

Abstinence

- Abstinence means that you are not having any type of sexual contact.
- Abstinence is the best protection against STIs and pregnancy.
- You should never feel pressured into having sex.

More and more teenagers are choosing abstinence because they want to be 100% sure of avoiding STIs (sexually transmitted infections) and [pregnancy](#). Even teens who have had sex before are making a commitment to be abstinent. Read on to find out more about how to deal with the pressure of having sex, whether it's still possible to get STIs, and why many teens are choosing abstinence over sex.

What exactly is abstinence anyway?

Abstinence means that you are not having sexual intercourse. Sexual intercourse means that you are having "sex" with a partner. Sex can be vaginal, oral or anal. So if someone is abstinent, it means they are not having sexual relations with anyone.

Why are teens choosing to be abstinent?

Many teens choose abstinence because they know that it is the best protection against STIs, and it is 100% effective in preventing pregnancy. Others choose abstinence because of religious beliefs or because of their own values.

Do most teens who have had sex wish they waited?

Yes. In fact, 3 out of 4 girls who have had sex wish they had waited longer before having sexual intercourse.

What should I say if I feel pressured to have sex?

A good relationship is about good communication. Talk to the person you're dating and be clear about your values and what you really want. Don't be shy about what you don't feel comfortable doing. The fact is you don't really need to tell anyone why you don't want to have sex. It's good to be honest with the person you are dating early on that you plan to be abstinent. This way there will be no expectations and you both can avoid situations that could make abstinence difficult, such as going to a party where there's alcohol or being alone in an empty house.

My partner keeps telling me. "If you love me, you'd have sex with me."

Don't be fooled by this line! Loving someone doesn't just give them permission for sex. Changing your mind and having sex when you really don't want to is letting yourself down, and it doesn't guarantee that your partner will stay with you either. In the long run, if someone wants to break up with you just because you won't have sex, they really are not worth it.

How can I talk to my parents about sex?

You may think that your parents would be last on your list of people that you would talk to about sex but remember they were teenagers once too and probably faced a lot of similar issues that you are facing now. In fact, your values are based on your parent's attitude about things. Talking to a parent may help you understand your feelings. You might want to start a conversation with your parent(s) about peer pressure. You could mention that you think there's a lot of pressure on teens to have sex. Then you might ask them their feelings about sex before marriage. Parents know that growing up isn't easy. If given the chance, parents can be very helpful and supportive. The important thing to remember is to talk about your feelings with an adult or friend you feel comfortable with—someone you can trust.

Is it possible to get an STI or become pregnant without vaginal intercourse?

You can get an STI with vaginal, anal, or oral sex. You should also know that some STIs (such as [HPV](#)) are spread by close skin-to-skin contact of the genital area. Yes, it is possible to get pregnant without having sexual intercourse if a male ejaculates (sperm comes out of the penis) close to your vagina.

Are there any other risks involved with having sex?

Yes. Besides running the risk of getting an STI or becoming pregnant, having sex when you're not ready can cause you to feel bad about yourself and also make you question your relationship.

How will I be able to tell if I'm ready to have sex?

Knowing when you are ready to have sex can be tricky because your body may feel like you are ready. You may feel very romantic with your partner and have the urge to have sex. This is perfectly normal but you should also listen to your thoughts and beliefs to help you decide when the time is right. If you're nervous or not sure, wait until you can make a choice that you are sure of. Remind yourself that abstinence is the only 100% way to avoid pregnancy and STIs. One thing for sure to remember is: "you should never feel pressured or pushed into having sex".

Most teenagers will agree that saying "no" to sex can be hard but having sex is a serious decision that has consequences. You can make a choice to say "no" to sex and still be close with your partner. When you choose to be abstinent, it means you want to wait to have sex until the time is right for you! Talking with someone you trust will help you follow your feelings and values and stick to your decision.

Pregnancy

Did you know that about 800,000 teen girls become pregnant in the United States each year, and more than 80% of these pregnancies are unplanned? Dealing with a pregnancy is one of the most important decisions a teen may need to make...

General STI Information

STIs are most common among teens and young adults, with about two-thirds of all STIs occurring in people under age 25. This is because younger people are more likely to be more sexually active and take more risks...

Read more: <http://www.youngwomenshealth.org/abstinence.html#ixzz2De501vCR>