



Understanding Teen Sexual Behaviors: “Best Practices” for Parents

- ❖ Teens who have a regular dating partner are more likely to have sex than those who do not.
- ❖ Most teens say they had done many couple-like activities before the first time they had sexual intercourse. Many teens don't consider activities like oral sex to constitute “having sex” (that usually refers only to sexual intercourse)
- ❖ Most teens describe their first sexual partners as a friend and meet them through their friends, school or place of worship.
- ❖ Just over half (60%) of teens talked about contraception with their partner before having sex for the first time.
- ❖ If your teen has a steady dating partner, sexual intercourse may become part of that relationship. Teens, on average, have their first experience of intercourse at age 17.
- ❖ Encourage your children to talk honestly about their relationships in order to help avoid potentially risky situations.
- ❖ Strong parent-teen relationships, effective communication about sex and related topics, and monitoring behavior can help reduce the risk for early and unprotected sex among teens.
- ❖ Teens in more casual relationships (those who report fewer couple-like behaviors) are less likely to discuss contraception. They include:
 - Teens who first have sex at age 14 or younger
 - African American teens
 - Boys
 - Hispanic teens are least likely to discuss contraception with their partners
- ❖ Understanding more about the characteristics of teens' first sexual partner can help reduce the likelihood that teens will engage in early and unprotected sex. See <http://www.childtrends.org/index.cfm> and search under “Marriage and Family, Adolescent Sexual Behavior,” for up-to-date information on trends in teen sexual behavior.

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