

Safe AND Sound

*The truth
about abstinence,
premarital sex
and sexually
transmitted
disease*



ROCKY MOUNTAIN
FAMILY COUNCIL

Not Everyone is “Doing It”

The youth of America are being lied to. They are being told through the media and by their peers that sex before marriage is o.k. and that everyone is having sex. A recent study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) tells a different story. CDC reported that more than half of all high school students have never engaged in sexual activity and another 13.6 percent who are sexually experienced are currently abstinent.¹

Teens want a strong abstinence message

In a national survey, 93 percent of youth ages 12 - 17 said that they want a stronger abstinence message from our society.²

Most regret not waiting

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy surveyed a nationally representative sample of 501 teens ages 12 to 17 and found that 41 percent of them had had sexual intercourse. Among those who were sexually experienced, 63 percent reported wishing they had waited before becoming sexually active.³

More likely to divorce

A study by the National Center for Health Statistics and the University of Maryland showed that those who are sexually active before marriage are 71 percent more likely to divorce than those who are virgins on their wedding night.⁴

Family Factors

According to a study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, the family factors most significantly associated with teens delaying sex are:

1. High levels of parent-family connectedness
2. Parent disapproval of their adolescents being sexually active
3. Parent disapproval of their adolescents using contraception⁵

The message is clear — we should expect more virtue from our teens and they should expect more wise counsel from us.

Danger Ahead

When kids lose their virginity before marriage, they put at risk their future ability to have children. They may also lose their enjoyment of sex with their spouse because of physical and emotional pain. Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) can lead to infertility, cancer and lifelong regret. If kids are thinking that condoms will provide 100 percent protection from pregnancy and disease they are wrong. Not only are condoms not effective against many STDs, they never protect the heart from the emotional and spiritual pain of sex before marriage.

Pregnancy and Abortion

Teen mothers account for nearly 765,000 out-of-wedlock births and 300,000 abortions each year in America.⁶

Human Papilloma Virus (HPV)

- HPV is the most prevalent viral sexually transmitted disease (STD) in the U.S. Each year, approximately 5.5 million Americans acquire this infection. Eighty million Americans between the ages of 15 and 49 have been infected by HPV at some point in their lives.⁷



- HPV is spread by skin-to-skin contact and the virus is frequently present throughout the genital region of infected people — including those areas not covered by a condom.⁸
- HPV often resides in the pubic area and may be

passed along during sexual contact even when condoms are used consistently and correctly.⁹

- Genital warts are the most common clinical manifestation of HPV infection. Treatment of genital warts is often painful and may require surgical removal. Many patients with genital warts also experience emotional suffering, knowing they have become infected with a sexually transmitted infection.¹⁰
- A study in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* reported that HPV infection was present in 93 percent of cervical cancers.¹¹

Herpes Simplex Virus

- Two types of herpes simplex virus have been identified, herpes simplex type 1 (HSV-1) and herpes simplex type 2 (HSV-2). HSV-1 is a common cause of oral herpes and HSV-2 is primarily transmitted through sexual contact — including skin-to-skin and skin-to-mucous membrane contact. Areas of transmission for males and females include the entire genital region, plus the pubic and perianal area, and the inner thigh. Since no currently manufactured condom covers all these areas of potential infection, condoms may not be highly effective in preventing transmission of genital herpes.¹²
- A report from the American Social Health Association shows that 22 percent of Americans 12 years of age or older are infected with HSV-2. That means that approximately

45 million Americans are infected with HSV-2. Due to the fact that genital herpes is both incurable and lifelong, it may be passed to any sexual partner at any time.¹³

- The most common symptom of genital herpes is pain at the site of infection. The pain often begins before any skin changes are visible and is typically described as “burning” or “itching.” Blisters typically appear and after a week these clusters of blisters rupture to form “wet” ulcers. The ulcers become covered with a scab or crust. Other generalized symptoms include fever, headache and pain when urinating.¹⁴

Chlamydia

- Although some who are infected with chlamydia show symptoms (abnormal genital discharge and/or painful urination), as many as 85 percent of infected women and 40 percent of infected men have no symptoms.¹⁵
- Having no symptoms is very dangerous because, if left untreated, over time chlamydia can damage the reproductive system of those infected without any notice. Up to 40 percent of women infected with chlamydia will develop pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). Approximately two-thirds of all PID is not treated, because patients have no symptoms and therefore do not know they are infected. Chlamydia, therefore, may infect a woman’s reproductive organs and cause infertility without her knowing she has a problem until years later when she attempts to become pregnant.¹⁶
- Condoms are inadequate safeguards for a woman’s fertility because they provide unreliable protection from chlamydia.¹⁷
- Chlamydia is the most common reportable infectious disease in the United States with more than 500,000 cases reported annually. It is 70 times more common than measles, mumps and whooping cough combined.¹⁸



Gonorrhea

- An estimated 650,000 cases of gonorrhea (bacteria) infection occur in the U.S. each year.¹⁹
- In women, the opening (cervix) to the womb (uterus) from the birth canal is the first place of infection. The disease can spread into the uterus and fallopian tubes, resulting in pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). PID affects more than 1 million women in this country every year and can cause infertility.²⁰

HIV

Approximately 50 percent of all new HIV infections occur among people under 25, with the majority being infected sexually. HIV has taken the lives of more than 350,000 Americans and millions worldwide.²¹

Simply Biology?

At what point in our nation's history was marriage taken out of discussions with our kids about sex? It was when parents forfeited their role as the primary educator of their kids and began to leave sex education up to the "professionals." Today, many teachers and parents see nothing wrong with sharing the biology of sex outside the context of marriage. However, when we teach sex as primarily a biological function, we reduce this blessing of God to mere mechanics and ourselves to mere animals. While there are biological functions that we all can benefit from knowing, it is no wonder our young people are thought not to be able to control their so-called primal urges when we treat them like animals.

Abstinence Education Works

When abstinence education is presented to teens in a way that provides the knowledge and skills needed to abstain from sex before marriage, the results are staggering. A program in Washington D.C. called *Best Friends* is a shining example of effective abstinence education. Only 22 percent of *Best Friends* girls reported having sexual intercourse compared with 76 percent of those Washington D.C. high school girls overall. The *Best Friends* girls had a 1.1 percent pregnancy rate, in contrast to the 26 percent pregnancy rate among high school girls city-wide.²²

According to The Medical Institute for Sexual Health, the *Best Friends* program shows "that a well-conceived, well-executed, long-term, comprehensive, character-based abstinence program can have a significant impact on teens."²³

Best Advice

Delaying sex until marriage or abstinence is the only method supported by medical research that offers 100 percent protection from sexually transmitted diseases and early pregnancy. True abstinence is more than just delaying sex until marriage; it is understanding the role of pure sexual relations within the context of marriage.

In view of the sexually charged society we live in, it is vital for parents to talk to their teens about these issues in context. Talking about the issue of sex outside the context of marriage makes sex just a trivial pursuit, instead of the true spiritual, physical and emotional union of two people.

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