



Self Health- NOW!

By Cheryl Fenton Hendrick

Your trig final is in a week. You've got the sweetest of boyfriends (isn't he cute?). You just made the soccer division finals.

When you're busy thinking about math tests, next week's dance or college apps, life in your 40s and 50s

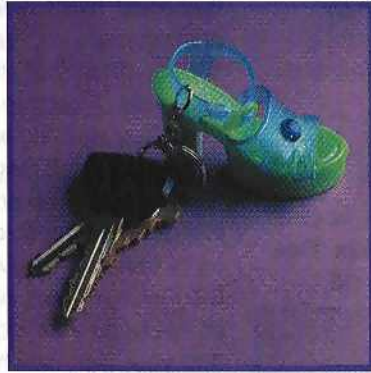
probably doesn't even cross your mind. After all that's at least a million years away, right? Believe it or not, how you treat your body and mind in your teenage years can make your life better when you are a teen-plus-20. Here are a few tips that will help you stay your healthy, happy young self, even when Father Time tells you you're not a kid anymore.

Taking care of your body now will guarantee a bright future

Photography by Ken Robinson

Crash-Test Dummies

Being part of the “in” crowd is great, but joining the “in-the-hospital” crowd is probably not what you had in mind, huh? According to the



Centers for Disease Control, unintentional injuries rank as the leading cause of death of people between the ages of 16 and 20. Of

those, car crashes are number 1. In fact, in 1999 in the United States, teen car crashes accounted for 75 percent of all deaths caused by unintentional injuries.

Some of the most common culprits (any of these sound familiar?):

- Speeding (“If I don’t get home soon, my mom will kill me.”)
- Overestimating ability to control car in risky maneuvers (“Oh, I almost missed the turn. I think we can still make it.”)
- No seat belt (“But it’s uncomfortable and it’s wrinkling my new shirt.”)
- More than three people in the car (“Hey, let’s all pack into my car and go to the mall.”)
- Driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol (“I’m OK to drive.”)

So next time your BFF hops in the car with you, tell her to buckle up. Drive a little slower. Use your mirrors. You want to be around to let your kids borrow the keys to your car someday, don’t you?

Muscle Madness

Body image is tough to deal with during your teen years. Hormonal changes have you all freaked out and society can pressure you into



feeling like you’re not what you should be. Staying active with exercise is a

great way to feel good about yourself and your body.

Don’t start working out until you are at least 12 years old, and even then, take it easy with light weights, if any, says certified personal trainer Steve Mallory. Teenagers should only exercise 30 to 45 minutes, three times a week. Mallory explains that you will get the most out of your workout if you exercise at your target heart rate (the rate-per-minute formula: 220 minus your age times 70%), not above it, or you risk burning much-needed muscle.

Exercise doesn’t need to be boring, like the tedious treadmill. Put on that super-cool, sporty workout outfit and turn “active” into “adventure.” Go disco bowling. Take the pooch for a hike. Strut your stuff at dance lessons. Join the cheerleading squad. Exercise can be fun, and it’s always great for your body and your overall wellbeing.

Sun Sense

That hottie in homeroom may love your sun-kissed look after summer break, but think how he’ll feel about you in 30 years, when you look more like a leather handbag than a beach babe.

“Teen-agers don’t think about

long-term effects of baking in the sun. It may look great now, but damage can show itself as early as in your 20s with dark spots, fine lines and more,” warns Jill Schuck, beauty editor of *Platinum* magazine.

Your “healthy” tan is actually your skin trying to tell you something—it’s in trouble. When the sun’s ultraviolet (UV) rays stimulate the cells, they make a brown pigment called melanin. Your brown color is your skin trying to protect itself from further damage. Watch out for two types of rays—UVA, which penetrates deep into the skin layers, contributing to early aging and wrinkling; and



/ continued on page 48

continued from page 47

UVB, the main cause of sunburn. Both are nasty and both can cause skin cancer. Choose a sunscreen that blocks both of these skin villains.

"No one disagrees that a bronzed glow looks great, but it can easily be achieved with self-tanners, which are easy to apply and can last up to six days," says Schuck. "It's hard to convince teens that tanning (including tanning beds!) is harmful, but prevention today means great skin tomorrow."

Here are a few sun-care guidelines from the American Academy of Dermatology:

- Wear SPF 15 every day, even on cloudy ones. Rays can still cause damage as they sneak through the hazy clouds.
- Avoid rashes and breakouts by choosing hypoallergenic and non-

Zapping Zits

What's the deal with those pimples that pop up when you least expect them? Like on the first day back to school or when you've got a big date.

No, zits don't have radar—they're not out to sabotage your social life. But they may be trying to tell you something about what's going on in your life.

Things such as a high-salt diet, stress, environment, medications and, yes, those crazy hormones, can all be culprits. The good news is you've got a lot of options for treating acne. Medicated facial and body washes and wipes help keep your skin clear by targeting your oily pores.

But what about the zit you've got right now? Check out the new Clear Confidence swab acne treatment from pHisoderm. They're easy-to-use; just snap the maximum-strength, medicated tip onto the swab, apply directly to the offending pimple and toss. Cool!

If severe acne is really getting you down, visit your doctor to talk about alternative solutions.

comedogenic products.

- Reapply sunscreen every two to three hours and after swimming or sweating.
- Avoid the peak sun times of 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Snow and water actually increase the amount of UV radiation by reflection.
- Wear long-sleeved clothes and hats.

You Are What You Eat

Everyone has tried a quick-fix diet to fit into that fab party dress. One thing is for sure: There are no



healthy habits in trendy, fad diets. Teen bods need the right about of protein, vitamins and minerals to take care of growth spurts, pesky hormonal changes, and growing tissues and bones. Crazy diets just don't cut it for teenagers growing into healthy adults.

According to experts, teenagers should have three meals and two snacks per day. But watch out what treats you eat, for that handful of cookies or chips could be your downfall. "Most teens are getting 45 percent of their calories from fat," explains Linda Fullam, a registered dietician. "What we want to see is getting [fat] under 30 percent." So reach for a slice of apple instead of a slice of apple pie.

Everyone should take a cue from their vegetarian buddies. Munch on fruits and veggies five to seven

times a day. And don't forget your good pal, protein. Get your fill from meats and fish if you eat meat, or from legumes, beans and soy products for those who only dig foods without a face.

"One of the biggest problems is that most teens aren't getting enough calcium," says Fullam. "We're afraid that there will be an epidemic of people in their 40s with osteoporosis." So when you are considering guzzling a refreshing pop—stop. Grab some moo juice instead. Aim for three or four glasses of milk per day. And don't forget the H₂O. At least eight 8-oz. glasses will keep your body hydrated and your skin looking great.

Never Grow Up

Taking care of yourself for a healthy adult life is one thing, but never forget that you are still young. Parents



and teachers may be telling you it's time to grow up, but your inner child will always need a little attention. Give her a chance to shine. Play with your younger sis or babysit someone else's. Watch the Powerpuff Girls and play Chutes & Ladders at a girly-girl sleepover. Cheer on your boyfriend at the carnival when he wins you the biggest stuffed bear there. Don't be in a hurry to grow up just yet. It will happen before you know it. And if you take care of yourself along the way, it will be a thrilling ride. ■