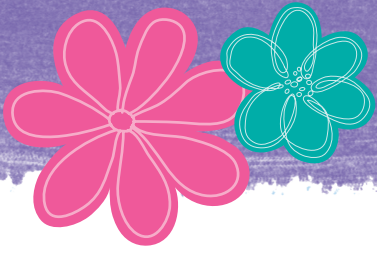


Enjoy an interview with Cara Natterson, M.D., author of *The Care & Keeping of You 2*



Dr. Cara Natterson and American Girl worked closely together to revise *The Care & Keeping of You* and to write *The Care & Keeping of You 2*. Here, she tells us why it's so important to bring this health information to a new generation of girls and their families.



Q: You were a practicing pediatrician for several years before transitioning to a role as consultant and author. Can you tell us a little about your path and how it has brought you to where you are today?

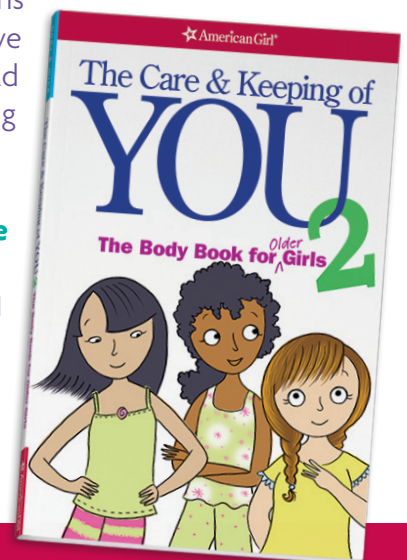
A: I absolutely loved seeing patients in the office and never really imagined myself doing anything else. But around the same time that I had my first child, I also published my first book, and I found two new loves. Writing was something I stumbled onto somewhat accidentally; I just decided to write down much of the advice I passed along to parents. It turned into a fun and fulfilling way to get good information out to the parents who were craving it. Meanwhile, nothing compared to the experience of becoming a mom. It made me a much more empathetic pediatrician, and it profoundly changed the content of my advice! But ultimately, there wasn't enough time in the day to be a doctor, a writer, and a parent, so I needed to make a choice about what to prioritize. Five years later, I find myself launching a book with American Girl, a brand that is all about health, self-esteem, and girl empowerment. At the beginning of this journey, I could not have imagined having landed at a better place.

Q: How did you connect with American Girl on this project?

A: I was actually on the speaker circuit with one of my previous books, and a Mattel executive was in the audience. She invited me down to Mattel to speak with the employees. Meanwhile, I had been recommending *The Care and Keeping of You* to every tween girl coming through my office from the day I started practice. It was one of the first things my fellow pediatricians taught me: this was the go-to book for girls to read to learn about their bodies. Once I read it, I understood why, and from then on I passed the tip along. As it turns out, this happens in pediatricians' offices across the country. Over the years, they have discovered *The Care & Keeping of You* and they almost uniformly recommend it. I told some of the folks at Mattel that my dream would be to work with the Care & Keeping of You brand, and here we are today!

Q: *The Care & Keeping of You* has been a well-known resource for girls over the past ten years. Did you have any involvement in the development of that book?

A: The original book came out while I was still training to be a pediatrician, so I didn't have a hand in that one. But given that it will mark its 15th birthday in 2013, it was ready for some updating. I was fortunate to participate in that project, introducing concepts such as obesity prevention that really didn't exist when the book was first published. I worked with the team at American Girl to revise the content and





illustrations of the original book so that it is appropriate for girls who are a little bit younger, because my daughter and her friends were all starting to enter pre-puberty and they wanted a book that was appropriate for them. With *The Care & Keeping of You 1* and 2, there is now content directed at younger girls (ages 7 to 10, or girls in the earliest stages of puberty) and content for older girls (ages 10 to 13, or girls further along in puberty).

Q: How is your new book, *The Care & Keeping of You 2*, different from *The Care & Keeping of You 1*? What specific topics are covered in the book?

A: *The Care & Keeping of You 2* is really for older girls or girls who have already entered puberty. It discusses not just how the body changes but why. It also covers emotional and social issues that don't appear in the original book. There are sections about anatomy and hormones, mood swings and stress, screen time and family dynamics—topics that are really relevant to girls in the throes of puberty. The goal of both books is to help girls grow safely and healthfully, and depending on how old the girl is, the questions and concerns change.



Q: *The Care & Keeping of You 1* and *The Care & Keeping of You 2* are written for girls, but how do you use them as a resource for parents?

A: I always suggest that parents read through any reference book they buy for their child before handing it over. That way, they know what information is in the book and will be ready for the questions that their child might ask. When it comes to talking about puberty, it can be very difficult for parents to start the conversation. Using a book like *The Care and Keeping of You 2* can help by introducing topics that neither one of you feels all that comfortable bringing up. It was important to me to stress over and over that girls do best when they share information with their parents or other trusted adults. Both books remind them of that repeatedly; better yet, they give the girls advice about how to begin to talk to those adults.

Q: From your perspective as a parent to a young daughter, what are the top things that you want all of our daughters to take away from this book?

A: For me, the bottom line is self-esteem. If girls feel empowered to make good choices, they are more likely to follow through and take action. If we teach our kids how to grow safely and healthfully, they can do much of that hard work on their own. But it shouldn't be all on our kids. I remind the girls in *The Care & Keeping of You 2* that most of what is good for them is good for their parents, too. Everyone should shower regularly, get a good night's sleep, eat well, and exercise. So although I want girls to feel good about themselves, I want them to feel good about the people around them, too. Making an effort to practice what you preach is key to raising healthy tweens and teens!