

How to Prevent Teenage Pregnancy

Three Methods: [Preventing Pregnancy as a Teen](#) [Preventing Your Teen from Becoming Pregnant](#) [Understanding Different Birth Control Options](#)

Teen pregnancy rates have been falling over the last couple of years, in large part because parents and schools have been better than ever before about giving teens as many tools as possible to make smart choices. Evidence of effective ways to prevent teen pregnancy is overwhelmingly in favor of a comprehensive education and good communication.

Method
1

Preventing Pregnancy as a Teen

1 Educate yourself about pregnancy. Start by educating yourself about how pregnancy starts. Many studies have found that the better education you have regarding how sex and pregnancy work, the better able you will be to make good decisions regarding sex. You can find lots of high quality information online using sources like Mayo Clinic and Wikipedia.

- The short version is that a man produces a substance in his body, called semen, which exits his body through the penis. This substance is deposited in a woman's vagina (through sex or other means), where it combines with an egg in her uterus to form a baby. Women only have eggs in their uterus sometimes and even then, the egg doesn't always get what it needs from the semen. This is why you won't get pregnant every time you have sex.

2 Bust some pregnancy myths. There are lots of myths about how you can get pregnant. If you know the truth from the facts, you'll be much better able to protect yourself. Remember, when in doubt, play it safe. It's better to wait until you have proper protection than risk getting pregnant because of something you read on Tumblr.

- Myth: "You can't get pregnant if you have sex during your period." Your body will usually release an egg half-way in between your periods...but loads of women can have an egg release just about any time in their cycle. In fact, this method may be more likely to get some women pregnant, so don't rely on this to help you.
- Myth: "You can't get pregnant if you use the pull-out method." The pull-out method is when the guy pulls his penis out of the vagina before ejaculating or "cumming" (orgasming and releasing his semen). The problem is that the penis will release fluid before ejaculation that can still get a girl pregnant! Using the pull-out method is very unreliable and for most people, the chances of getting pregnant with this form of "birth control" is about 30%.^[1]
- Myth: "You can't get pregnant if you use certain positions or have sex in certain places." It doesn't matter if you're having sex in a pool/hot tub or if the girl is on top during sex. If there's a penis in a vagina, pregnancy can happen.
- Myth: "You can get pregnant if you do _____ afterwards." Unless that blank is filled with medication or medical devices like Plan B or an IUD, then this is a total myth. Jumping jacks, douching, showering, peeing, eating certain foods: you name it, these things won't help keep you from getting pregnant.

3 Be abstinent as much as you can. We don't want to sound like that guy at your church, but abstinence really is your best bet at not getting pregnant. Even the most effective forms of birth control only work most of the time. If you want to guarantee that you won't get pregnant, find other ways of getting sexual release that don't involve penetration.

- Pregnancy isn't the only risk of sex, either. It's important to remember that. You also need to be safe and use protection to keep yourself from getting STDs.
- There are also merits to taking things slow, in your relationship. While sex is fun and feels good, it adds a lot of complication. You might think you'll have fewer problems once you start having sex but really you'll have more. This is why, if you can make it work, it's better to stay abstinent until you're in a place in your life where you're better able to deal with those complications.

4 Find other ways to get sexual release. Full, penetrative sex isn't the only way to get sexual release. If you don't have access to birth control or if you just want to be super sure that you don't get pregnant or get anyone else pregnant, try other ways of getting physical that don't lead to babies.

- Try something like mutual masturbation. This is where you stimulate yourself in front of your partner or you stimulate each other. As long as no penetration occurs and the man's semen is kept away from the vagina, no pregnancy can occur. This is also relatively safe in terms of protecting you from disease.
- You can try something like oral or anal sex. This should still be done with a condom, however, because both can still spread disease and infections.

5 Talk to a trusted adult. Talk to an adult that you trust about sex, sexual health, relationships, and pregnancy. They should at least be able to give you some advice. They might even be able to help you find resources so that you can better protect yourself from getting pregnant. Schedule some private time to talk with them and then tell them why you want to talk. It might be awkward at first and it might take more than one conversation, but you'll find that having someone who can help you will make you much more comfortable and happy.

- Say something like, "Brian, I'm not comfortable going to mom and dad, but I really want to get intimate with my girlfriend and I'm worried about her getting pregnant. Can you help me choose the right condoms?"

6 Find independent care. In lots of states, you can get birth control from doctors and pharmacies without your parents legally needing to be told. If you don't feel comfortable talking to your family about your situation, make an appointment with an organization like Planned Parenthood. They'll educate you and get you everything that you need at a price you can afford, so that your parents don't need to know about what you're doing.

- You can find your local Planned Parenthood clinic by visiting their website.
- If you live outside the US or in an area not serviced by Planned Parenthood, check with your local health department to get advice about what services might be available to you.

