



# Empty Nest

## *How to handle changes when children head to college*

When a teenager leaves for college, it can be a big change for the whole family. Parents might feel a mix of pride and sadness, while siblings adjust to a new household routine.

For the teenager, the excitement of newfound independence often comes with challenges like homesickness and the pressure to succeed. Understanding these changes and their emotional impact can help families support each other through this important transition.

- **Emotions and Feelings.** Both parents and siblings might feel a mix of emotions. Parents might feel proud and excited but also sad and anxious. They might worry about their teen's safety and success. Siblings might feel left out or miss their older brother or sister. It's normal for everyone to feel a bit lost as they adjust to the new family setup.
- **Changing Roles.** Family roles can change when a teen goes to college. Parents who were very involved in their teen's daily life might have more free time. They might need to find new hobbies or interests. Younger siblings might have to take on more responsibilities around the house. Everyone in the family will need to adjust to these new roles.
- **Communication.** Keeping in touch becomes important. Regular phone calls, video chats, or even text messages can help maintain strong family bonds. However, it's also important to give the college student space to grow and become independent. Finding the right balance between staying connected and allowing independence is key.
- **Independence and Responsibility.** For the teen going to college, this is a time to learn independence. They will have to manage their own schedule, make new friends, and handle their studies without parental guidance. This can be both exciting and challenging. For parents, it's a time to trust their child's ability to make good decisions.
- **New Family Dynamics.** The family might find a new way to connect and spend time together. Planning visits to the college or having special family events when the student comes home can help maintain a close relationship.
- **Coping with Empty Nest Syndrome.** Parents might experience "empty nest syndrome" when their child leaves for college. This can cause feelings of sadness and loneliness. Finding new activities, spending time with friends, or focusing on work can help parents adjust to this new phase of life.



## Your benefits with Spring Health

It's important for families to support each other emotionally during this time. Open and honest conversations about feelings and concerns can help. If anyone in the family is struggling with the change, Spring Health can help. Talking to a mental health professional can provide you with strategies to cope with anxiety and stress.

[Sign up](#) or [sign in](#) to speak with your Care Navigator, a licensed clinician who can answer questions, book same-week therapy appointments, and more.

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[nestle.springhealth.com](https://www.nestle.springhealth.com)

1-855-629-0554

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