

JULY 2018

Parenting teens who face limitations

By Jennifer Allen, PhD, and Kendra Parris, PhD, of the St. Jude Psychology Department

In the September 2017 newsletter, we discussed strategies for parenting teens who have dealt with chronic illnesses. But what if the illness has caused limits that set your teen apart from peers? Your teen might have differences that are physical, cognitive, academic, emotional or social. Here are some ideas on ways to handle some of your teen's needs.

From a physical standpoint, your teen might have permanent hair loss, trouble with motor skills, weight gain or loss, skin and growth problems, fatigue, or vision or hearing loss.

Your teen might also develop chronic pain or endocrine issues like diabetes. Follow up regularly with medical and rehab specialists and encourage your teen to have a healthy sleep schedule and to engage in healthy behaviors.

Changes can also occur in memory, attention, processing speed or learning. Your teen may benefit from an

individualized education program (IEP) or a 504 Plan at school. These plans can provide accommodations to help your teen succeed. Talk to your school counselor.

"Brain training" apps for tablets and computers may also be helpful. If you have concerns about your teen's ability to make informed decisions, talk to the medical team. They can discuss the possible need to set up a legal guardian at age 18.

Teens faced with life-threatening illnesses may have differences in the way they function emotionally. You may notice that your teen feels more worried or sad than usual, has low self-esteem, guilt, or even body-image issues. Talking with a school counselor or a licensed mental health clinician can help. Your teen may also benefit from bonding with a mentor, pursuing a healthy hobby, or taking part in camps or groups with other teens who have had similar

experiences.

Being away from school can affect teens' friendships and social development. Encourage your teen to take part in extracurricular activities with peers who have similar interests. Formal social skills training may help if you have concerns about how your teen is developing socially.

As the parent of a teen with special needs, you might feel guilty, isolated, worried or tired. Being an advocate for your child can be hard. If you notice you are feeling this way, consider seeking help from a local, licensed mental health clinician. Or perhaps you can find a support group with other parents who are facing similar issues. Things do improve with time, as you gain more experience and a better perspective. Remember, you are not alone.

For more information, call the Psychology Clinic at 901-595-3581.

MRI safety guidelines protect you and your child

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans may be used to take pictures of the inside of your child's body using a large magnet, radio waves and computers. The MRI magnet is very strong and will attract metal objects, causing them to become hot or move quickly toward the scanner. Having metal on your clothes, shoes or even in your body could be dangerous for anyone in the room. For this reason, safety rules must be strictly followed in the MRI area.

The area before you enter the MRI scan room is restricted. The staff calls this area Zone III. It includes the induction rooms, where some patients receive sedation or anesthesia before their MRI scans.

Entering zone III

- Before you or your child enters Zone III, the staff will ask you to fill out a screening form that asks about any metal in your child's body. Your child also must change into a hospital gown to make sure that no metal in the clothing poses a safety risk or

disturbs the image quality.

- Anyone entering Zone III must step through a metal detector that is more sensitive than ones you see in most airports. This rule includes parents or guardians who want to go with their child into the induction or MRI room. If the detector shows that the person has metal on the body, this person will have to remove the metal and be screened again. If the metal cannot be removed, the person may not enter Zone III.
- Only one caregiver may go with the patient to the MRI area. Other caregivers and siblings must remain in the waiting room. This might require changes to travel plans so that another caregiver can watch siblings.

Entering zone IV

- No comfort items, such as stuffed animals, may go into the MRI room (Zone IV). These items might contain metal and would not be safe near the MRI magnet.

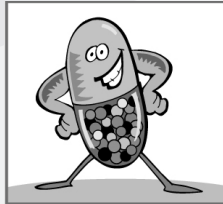
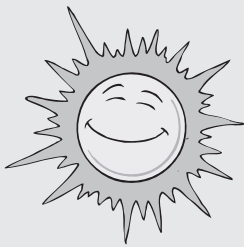
Remove metal before entering

- If your child has dental braces with archwires, the archwires (only) must be removed before the MRI exam. We prefer that this be done by your child's orthodontist, but sometimes it can be done in the St. Jude dental clinic (by appointment).
- Medicine patches that are applied to the skin may contain metal. This could cause a skin burn during an MRI scan. For this reason, you must remove all medicine patches before an MRI scan.

