

Resource 1c

Straight Talk to Sexually Active Teens

Have you obtained a highly effective form of birth control from your healthcare provider? Have you talked with your partner about it?

- The Depo-Provera shot (*if* taken on schedule every 3 months), the patch (*if* applied according to schedule) and the birth-control pill (*if* taken daily) provide good pregnancy protection.
- But, these contraceptives give ZERO protection for STDs. You must also use condoms.

Are you entirely confident that you can use condoms correctly each and every time?

- Condoms when used correctly every time can significantly reduce your risks (85% risk reduction) for HIV.
- Even though HIV can be treated there is no cure. AIDS can kill.
- Half of new HIV infections are among young people.
- Of new HIV infections among 13 to 19 year olds, 61% are females.

Do you realize that condoms give incomplete protection from STDs?

- Condoms are effective in reducing the risk for HIV when used EVERY time CORRECTLY.
- Condoms can reduce your risks for other STDs—but sometimes not as much. There is less risk reduction for STDs spread by infected skin in areas not covered by a condom, like is sometimes the case with herpes, syphilis, and HPV. HPV can disfigure you with genital warts and some types of HPV can lead to cervical cancer.
- Teen girls are at greater risk for infection because the skin on the cervix is not mature.

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Are you committed to being tested every 6 months, since most STDs have no symptoms? And EVERY time you have a new sexual partner? Have you insisted your partner be tested? Are you confident your partner won't cheat on you?

- Much STD transmission occurs when people are not aware.
- Every time you have sex, you are exposed to all of your partner's past partners. So, if a former girlfriend or boyfriend of your partner had Chlamydia 3 months ago, or HIV, guess what? It could now be yours. If a partner cheats, all his or her exposures are yours too.
- If a partner refuses testing, it's a danger sign for the relationship. Love means you will not hurt the one you love or place that person in harm's way.
- Untreated STDs can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). One hundred thousand females become infertile each year as a result of PID. Life-threatening tubal pregnancies can also result from PID.

What will you do if you conceive a child? Have you *talked and agreed* about:

- Getting married and parenting together?
- Adoption and abortion?
- How it might feel to a child to be abandoned by his or her father as are so many children of teen mothers? The disadvantages that children of young unwed parents typically face?

Consider changing course: Is sex giving you what you want? Do you know that 8 out of 10 first-time teen sexual relationships last 6 months or less? STDs can hang around a lot longer than a partner, and a baby is forever. You always have the option to dump an "ex" you no longer like, but a child that results from your sexual experience does not have that option. Just because you said yes before, doesn't mean you can't say no now.