



Discussion Guide

For Adults Working with Teens

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Sex 411: Answers to Your Most Common Questions about Sex

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I'm not having sex, but I feel like everyone is having sex. Is it OK not to? It's definitely OK to not have sex. Believe it or not, most teens across the country have decided to delay having sex until they feel they are ready. (More than half of all 9th through 12th graders have not had sexual intercourse, according to the CDC's 2003 Youth Risk Behavior Survey.)

When you're in a relationship, not having sex lets you focus on the actual friendship rather than the sex. Not to mention, not having sex is the most effective form of protection against unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

Sex is a larger commitment than many people our age are willing to admit, and sometimes after having sex, they feel ashamed or regretful, because it was too much, too soon. Whatever the reason, postponing sex is the easiest way to avoid rushing "headfirst" into things.

It is not bad to have responsible sex when you're a teen, but there's just no denying that not having sex is the safest route for teens who aren't sure they're ready for sex.

—Kameron Collins, 17, Staff Writer

Can I get pregnant if I'm having sex using a condom and the condom falls off during the act?

Yes, you can, because if the condom falls off, semen, which contains sperm, can get into the vagina.

This is why it's important to use two forms of birth control when you have vaginal sex: one (like a latex condom) to prevent sexually transmitted diseases, and the other (like the Pill, patch, or shot) to prevent pregnancy.

The condom can fall off if it's not put on the right way. Your partner must put the condom on correctly. There are directions in condom boxes, so he should carefully follow them. You can also find directions sliding-scale fee.

To find a provider near you, call the Emergency Contraception Hotline at 1-888-NOT-2-LATE (668-2528) or log on to Depo-Provera), the patch, the ring (NuvaRing), and many others. You have to stay protected from sexually transmitted diseases and prevent pregnancy, too. So, you'll still need to use a condom.

—Sylvia Mayorga, 15, Staff Writer

I know this is going to sound stupid, but I just want to know: How many times does someone need to have sex to be considered a slut?

I never liked the word "slut." People often use it to refer to girls who have frequent sex or who they think have had frequent sex. My question is: As long as they're keeping it safe, what's wrong if they enjoy their sexuality?

There's nothing wrong with it: In fact, we should all be proud of our sexuality, and enjoy it however suits us best. Since our sexuality is so personal, no one has the right to judge us for how we explore it—unless we're hurting others or ourselves.

The important thing is to be confident in your beliefs. If you feel confident, then your decision about when, how, and with whom to have sex will be a firm one. This is why it's so vital to be comfortable with your body, use contraception, get tested, communicate with your partner, and believe in your personal principles.

So, in my opinion, sex is never "slutty." Although the answer to this question really just resides in you, no one deserves to be called a slut.

—Ana Bacic, 17, Staff Writer