

Teen Chat

A Guide to Discussing Healthy Relationships



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Wait. Think. Talk.



“Decisions about sex and relationships may be the most important decisions you’ll ever make, so think before you act.”

Most Teens Are Saying “No.”

Don't be fooled into thinking most teenagers are having sex.

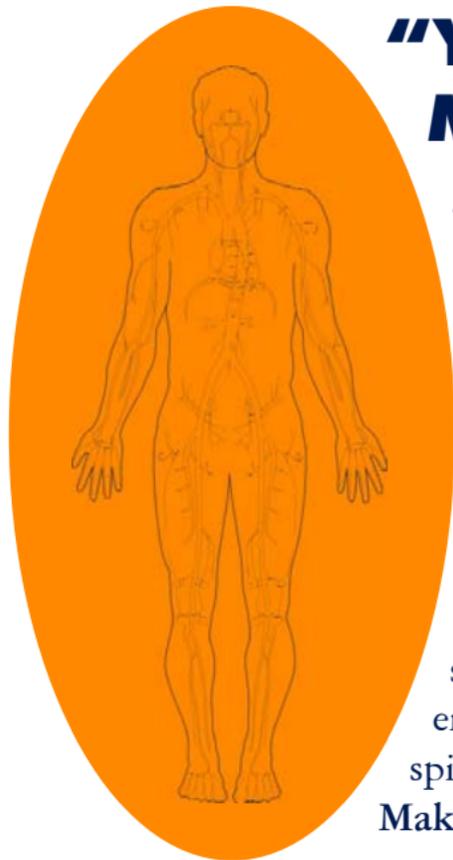
THEY AREN'T!!

*There's a lot to **know and think** about before you decide to say “yes” to having sex.*



“You Are More Than Just a Body”

During the teen years, you may be strongly attracted to another person. Your body may send you strong messages that make you want to get closer to that person. But your body **won't** tell you how having sex may harm you physically, emotionally, socially, spiritually, and financially. **Make the choice to wait!**



You may not know that:

- ✓ Almost 850,000 teens become pregnant each year. Not having sex is the only 100% sure way to protect against the risk of pregnancy.
- ✓ Teens are more likely to have problems during pregnancy.
- ✓ Babies of young teen mothers are more likely to be born with serious health problems.
- ✓ Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are at epidemic levels. Not having sex is the only 100% sure way to avoid herpes, syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia, and HIV/AIDS. One in four teens who has sex gets an STD.
- ✓ One in four new STD cases occur in teens.

If you choose to wait,
you won't have to worry
about any of the above!!



QUIZTRON
FORM 71004

ANSWERS ON PAGE 19

NAME _____

SUBJECT _____

DATE _____ HOUR _____

FEED THIS DIRECTION 

QUESTION 1:

Which condition(s) can be caused by an STD?

- A Pelvic inflammatory disease
- B Infertility
- C Pain
- D Cancer
- E Death
- F All of the above

QUESTION 2:

How much do you know about STDs? (True or False)

- T F Many STDs don't have symptoms.
- T F You usually can't tell by looking at someone if they have an STD.
- T F STDs can cause serious, life-long problems and sometimes death.
- T F STDs can be transmitted orally.
- T F The only way to be sure whether someone has an STD is by testing.

“You Are More Than Your Feelings”

Sexual feelings can be pretty strong, so make sure you’ve thought this through! Be sure to *think* before you act.

Think about your future. *Think* about the consequences.

- ✓ Think about yourself! Think about how you may feel! Ask yourself, “Is it better to wait for sex with my spouse?”
- ✓ Face it! Sex for teens is pretty risky to your body, your feelings, and your future!
- ✓ Exercise your intellect... take time to write down the consequences of sex. Then ask yourself if it’s worth the risk.
- ✓ Sex isn’t a decision you should make because you think everyone else is doing it.
- ✓ STDs can be painful emotionally and physically. They can make it impossible to have a baby. Some are incurable, and some may even cause death.



“What Should I Know About Romantic Relationships?”

They’re great... but good relationships don’t develop overnight. They take time. Sex is not what makes a relationship work.

Watch out for lines like, “If you care about me, you’ll have sex with me.”

JUST KNOW...

- ✓ You don’t have to have sex with someone to prove you like or love them.
- ✓ Sex should never be used to pay someone back for something. All you have to say is “Thank you.”
- ✓ Sharing time, thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and mutual respect is what makes a relationship strong.
- ✓ Saying “No” can be the best way to say “I love you.”

"Should I Have Sex Now Or Should I Wait?"

It's true some teens decide to go ahead. But you have to live with the consequences of your decision.

