

Talking with my 12-16 year old

Normal Development:

• Physical Changes¹:

- Girls will:
 - grow taller and reach their adult height
 - develop breasts, underarm hair, and pubic hair
 - will start her period if she has not already
- Boys will:
 - grow taller until he is in his 20s
 - grow thicker underarm hair
 - grow chest and back hair
 - have their penis and testicles get larger

• Social Changes¹:

- Your child will:
 - want to be more independent
 - start making plans for the future
 - become aware of peer and media pressure to have sex and to dress, talk, and act in the "popular" way
 - may want to start group and individual dating
 - will use friends & family as role models for how to express love and anger

Risky Behaviors:

• Internet Danger²:

- 9 out of 10 teens use the internet daily
- 1 out of 4 have Facebook and MySpace pages
 - These sites allow them to post information about their personal life for all people to see²
- Displaying "sexy" pictures puts teen at high risk of attracting attention from adults posing as teens
 - **Action:** Warn your teen that not everyone on the internet is really who they say they are
 - **Action:** Warn your teen that anyone can look at those websites and see all the information that they posted, including pictures of fights, sexual acts, or drug use
 - **Action:** Know if your teen has a website and frequently check it

• Sex:

- Nearly 6 out of 10 high school students have had sex³
 - Only about 7 out of 10 used a condom last time they had sex³
- Teens have an "it won't happen to me" attitude
- There is the risk of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, like AIDS, syphilis, or gonorrhea, every time they have unprotected sex
 - **Action:** Tell your teen about the risks of unprotected sex
- Teens that don't use any birth control have a 1 in 9 chance of becoming pregnant⁵

- Teens that become pregnant are³:
 - Less likely to finish high school
 - More likely to have a second pregnancy as a teenager
- 7 out of 10 teen mothers are unemployed as adults³
- Daughters of teen mothers have a 4 out of 5 chance of being a teen mom
- Sons of teen mothers are 2.7 times more likely to spend time in jail³
 - **Action:** Tell your teen to wait to have sex or to use protection every time they have sex
- 3 out of 4 people diagnosed with sexually transmitted infections are younger than 25 years old³
 - The risk of sexually transmitted infections are⁴:
 - Infections of the uterus and fallopian tubes
 - Ectopic pregnancy (the baby implants somewhere other than the uterus)
 - Sterility
 - **Action:** Warn your teen that not having sex and condoms are the only things that protect against sexually transmitted infections

Conversation Starters:

Assure your child that no topic is off limits & you are always available to talk.

- You can always come to me with any questions or problems.
- Do you have friends at school? What are their names?
- What do you see yourself doing in 10 years? When do you think it would be easiest to raise a baby? What can you do to prevent having a baby now?
- I believe you should wait to have a baby until . . . what do you think?
- Does your girlfriend/boyfriend ever hit, threaten, or make you do things that you don't want to do? Do you know where you can get help?
- Do you have a myspace or facebook page? What kind of stuff do you put on it? Who do you think views it? Friends? Teachers? Employers? Sexual Predators?

What if I can't answer their questions?

These recommended websites are resources for parents and other family members to read about sexual health, puberty, relationships, pregnancy, and myths. You can always call your health care provider!

- Parent's Sex Ed Center (www.advocatesforyouth.org/parents)
- Talking with Kids about Tough Issues (www.talkingwithkids.org)
- Families are Talking (www.familiesaretalking.org)

What if my son or daughter doesn't want to talk?

These recommended websites are resources for teens to get truthful information about their body and their health.

- Baby Can Wait (www.babycanwait.com)
- Birds and Bees (www.birdsandbees.org)
- Teenwire (www.teenwire.com)

Sources Cited:

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3. United Way of Greater Milwaukee. "If Truth Be Told: 2006 Report of Teen Pregnancy Prevention." 2006.
4. Schrier, LA. "Randomized Controlled Trial of a Safer Sex Intervention for High-Risk Adolescent Girls." *Archives of Pediatric Adolescent Medicine*. 2001.
5. Stevens-Simon, C. "Counseling Adolescents about Sexual Health." *CME*. University of Colorado, Denver Health and Sciences Center. 2007.

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