

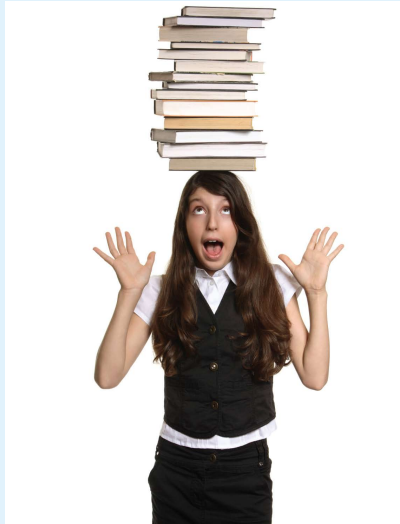
# Teen Talk



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A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE BOSTON CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL LEAGUE'S RESOURCE CENTER

## Extracurricular Activities: How much is too much? — By Georgia



When it comes to extracurricular activities such as sports, band, student government or clubs, it can be hard to know how many activities you can juggle. This is especially true if you have other commitments such as a part-time job or responsibilities at home such as caring for a younger sibling or helping a grandparent. First, think about the activities that seem interesting and then find out what is expected of participants. For example: How often do members meet? Is the activity in the fall/spring or both? Is the meeting time flexible? Does it cost anything to join the group/sport/etc.? Making an informed decision will help you to plan ahead so you can manage your time.

Before you "sign-up" for a particular activity, talk with others who have participated in it. You will likely get honest opinions that will help you make a decision about joining or not. It's fun to spend time doing an activity that you are familiar with but don't be afraid to try something new such as volunteering for your school paper or running for a class office.

There are benefits to participating in extracurricular activities such as meeting new people with similar interests, and being able to show college admission officers that you are well-rounded. But, you can have too much of a good thing. If your schedule is packed full with activities leaving you with little or no time to do homework, study for tests, or spend time with your family and friends, you may need to cut back on the number of activities you're involved in. If you're feeling stressed, talk to a parent, guidance counselor or other trusted adult.

## Recipe: Peanut Butter Rocky Road Squares

Note: Desserts and sweets aren't typically a good source of vitamins, minerals, or other nutrients that your body needs. It's best to enjoy them occasionally, but not every day.

### Ingredients:

- 6 cups Cocoa Puffs® cereal
- ¾ cup light corn syrup
- ½ cup sugar
- ¾ cup peanut butter
- 2 cups min marshmallows
- ½ cup peanuts, coarsely chopped
- ½ cup semi-sweet chocolate chips

### Steps:

1. Bring light corn syrup and sugar to boiling over medium heat in saucepan, stirring constantly
2. Remove from heat; stir in peanut butter until melted
3. Place cereal in a large bowl
4. Pour mixture over cereal and stir to coat well
5. Cool for 2 minutes, then stir in marshmallows
6. Press into ungreased 9 x 13 inch pan
7. Sprinkle with peanuts
8. Heat chocolate chips in a double boiler or in the microwave until melted and drizzle over bars
9. Let stand until chocolate is set
10. When cool, cut into 24 squares

— Makes 24 squares

## New Health Guides

Girls Guides: Bad Breath, Juvenile Myasthenia Gravis | Guy's Guides: Dandruff, Migraine Headaches, Medical Research in the Clinic Setting



**Boston Children's Hospital**  
Center for Young Women's Health

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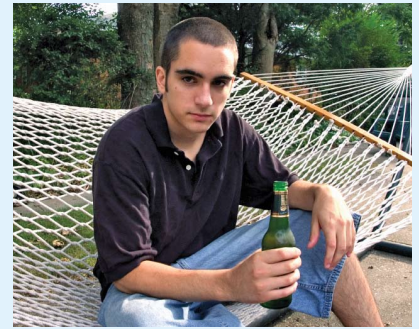
# What's Alcohol Got to Do with It? — By Alexa

Although many teens are aware of the legal drinking age and the consequences of consuming alcohol, most don't seem to be phased by television shows and movies that display scenes of underage drinking. In fact, if a show is about teens, drinking is almost always involved. I just think that if teens see this behavior over and over again on the screen, they'll think it's "normal" to drink at parties and at other social events.

An even bigger question is: Where is the fine line when teenage drinking becomes alcohol abuse? Alcohol abuse can have dangerous effects on your body at any age, but the impact to teens is huge. When you're a teen your brain is still developing and too much alcohol consumption can interfere with important brain functions as well as put you at a greater risk for developing anxiety and/or depression. Research has shown that teens who drink before the age of 15 are four times more likely to become dependant on alcohol than individuals who start drinking at the legal age of 21. Alcohol is usually thought of as a depressant due to its ability to slow down the body's vital functions including coordination, rational thinking, and judgment. People who depend on alcohol lack control, and that is a skill that girls and guys are developing during their teen years.

Alcohol can consume your life and put you in a dark place. Before you know it, you won't be able to have a good time when you're out with friends if you don't have a couple of drinks. I feel like alcohol shouldn't be used as a way to deal with problems. If you're feeling like you "need" alcohol to have a good time, you may be dependent on it. Don't think alcohol will take your problems away, instead, talk to a parent or trusted adult.

Resources: [youngmenshealthsite.org/alcohol.html](http://youngmenshealthsite.org/alcohol.html) | [www.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov)



## "I'm Gay" — Part 2 — An Interview by Erica

In "I'm Gay" — Part 1, we brought you David's coming out story. This time, I'm going to tell you about JB. His experience is completely different from David's.

*Erica:* Did you come out to your parents?

*JB:* The person I came out to was my mom. She asked me when I was in the 7th grade whether I liked girls or not and I said "I'm not sure who I like, but I don't like girls like the rest of the boys at school."

*Erica:* So basically your mom came to you with questions before you decided to tell her?

*JB:* Yes. I stayed in the closet until the 9th grade. A boy in class made a reference to something gay people do and then said "right, John?" I'd had it with the jokes, so I yelled out "Alright we get it, I'm gay! Get over it!" I was afraid I would lose friends but I didn't. I was actually embraced as the only student in my grade to be "out" of the closet.

*Erica:* That's really good. I'm glad you had such a positive experience.

*JB:* Thanks. As I continued to tell my close friends, they all said "We already knew!"

*Erica:* If you could, would you do anything differently?

*JB:* Yes, I would have told people I'm gay on my own at a different time, but I don't know when that would have been. There was this one male friend I was close with since elementary school that

eventually stopped talking to me. To this day, he still acts weird towards me.

JB didn't have to work up the courage to tell his parents that he was gay because his mother took the initiative and asked him. Fortunately, he had the support of both his mom and his friends.

Some people tried to make him feel uncomfortable at school, but instead he came out to everyone and put an end to the jokes—a very smart thing to do (in his particular situation). Although JB did lose a friend, he's okay with it.

As I mentioned in "I'm Gay—Part 1", everyone's experience is different and you should only come out when you feel comfortable to do so and you are ready to deal with the consequences. In JB's situation, the only negative consequence was losing a friendship, but he still got the acceptance of his mother and other close friends.

As long as you feel okay with the way things are, it doesn't matter when, how, or to whom you come out. Your sexual preference is very personal. You should be the only person making any decision about disclosing that information and when.



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