Ask yourself these questions before making up your mind:

- ✓ Am I willing to risk *STDs*, including *HIV/AIDS*, and risk *becoming sterile* so I can't have a baby in the future?
- ✓ Am I willing to risk getting *pregnant* or getting someone pregnant?
- ✓ Am I ready and able to support *a child* on my own?
- ✓ Can I handle the *emotions* and *conflict* I may feel?
- ✓ Will my decision *hurt* others - my parents, my friends?
- ✓ If we're fully committed as a couple, why not *wait* until we're married?



"Why Should I Wait Till Marriage To Have Sex?"

- ✓ You'll have more self-respect and more respect for each other.
- ✓ You'll know the other person wants you for more than just your body.
- ✓ You'll give yourself a chance to develop deeper relationships and feelings.
- ✓ You'll worry less about breaking up, being betrayed, or having your parents disapprove.
- ✓ You're more likely to have a more trusting marriage.
- ✓ You're less likely to get divorced.
- ✓ You're more likely to have better sex when you are married.
- ✓ There will be two of you to care for your children, and possibly two incomes!



“What Should I Know If I Decide Not To Have Sex?”

Maybe you didn't know, over half of all teens decide not to have sex. Many teens worry about hurting the other person's feelings, BUT it's not so hard to say “No” and still remain friends. For example, you might say:



- ✓ “I like you a lot, but I'm just not ready to have sex.”
- ✓ “I don't believe in having sex before marriage. I want to wait.”
- ✓ “I enjoy being with you, but I don't think I'm old enough to have sex.”
- ✓ “I don't feel like I have to give you a reason for not having sex. It's just my decision.”
- ✓ “If you really loved me, you wouldn't pressure me to have sex.”

“What Should I Know About Pressure?”

“Be Popular” “Be Part of the In-Crowd”
 “Be a Man/Be a Woman” “Everybody's Doing It”
 “Sex Is Fun. If It Feels Good, Do It”



It comes from everywhere... advertising, friends, movies, TV shows, songs, and books.

**BUT STOP . . .
 . . . AND THINK**

Will having sex really make you more popular, more mature, or more desirable? No. In fact, having sex may even cause your partner to lose interest. The one sure thing about having sex is that you may be in for problems you don't want to deal with. Besides, don't let an act with someone determine your worth. Strive to be your own person!

**"When I Decide
 Not To Have Sex,
 How Do I Stick To
 My Decision?"**

- ✓ If you decide to wait, don't be afraid to *take a stand* about your decision.
- ✓ *Talk about your goals* and what seems right for you.
- ✓ Try to *avoid situations* where sexual feelings become strong. "Stopping" is much harder once feelings build up.
- ✓ If you and your partner can't agree, then maybe you need to find someone whose beliefs are closer to your own.



Meanwhile...

- ✓ Set goals for your future.
- ✓ Join a community- or faith-based organization.
- ✓ Help start a neighborhood project.
- ✓ Join an afterschool activity like band, the choir, a sports team, etc.
- ✓ Decide what you want to do after you graduate from high school ... military, college, work, etc.
- ✓ Look for summer programs and internships.



"What If I Already Had Sex? Is It Too Late To Start Over?"

It's never too late to make healthy choices. **You are worth it!!!** Deciding to start over is the hardest part, but here are some tips to help you stick to it:

- ✓ Make your decision to start over and stick to it.
- ✓ Value yourself and your decision.
- ✓ Avoid compromising situations.
- ✓ Communicate your standards to your friends.
- ✓ Find nonphysical ways to show you care.
- ✓ Find a keepsake as a daily reminder of your decision.



“Where Can I Get Information That Will Help Me?”

If you want more information or help, talk to someone who cares about you. Ask your parents, an older brother or sister, other family members, or an adult you feel will listen and give you good advice. There are people and organizations in your community who want to help: your family doctor; your faith leader; your school nurse or counselor; or local health care providers.



“How Do I Talk to My Parents?”

Do you ever feel like talking to a parent about not having sex, but something’s holding you back? Maybe you’re too embarrassed? Guess what - your parent(s) probably feel that way too! But they DO care, and they DO want to talk to you. Someone has to take the first step. Maybe that someone is you.



Here are some icebreakers for talking to your parents:

- ✓ *Look for opportunities to start a conversation.*
- ✓ *Use a TV show, a book, or an article as a starting point.*
- ✓ *Start out with less awkward questions and work your way up to the complicated ones.*
- ✓ *Ask about their own teenage years. What choices did they make? Do they regret any of their choices?*
- ✓ *Once you've got a discussion going, you can steer it toward your own concerns, possibly these:*
 - ✓ *What's so great about marriage anyway?*
 - ✓ *Abstinence seems kind of hard. How do I say "No" to someone who is pressuring me to go farther than I want to?*
 - ✓ *How do I say "No" and keep my boyfriend or girlfriend?*

Now give it a try. Parents have so much to offer.

Answers to questions asked earlier:

Question: Which condition(s) can be caused by an STD?

Answer: **F** All of the above

Question: How much do you know about STDs? (Answer True or False)

Answer: **T** All are true







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