

Making the Right Choice Facts for Teens on Preventing Pregnancy

Some teens say they feel pressure to have sex. Maybe the person you are dating, your friends, or other kids are pushing you to do it. Maybe it seems like “everyone is doing it.” Here are some facts to think about before considering engaging in sex:

Fact: There is nothing strange about waiting to have sex. Half of all teens say “no” to sex.

Fact: Sex has health risks. Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) like Chlamydia, herpes, and AIDS can affect males and females for life. Also, teens have a higher risk of medical problems when they are pregnant and give birth.

If you are sexually active, be sure you know and understand the following facts about the condom:

Fact: The condom is the only birth control method that protects against STDs.

Fact: Because condoms protect against STDs, you should use a latex condom every time you have sex-no matter what other type of birth control you and your partner might also use.

Sexually active teens should know the following facts about female contraceptives:

Fact: “The pill” is the most popular type of birth control used by women. There are many brands of the birth control pill. For the pill to work, a woman must take it everyday. There are higher risks for heavy smokers who take the pill.

Fact: Of those women who use the pill properly, 99 of 100 will not get pregnant.

Fact: Depo-Provera is a popular choice of birth control for women who sometimes forget to take the pill everyday. It is also a good choice for females with special medical problems. This type of birth control is given as a shot every 3 months. It prevents pregnancy during that whole time.

Fact: Another type of birth control is Norplant. Norplant is made up of six capsules the size of matchsticks, which are put into a woman’s arm. Each capsule contains a chemically made hormone that is released into the blood over a period of 5 years to prevent pregnancy. Norplant will protect against pregnancy for 5 years, you can have the capsules removed at any time. A common side effect of Norplant is irregular bleeding.

It is important to discuss different birth control methods with a health professional. Your pediatrician can let you know how safe and effective these methods are, what side effects they can cause, and how much they cost.

The choice is yours. Choosing not to have sex is the only way to avoid all STDs and getting pregnant. If you do choose to have sex, you need to make plans to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

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