

Back to School with Healthy Choices

As the school year begins, it's the perfect time for students and families to reset routines, set goals and make choices that support health and well-being. Here's how to stay on track mentally, physically and socially.



FOCUS ON YOUR FOUNDATION: HEALTHY HABITS

- **Get enough sleep:** Aim for 8–10 hours per night to help with focus, mood and energy.
- **Eat well:** Fuel your body with balanced meals and snacks. Focus on fruits, veggies, whole grains and lean proteins.
- **Stay active:** Physical activity improves mood and reduces stress. Join a school sport, take walks or try a fitness class.



STAY ENGAGED & CONNECTED

Being involved helps teens feel a sense of purpose and belonging. Try:

- Clubs and sports teams
- Volunteering
- Youth leadership programs
- Creative outlets like music, art or drama

Find what excites you! Busy, connected students are less likely to turn to risky behaviors.



MAKE SMART CHOICES: AVOID UNDERAGE DRINKING

- Alcohol affects brain development and increases the risk of accidents, poor decisions and long-term health problems.
- Teens who avoid alcohol are more likely to succeed academically and stay safe.
- If you feel pressured or curious, ask questions and talk through your feelings with a parent.
- Decide in advance how you'll say no if someone offers you alcohol.
- Arrange for a ride or call a parent if you're ever in an uncomfortable or unsafe situation.
- Hang out with friends who support your healthy choices.



MANAGE STRESS IN POSITIVE WAYS

School can be demanding; don't let stress take over.

- Try journaling, breathing exercises or stretching.
- Take short breaks when studying.
- Reach out to a trusted adult, school counselor or friend when you're overwhelmed.

Stay informed, get involved and make this school year one of growth, balance and smart choices!