

# THE NATIONAL DAY MAY 4 TO PREVENT TEEN PREGNANCY 2011 PARENT DISCUSSION GUIDE

Talking to your kids about love, sex, and relationships can be awkward. To help get that two-way discussion started, The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy offers the National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy Quiz and this companion discussion guide.

Visit [StayTeen.org](http://StayTeen.org) to take the National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy Quiz yourself and encourage your teens to take it, too. Then use this discussion guide to help get the conversation started.

## QUESTIONS FOR TEENS FROM PARENTS

**PARENTS:** Ask your teen(s) to take the National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy Quiz and then answer these questions.

### 1. Talk about some general questions first.

- Do most teens mistakenly think teen pregnancy simply won't happen to them? Why or why not? Nearly 750,000 teen girls get pregnant in the United States every year and most of them thought it wouldn't happen to them either.
- Have you ever thought about what would happen if you got pregnant or got someone pregnant? How would your life change? How would our family change? How would my life as your parent change?

## THINGS TO TALK ABOUT WITH TEENS

- ✓ Sex has consequences—both physical and emotional.
- ✓ Not having sex is the best and safest way to prevent pregnancy.
- ✓ If you're going to have sex, you must use contraception carefully and correctly each and every time.
- ✓ Have a plan: think about what you'll do in the moment (before you are *in* the moment).
- ✓ Not everyone is "doing it"—and if more teens knew that, they'd feel supported in waiting.
- ✓ To use birth control every time, you need to think about it beforehand.
- ✓ If you can't talk to your partner about sex and contraception, you're not ready to have sex.
- ✓ You can always say "no," even if you've said "yes" before.
- ✓ Have questions? Ask a parent or other trusted adult.
- ✓ Having sex at a young age is very risky—your chances of getting pregnant or getting an STI are much greater than if you wait until you're older to have sex.
- ✓ Thinking "it won't happen to me" is not a form of birth control.
- ✓ There are a lot of myths and misconceptions out there about sex. Make sure you know the facts.

- Is teen pregnancy a problem in our community? How so? Who should be solving it? What needs to be done?

**2. Take the National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy Quiz yourself, then ask some general questions about it.**

- Did you learn anything new from this quiz? What? Did it change the way you think about these important issues?
- Are the scenarios realistic? Do you know anyone who has been in a similar situation? What are some other tough situations that you've heard of that teens might face?
- Do you think your friends and kids in your school think about these situations before they actually happen? Do they make plans about what to do?

**3. Now ask some specific questions about the National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy Quiz.**

## SCENARIO 1

- Do you think underage drinking is a problem in our community or among the people you know? Do you think alcohol or drugs make teens do things they wouldn't do if they were sober?
- Without naming names, have you ever known someone who has gotten drunk or high at a party and did something they regretted later? What advice would you have given them to help them make a better decision?

## SCENARIO 2

- Why do you think people have sex without protection when they know the potential consequences?
- Do teens buy into myths about sex—like that you can't get pregnant the first time you have it? Why do you think that is?
- Is it difficult for teens to talk to their parents about sex and birth control? What can parents do or say to make it easier to start the conversation?

## SCENARIO 3

- Would you go further sexually than you were ready to—or pressure someone you were with to do more than they wanted to—because you felt like your friends expected it?
- Would you feel comfortable telling people the details of your sex life? What would it feel like for you if the person you were intimate with shared those details with their friends?

## SCENARIO 4

- Do you think teens think sex just isn't a very big deal? Where would they get that idea?

- Do you think it's more common today than in previous generations for teens to become sexually involved with someone they aren't seriously dating? Why or why not?

## SCENARIO 5

- What would you do if you got a sexually suggestive text or photo from a classmate, friend, or someone you were dating? What would you do with it? Would you forward it to your friends? Ignore it?
- What is the worst thing that could happen to a sexually suggestive photo that gets sent to someone?

## SCENARIO 6

- Is it embarrassing for teens to say they're virgins or that they want to wait to have sex? Is it hard to say no to someone you really care about if they're ready for sex and you aren't?
- Do you think dating someone older increases your chances of becoming sexually active? Do you think girls or guys feel pressured by their older partner to have sex? At your age, how much of an age difference is too much?

# QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS FROM TEENS

*TEENS: Ask your parent(s) to take the National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy Quiz and then answer these questions.*

### 1. Talk about some general questions first.

- Do you worry about me getting pregnant or getting someone else pregnant? What is the one piece of advice you think is most important when it comes to avoiding pregnancy?
- Do you find it difficult or awkward to talk to me about sex? Do you think other parents have a harder or easier time with it?
- Are the scenarios in the quiz similar to anything you experienced when you were my age? Has your thinking about sex and relationships changed since you were younger? What do you wish you knew when you were my age that you know now? What's the most important thing for me to know?

### 2. Now ask some specific questions about the National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy Quiz.

## SCENARIO 1

- Do you worry about me making bad decisions about drinking and drugs and sex? What can I do to calm that fear?

## SCENARIO 2

- Would you be worried or relieved if I came to you first about protection? What would you say?

## SCENARIO 3

- What was it like when you were my age? Did you feel pressured to have sex? Did it seem like everyone your age was having sex? Did you talk to your friends about it? Did you talk to your parents about it?

## SCENARIO 4

- What are your own values about sex, relationships, pregnancy, and marriage? When do you think the “right” time is for someone to start having sex?
- What is your definition of a healthy relationship? What kind of relationship would you like to see me involved in?

## SCENARIO 5

- What would you do if you found out that I sent a sexually suggestive picture of myself to the person I have a crush on?
- How can I get the guy or girl I like to notice me without doing something provocative to get his or her attention?

## SCENARIO 6

- Do you think it’s acceptable for me to date someone older or someone younger? Do you worry that I’ll feel pressured to have sex because of it?

## QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS ONLY

**PARENTS:** *There are lots of ways adults can help teens reduce their risk of getting pregnant. One way is to get to know the parents of your child’s friends and bring everyone together to discuss issues facing your children. Here are some questions to get the discussion going.*

- Is teen pregnancy a problem in our area? How big of a problem? What can we do to get it under control?
- How much do we know about what our kids are watching on TV or online? How is this influencing their views on sex?
- Do we know how our kids spend their spare time? Who do they spend it with? What are they doing?
- How can we talk to our teens about sex, love, and relationships without sounding preachy or making them feel weird? Is it something that should be done as a family or one on one?
- What are some of the things we remember about “the sex talk” with our own parents? What would we do similarly with our kids? What would we do differently?

## DID YOU KNOW?

- **Three out of every ten girls in the United States get pregnant at least once before age 20.** That's more than 750,000 teen pregnancies each year.
- Three out of four teens say they **don't think it's embarrassing to admit to being a virgin** and most who have already had sex say they **wish they'd waited longer**. Most also say that it would be much easier to wait if more teens spoke positively about not having sex.
- One in seven teens has sex before age 15. The younger teens are when they first have sex, the **more likely they are to regret it**. When teen girls date guys three or more years older, they are more likely to have sex and are less likely to use protection.
- If you're drunk or high, it's hard to make good decisions about sex—lots of teens say they've done something when using drugs or alcohol that they **might not have done if they were sober**. Don't do something you might regret, or might not even remember.
- Girls aren't the only ones who feel pressure to have sex. Nearly **8 out of 10 guys say there is way too much pressure on them to have sex**—from their friends, society, and from girls. One out of every five guys says they have been pressured by a girl to go further sexually than they wanted to.
- Most guys are okay with not having sex. In fact, more than half say they're relieved when a girl wants to wait and two-thirds say they could be happy in a relationship that doesn't include sex. Most say they would rather wait to have sex with someone they love than lose their virginity as soon as possible.
- While most teens say they feel pressure to have sex, **not everyone is doing it**. In fact, about half of high school-aged teens haven't had sex.
- **Most teens who have had sex wish that they had waited**. And you can always say no—even if you've said yes before.
- Mistaking sex for love can leave you unfulfilled and unhappy and lead to risky sexual situations. About one in five teens say that most of their friends are in **"unhealthy" relationships**—those without love, trust, mutual respect, and honesty. Remember, it's okay to be friends *without* benefits.
- **Got an extra \$11,610?** Because that's at least how much it cost to raise a baby for the first year. How about \$250,000? That's what it'll cost you to raise a kid for 18 years.
- **Here's something for you to think about before you press 'SEND' on your cell phone or email:** One-third of teens say that their peers who share sexy text messages and images of themselves are "expected" to put out. Is that really the impression you want to make?
- You can get pregnant or cause a pregnancy the first time and any time you have sex without protection. If you have sex regularly without using protection there's an 85% chance you'll get pregnant within one year. Luckily there are lots of forms of protection you can use. Look into all the options and decide which one will work best for you.