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TALKING SEX TOGETHER

FACT FINDING *Getting the Info You Need*

FACT VS. FICTION

Between the media's distortions and your classmates' fantastical rants, sometimes it's almost impossible to distinguish fact from fiction when it comes to sex. Here are some *facts* to trust:

- **“PEER PRESSURE” IS REAL.** Pressure in high school is everywhere — it can come not only from friends but from teachers, parents, and people you work with. Remember that every decision that affects you is yours to make, because you'll have to live with the consequences — empower yourself to make the right decision for you.
- **EVERYONE'S NOT DOING IT.** Less than half of high-school-age teens have had sex. So if you choose not to have sex, know that more than half of your classmates are making the same decision.
- **TEENS ACTUALLY REGRET HAVING SEX.** Six in 10 teens who've had sex by the time they turn 18 wish they had waited longer.¹ In fact, a lot of those teens have sex because they face pressure to lose their virginity. Among teens who've had sex, almost half say they've been pressured to do something sexual that they didn't want to do.²

SAFER SEX TIPS

If you do choose to have sex, here's some info to make sex *safer* for you and your boyfriend or girlfriend:

- **DOUBLE UP** — It's important to use both a condom for STI prevention and a contraceptive, like birth control, to prevent pregnancy. Furthermore, know *how* to use condoms and contraceptives, because the rate of effectiveness of these methods goes down when people don't know how to use them correctly. Talk to your doctor or check out PlannedParenthood.org for more info.
- **EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED** — Condoms break, so always have a backup condom ready. Also, know your options for emergency contraception, which, unlike most types of birth control, helps prevent pregnancy *after* sex.
- **SEX, DRUGS, AND ALCOHOL** — Using drugs and alcohol affects the decisions you make, which increases your risk of getting an infection, having sex, or becoming pregnant. Plus, the chemicals in drugs and alcohol actually reduce your ability to enjoy sex.
- **CONSULT AN EXPERT** — If you're having sex, it's important to get regular checkups with your doctor to make sure you're sexually healthy. At least one in four people who have sex get STIs, but most don't know that until they're tested.³

¹“Kiss and Tell,” The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, 2007. <http://www.stayteen.org/relationships/kissandtell.html>.

²“National Survey of Teens,” Kaiser Family Foundation. <http://www.kff.org/youth/hivstds/1373-datingrep3.cfm>.

³“Guide for Teens,” Planned Parenthood, 2007. <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/sexual-health/teens-health/guide-for-teens-and-families.htm..>