If you want to go with your child into Zone III, you should:

- Dress in clothes that do not contain metal. Avoid snaps, zippers, rivets, hooks, wires and steel-toed shoes.
- Remove jewelry, shoes, watches and body jewelry.
- Be ready to change into a hospital gown.
- You might want to bring a sweat suit or warm-up style clothing to change into during the MRI.

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Talking about Medicines

Grapefruit juice and drug interactions

By Shane Cross, PharmD, Pharmaceutical Services

Grapefruit is great for you and is a recommended fruit of the American Heart Association's "Healthy Heart Campaign." However, it is also known to interact with certain medicines. Grapefruit and grapefruit juice can interact with drugs in two ways:

- By causing the medicine to remain in the body longer than it should, and
- By increasing the amount of medicine that is absorbed into the body.

A reaction to grapefruit could possibly lead to unwanted side effects from the medicine your child is taking. Grapefruit does not react with all medicines, but there are several that you should be aware of as a St. Jude parent. At St. Jude, the most common medicines that could be affected include HIV medicines, drugs that suppress the immune system (given after bone marrow transplant) and certain chemotherapy drugs.

It is always best to check with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if your child eats grapefruit, drinks plain grapefruit juice or drinks a product that contains grapefruit juice. A St. Jude pharmacist can review your child's list of medicines to see if any of them might react with grapefruit.

Get your travel reimbursement faster from St. Jude beginning Monday, July 16

Beginning Monday, July 16, when you submit travel expenses to the Housing and Patient Services office by 11 a.m., you will be reimbursed by 5 p.m. the same day. This includes travel reimbursements paid by check or loaded onto a ClinCard.

If you have questions about this change, please call Housing and Patient Services at 901-595-4501.

MRI safety guidelines protect you and your child

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Most often, the magnet does not attract US coins and gold jewelry. Even so, for your safety and that of your child, the staff will ask you to remove these and other items, such as cell phones and credit cards.

Gadolinium-based contrast agent (GBCA)

Most MRIs require a contrast agent to better view tumors or tissue. Most contrast agents are gadolinium-based (GBCAs). Gadolinium is a metal

that is not needed for the body to function. It may be harmful when a large amount is present in the body. In GBCAs the gadolinium usually is bound in a way that it cannot escape the compound. It will later leave the body unchanged. Depending on which contrast agent is used, tiny amounts of "free" gadolinium can escape into the body.

The St. Jude staff only uses two of the safest contrast agents. This means the risk of free gadolinium staying in

the body is small. When your child's exam requires a GBCA injection (shot), the Diagnostic Imaging staff will give you a medication sheet about this. Please study this information carefully and talk to the staff if you have questions. To learn, more visit www.stjude.org/GBCA.

To learn more about MRI scans or safety rules for the MRI area, please talk to your child's doctor, nurse or the Diagnostic Imaging or Radiation Oncology staff.

St. Jude Parents is published on the first of each month by Patient Education and Information and Biomedical Communications. Your questions and comments are important to us. **We want to print advice and tips from St. Jude parents to other St. Jude parents.**

To share your ideas or to receive this newsletter by email, please call or email Alicia Wright, RN, MSN, at 901-595-5453 (ParentsNewsletter@stjude.org) or Lois Young (loislane.young@comcast.net). To subscribe to an online version of this newsletter or to learn more about *St. Jude Parents*, visit www.stjude.org/parents-newsletter. St. Jude is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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ATTENTION: If you speak another language, assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call 1-866-278-5833 (TTY: 1-901-595-1040).

ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-866-278-5833 (TTY: 1-901-595-1040).

تنبيه: إذا كنت تتحدث باللغة العربية فيمكنك الاستعانة بخدمات المساعدة اللغوية المتوفرة لك مجاناً. يرجى الاتصال بالرقم 1-866-278-5833 (الهاتف النصي: 1-901-595-1040).



St. Jude Children's Research Hospital

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