

ADOLESCENT HEALTH AND CHALLENGES**Lucia Yovita Hendrati**

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Adolescents are a productive age group that should maintain excellent health. In this edition (Vol. 20 No. 1), the Indonesian Journal of Public Health (IJPH) focuses on the theme of adolescent health, as adolescents play a significant role in shaping the future. Adolescent health includes physical, mental, and social aspects. Physical health is often indicated by levels of physical activity. Food intake among adolescents is closely related to their physical health, as fiber and vitamins in their diet support metabolic processes in the body. The habit of consuming vegetables and fruits is reportedly higher among adolescents in rural areas than in urban settings (Vionalita and GandIsmael, Z, 2025). Family habits in consuming these foods are influenced by the accessibility of fruits and vegetables (Sitepu AE et al., 2025). Moreover, family knowledge about the health benefits of fruits and vegetables significantly affects adolescents' eating habits. Families in rural areas are more likely to encourage their children to consume fruits and vegetables regularly. Breakfast habits are also more commonly practiced by adolescents in rural areas. Regular breakfast is beneficial for maintaining physical health. Conversely, poor eating habits such as frequent consumption of sugar-containing foods and beverages, like snacks and soft drinks, should be avoided, as they may contribute to obesity in adolescents. A poor diet can also trigger the risk of pre-metabolic syndrome, especially when it includes high-fat foods such as fried foods and animal-based products like tripe and intestines, which are often deep-fried in the processing. Sodium intake is another contributing factor to pre-metabolic syndrome in adolescents (Nuriannisa F et al., 2025). High-sodium foods, such as chips, are commonly consumed by adolescents during activities. Many adolescents also consume chips and coffee while engaging in various activities. Sedentary habits are associated with adolescent nutritional status (Wisnuwardani RW et al., 2025). Low levels of physical activity during free time or weekends, such as sitting with friends or listening to music,

can increase the risk of obesity (Farapti F et al., 2025).

Bad habits such as smoking, both electric and non-electric cigarettes, have a significant impact on adolescent physical health. Adolescents in urban areas tend to have higher smoking rates compared to those in rural areas (Vionalita and GandIsmael, Z, 2025). The habit of smoking is associated with long-term health risks, including cancer and heart disease. Adolescents who refrain from smoking are often those who possess the knowledge and skills to resist peer pressure and reject smoking behavior (Riyadi, S and Ru'iya, S, 2025).

Adolescent reproductive health is one of the key issues discussed in this edition of the *IJPH* journal. One concerning behavior related to this topic is free sexual behavior. Adolescence is a phase when attraction to the opposite sex becomes particularly strong. The influence of electronic media plays a significant role in how adolescents seek and find partners (Baskoro AA et al., 2025). Early marriage among adolescents is influenced by both parental and adolescent knowledge about its consequences. Poor parental communication skills are associated with a higher incidence of early marriage among adolescents (Wardani DS et al., 2025). Parental skills and knowledge about early marriage are often linked to their educational background, the lower the parents' education level, the poorer their understanding of the risks associated with early marriage. The role of parents in supporting adolescent reproductive health depends greatly on effective communication between parents and children (Kusumaningrum, 2025). Social media also plays a role in enhancing adolescents' awareness and ability to maintain their reproductive health (Wijaya YM et al., 2025). Sleep quality is associated with symptoms of pre-metabolic syndrome, the lower the quality of sleep, the higher the risk of developing pre-metabolic syndrome. Many adolescents have a habit of not sleeping at night, often spending time with friends at cafés while drinking coffee. The coffee sold at these places

often contains added sugar, which further increases the risk of pre-metabolic syndrome.

Mental health issues such as stress can be experienced by adolescents due to conflicts within the family and surrounding environment. Stress in adolescents can influence their food and beverage consumption behaviors, which in turn affects their nutritional status. Socio-economic conditions in an adolescent's environment can also impact their mental health. Research by Wulandari et al. (2025) stated that there was a correlation between stress levels and nutritional status. Encouragement from family and friends is important for promoting physical activity among adolescents (Zari AP et al., 2025). In addition, physical activity requires encouragement within itself, which is indicated by the personal physical activity schedule (Arovah NI et al., 2025). Environmental support also plays a key role in encouraging adolescents to engage in physical activities, for example, the availability of sports equipment in public facilities, schools, and homes. City parks equipped with sports facilities can motivate teenagers to make use of them. Government support is also essential in promoting physical fitness as part of efforts to improve community well-being.

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