

It's Just A Phase . . . So Don't Miss It

To enhance the conversation, here are a few activities your family can try:

Take a Hike – Once a week (or even once a month) encourage your family to go on a 10–20-minute walk or hike together. If needed, offer incentives like an extended curfew.

Adventure Challenge – Pick a physical activity your family enjoys doing together: Basketball, hiking, running, biking. Set one goal that aligns with your interests: shoot a 3 pointer at 20 different parks in one day, hike to 15 different waterfalls in one year, visit 10 National Parks, bike 5 new trails, run three 5Ks together, etc. Challenge yourselves to get fit in your favorite way and make some lasting memories.

Hand Over the Apron – Prepare your high schooler for the day when they will completely be on their own. Set them up for nutrition-success by letting them be in charge of dinner one night a week. Give them a set budget and suggest a healthy meal or two—but let them do the research, the coupon cutting, the shopping, and the cooking.

This guide is based on research from The Phase Project, a collaborative, ongoing effort, assembling classic and innovative research with practical application. To discover more ways to help your high schooler develop healthy habits, check out <http://PhaseGuides.com>.



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High School

HEALTH

PARENT CONVERSATION GUIDE

Health. For some high schoolers, physical changes have slowed to an almost imperceptible rate. For others, they'll grow and develop more over these four years than the last. But overall, the most drastic changes for high schoolers are social and academic. With all the added pressure, it's not uncommon for a high schooler to develop stress and/or anxiety. Sleep, exercise, a balanced diet, and emotional support will become staples. In the High School phase, your role is to . . .

Encourage
**A HEALTHY
LIFESTYLE**



So your child will . . .
**SHARPEN THEIR PERSONAL AWARENESS AND
LEARN TO BALANCE DIET AND EXERCISE.**

This guide is designed to help you connect with your high school student, giving you some words to say as you navigate the critical issue of health. You're becoming more of a coach now than an active advisor, but your teenager still needs you to help guide them along the way. Some of these conversation starters will overlap or need to be repeated at different ages. But as the conversation progresses, always keep this end goal in mind:

HEALTHY HABITS

Learning to strengthen my body through exercise, nutrition, and self-advocacy.

TO HIGH SCHOOLERS, SAY THINGS LIKE . . .

"Sometimes you have to pause to see if you are feeling hungry, thirsty, tired, or anxious."

"You can't replace sleep with energy drinks."

"You can't do marching band, theatre, *and* run track this year. That's overcommitting."

"When you shave, shave in the direction the hair grows."

"Fast weight loss isn't really healthy."

"Would you be interested in talking to a counselor about that?"

"I know this year can be intense. Are you getting enough rest?"

"Why don't you take a study break and go on a walk."

"Can I make you some eggs before you head out?"

"I bought some trail mix and there's yogurt in the fridge."

"Let me know if you need help with your college applications."

"Let's have dinner this week—just you and me."

JUST REMEMBER

Every phase is a timeframe in a kid's life when you can leverage distinctive opportunities to influence their future. High schoolers may think that they no longer need your guidance, but that's not exactly true. What they need most right now is your *Trust*. This phase will be more about handing off healthcare responsibilities than directing them because you're preparing your teen for what's next. Mobilize your student's potential by listening, guiding, and encouraging their self-expression.