

Just the Facts



youth
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RISK TAKING



**TEENS ARE
MORE LIKELY TO
TAKE RISKS WHEN
WITH FRIENDS
THAN WHEN
ALONE.**

It's normal for teens to take risks - it's part of puberty and development.

Brain development plays a large role in risk taking behavior.

- **Risk.** The part of the brain that regulates impulse control, planning, and decision making isn't fully developed until age 25.
- **Reward.** The part of the brain that responds to reward is easily activated and can override the part that controls reasoning, which is why teens seek out rewarding activities even if they may be dangerous.

Some teens are also genetically wired to be more impulsive and reckless.

Research also suggests that when teens engage in risky behavior "only once," the odds seem to be in their favor - sometimes they may try something risky without worrying about unfavorable outcomes.

Remember - some risks can have positive outcomes.

Strong parent-child relationships and open communication can be a protective factor.

Helping youth and families learn the skills they need to be more successful at home, in school and throughout the community.

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