Sutter Health

# Discussing Social Media Safety with Your Teen

Talking to teens about social media can be challenging for parents. Start by asking which app interests your teen and why. Then, research these apps together to talk about safe and responsible use. Try these conversation starters to help actively engage your teen in the discussion.

## Topic: Protecting your child's privacy

### Conversation Starters

- "Let's go through the privacy settings together and talk about what's right for you."
- "I wonder what someone could learn from a picture or video of your bedroom."

### Key Points to Make

- It's important to enable strict privacy settings and turn off location sharing on social media.
- Think before you post. Offhand posts and streaming videos may reveal something private or embarrassing.

## Topic: Guarding your child's reputation

### Conversation Starters

- "I've heard that anything on social media can last forever, even if it seems to disappear. Let's do some research and find out if that's true."
- "What are some kinds of things you wouldn't want the whole school to see?"

### Key Points to Make

- Even if you delete a photo or video, someone could have saved the original, like a screenshot and share it.
- Don't put anything on social media that you wouldn't feel comfortable posting on the school bulletin board.

## Topic: Staying safe from online predators

### Conversation Starters

- "How do you think you could tell if someone on social media is actually an adult pretending to be a teenager?"
- "What would you do if someone you don't know tries to communicate with you over social media?"

### Key Points to Make

- Look out for inappropriate comments about sex or your body. Predators may ask for revealing photos or suggest meeting in person.
- Block or ignore messages from people you don't know. Use social media to connect with your real-world friends.

## Keep the Conversation Going

Check in with your teen periodically. Ask how things are going on social media and whether anything unexpected has happened. Let your child know that you're always available to talk.

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