, makes our heads want to pop-off! Put this aside, keep her close and guide her to



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