7 Stay away from drugs and alcohol. There are lots of reasons that you might want to stay away from drugs and alcohol, but one of the major ones is that both can lead you to make really bad decisions. When you're drunk or high, your brain doesn't work as well as normal (that's why it feels so good). This means that while you might normally make the smart choice and use a condom, your drunk brain doesn't even consider it.

- You also have to worry about what might happen while you're passed out. When you've had so much alcohol or enough drugs to make it so that you can't move or are passed out, you have no control over what other people do to your body.
- For example, more than 20% of teen pregnancies were the result of sex that was influenced by alcohol.^[2]

Method 2

Preventing Your Teen from Becoming Pregnant

1 Educate yourself and your teen about sex. Education is, according to the statistics, your best weapon in preventing teen pregnancy. It has been shown repeatedly that the more a teen understands about where babies come from and how they can prevent pregnancy, the better off they will be.^[3] Of course, it's possible you were taught incorrectly too, so you'll want to refresh your memory before educating your teen.

- Educating yourself might also make you more comfortable about the subject, especially if you're from a very conservative background.
- You can find information on sex from books in your local library, at a doctor's office, and even on the internet.

2 Help them bust pregnancy myths. When kids don't get educated about sex, they'll try to make their best guess about how stuff works. Often, those guesses are horribly, hilariously wrong. Now, as funny as some of these ideas can be ("You can get pregnant from kissing!"), sometimes misinformation can lead to your teen getting pregnant or getting someone else pregnant. You'll want to make sure that any misconceptions they have are thoroughly dealt with so that they can make good choices for themselves.

- You can find examples of pregnancy myths in the section of this article for teens.
- The best way to find out what bad ideas your teen has about sex is to talk to them about what they know. Ask

them: "What do you know about sex? How does a woman get pregnant? What role does a man play? How do you think pregnancy can be prevented?"

3 Make birth control private but accessible. Even with open communication and a good relationship between the two of you, your teen might still feel uncomfortable about asking for what they need when it comes to preventing pregnancy. You can eliminate this concern by making sure that they can access birth control without having to ask you directly.

- One option would be to teach them where to go to get birth control on their own and at low cost, such as by making their own doctor's appointment.
- Another option would be to let them know that you'll keep a fresh box of condoms at the back of the drawer in the bathroom. They can take condoms without having to ask and you will replace them if the box runs out.

4 Communicate with your teen about your concerns. Now, no one's advocating here that you just run into this 100% liberal and promoting sex to your teen as if there are no consequences. It's important for you to talk to your teen about what you worry about and how sex can go wrong. If you communicate your concerns in a healthy, non-judgmental way, you'll actually be more likely to convince them that they might want to wait. Talk to them about:

- The health risks
- The emotional risks, and
- The risks to their future

5 Talk about drugs and alcohol with your teen. Drugs and alcohol are also a nearly unavoidable part of growing up. While your teen might normally make very good choices, it only takes one night of bad choices to wind up with a pregnant teen. Head this off at the pass by letting them know that if they're going to do those things, they need to at least do them in a safe environment. Tell them that impaired judgement can lead to poor decisions about sex or no ability at all to even make the choice.

- Girls should be warned about what boys might do to them if they pass out and boys should be warned about how getting consent is crucial to having sex but that alcohol can make you forget that.

6 Give them hopes for the future. If your teen has goals and hopes for the future, they'll have much more incentive to stay away from sex or at least be responsible about the sex that they do have. Help them pursue their dreams in order to keep them busy and make their goals seem reachable. Encourage them and help them believe that they can be more than they are now.

7 Keep them busy. If your teen's day is packed with activities, they'll have less time and energy with which they can get themselves into trouble. Don't expect that this will make them abstain from dating and physical intimacy altogether but it should remove some of the opportunities and certainly keep them from having sexy just because they're bored.

- Get them signed up for clubs or extra classes which let them engage in their interests and hobbies. If their hobby is something that they can do at home, invest in getting them some tools so that they can fully immerse themselves in that activity.
- If you don't have the money to pay for them to take an extra class in their favorite subject, talk to your local community center or community college. There may be grants or special tuition available to help your teen pursue these activities.

8 Pay attention. At the end of the day, you can't control the choices that your teen makes: you're simply not driving the car that is their life. But if you need to, you can direct their path by limiting the roads they can take. Pay attention to what they're doing. If they're dating someone much older (for girls) or much younger (for guys), do what you can to make sure that they make good choices. You should also talk to them if their dating relationships seem to be very "serious". If your teens are going out a lot to parties, it might be time to reign in their behavior. While these situations aren't always easy to control, doing something is better than doing nothing.

Method
3

Understanding Different Birth Control Options

1 Learn about how birth control works. First, it's important to know how birth control works. You might get misinformation about how it causes abortions or how it can do all sorts of terrible things to your body, but those things aren't true. There are lots of different kinds of birth control, from condoms to implants, and all work by making sure that either a man's sperm never reaches a woman's egg or by ensuring that that egg can't implant. Do research for each type of birth control you want to consider.

- Knowing how it works will not only make you more comfortable about using it or recommending it, it will also help you use it correctly and choose one which is best for your habits. Some birth control needs to be used in a very specific way or it won't work, so if you're bad at remembering to do things (for example) you might not want to take some forms of birth control.

2 Learn what types of birth control are available. Birth control doesn't just mean pills. There are lots of forms of both medication and devices that all do roughly the same thing: keep you from getting pregnant. Choose what's best for you and, to be extra safe, use more than one method at a time. This is especially important for teens and people that aren't in serious, long term relationships. You can use:

- **Condoms.** Condoms should be your first stop, since these protect from STDs as well as pregnancy. It doesn't matter what gender you are, you should have these on hand. Even if you decide to use another form of birth control, wear condoms anyway.
- **The pill.** There are many different varieties of "the pill" but all are taken by a woman to keep her from getting pregnant. These do not cause an abortion, as you might have been told. Instead, they make a woman's uterus inhospitable to an egg, preventing it from implanting. Usually, you take a pill every day and the pill is very small. This is an easy and effective form of birth control and it has many other benefits (like clearing acne and making your periods more comfortable).
- **Implants and IUDs.** There are several different implants and IUDs (intrauterine devices) available, all of them for women. Some of these go in your arm and some are fit into your uterus. All are considered some of the most effective forms of birth control. While it can be uncomfortable to put in, these are great options for teens because you can get it put in and then forget about it. Most of these devices are good for at least 3 years, and some for as many as 12. This means that you wouldn't have to worry about getting pregnant until it was really time for you to get pregnant.
- **Other methods.** There are also many other methods, like the vaginal ring, the sponge, and the patch. Talk to your doctor about what options might be best for your situation and habits.

3 Use any birth control you choose correctly. No matter what form of birth control you use, make sure you're using it correctly. Most forms of birth control are very effective and work 99% of the time, but that's only if you use them the way they're meant to be used. If you're a teen, learn how to use your chosen method correctly. If you're a parent or adult, do your own research and then make sure your teen knows what to do.

- You can find information about how to use each form correctly on [Planned Parenthood's website](#).

4 Discuss birth control, even if it's uncomfortable or you don't know how. A basic piece of advice in life is that any problem you have can generally be made better by talking about it. Talking about family planning methods with your parent, trusted adult, son, daughter, or other teen can seem awkward. We're raised to feel uncomfortable discussing sexual topics. But by opening communication and just getting everything out there, everyone can be better informed and more comfortable. Like a monster under the bed, you'll find that discussing sex in a practical and healthy way is less scary once you understand it.

- Now, it can take more than one try to have the discussion you really need to have about family planning. Don't give up!
- Parents wanting to discuss birth control can say something like, "Jon, you're going to have a lot of urges. You're getting older and that's normal. But a big part of being an adult is being responsible about the things that you want to do. I want to talk to you about what your responsibilities are now that you're becoming a man."
- Teens wanting to discuss birth control can say something like, "Mom, I'm getting older and I want to make sure that I don't ruin my future before it starts. I'd rather get birth control that I might not need for awhile than make a bad choice. Can you help me figure out what I need to know before something goes wrong?"

5 Know your options if you do get pregnant. If someone does become pregnant, it's important to know what options are available, so that you can make an informed choice about how you want to handle the situation. Since society tends to be really divided on what to do in this situation, you should get as many opinions as you can from many different sources.

- One good source of information is Planned Parenthood, which will discuss all of your possible options with you and let you decide what's best for you. If you decide to keep the baby, they will also help you find services and resources.

Can you answer these readers' questions?

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On **How to Heal Your Thyroid Naturally**, a reader asks:

What can cause me to skip periods without being pregnant?

Your answer...

[Reply](#)

On **How to Evict a Tenant in Illinois**, a reader asks:

How do I evict an ex girlfriend?

Your answer...

[Reply](#)

On **How to Develop a Questionnaire for Research**, a reader asks:

How do I formulate a questionnaire on the need for rental space?

Your answer...

[Reply](#)

Tips

- If you know of any family or friends who had a kid in their Teenage years, have that person explain what it was like, and how there life was during the pregnancy and after.
- Be Gentle about the subject, Teenage years are hard on them.

Warnings

- Be prepared for your teenager to yell at you.

Sources and Citations

1. <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/birth-control/withdrawal-pull-out-method>
2. <http://www.teenpregnancystatistics.org/content/alcohol-and-teen-pregnancy.html>
3. <http://www.cdc.gov/teenpregnancy/aboutteenpreg.htm>