

Get Involved

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Greetings!

Harrisonburg-Rockingham Teen Pregnancy Prevention is dedicated to delaying sex and avoiding pregnancy among teenagers.

We hope that this newsletter will provide you with the latest news concerning teen pregnancy, both locally and nationally.

*Thank You
For Your Support*

Teen Boys: What is their role in teen pregnancy?

When it comes to preventing teen pregnancy, girls have traditionally been the primary target audience of programs, practitioners, researchers, parents and other individuals who work with youth.

However, recent research has found that teen boys are just as important in preventing teen pregnancy. According to The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy (NCPTP), the significant reductions in teen pregnancy and birth rates in recent years can be attributed in part to remarkable changes in the sexual behavior of boys.

For example, fewer teen boys are having sex. In 1991, 57% of boys in 9th-12th grade were having sex, compared to 48% of boys in the same grades in 2003. This 16% decrease is admirable. In addition, fewer teen boys are having sex with multiple partners. In 1991, 23% of boys in 9th-12th grade reported having four or more sexual partners, compared to 18% of boys in the same grades in 2003.

So, what can be done to help further these positive

changes? A popular suggestion is to increase the prevention efforts that specifically target teen boys and to include teen boys more frequently in teen pregnancy prevention programs.

Two strategies that have proven to be effective among teen boys are those that include an added cultural component and those that combine sexuality education with a school, community or parent component. An added cultural component is defined as a program that includes elements related directly to the values or customs of a particular culture.

Programs that combine sexuality education with school can be found right here in Harrisonburg. Teen Pregnancy Prevention offers *Baby Think It Over*, *Vision of You and Healthy Choices Presentations*. Teen Pregnancy Prevention staff are able to speak on a variety of topics. Please contact Kim Hartzler-Weakly (568-7083) if you are interested in any of our programs.

In addition to these effective program components,

researchers believe programs that last at least two years are very effective with teen boys. Harrisonburg-Rockingham Teen Pregnancy Prevention's programs extend across the school years, allowing for teens to fully integrate the program's lessons into their lives. Allowing enough time for such integration is an important step when it comes to teen pregnancy prevention.

Many of the effective elements of a teen pregnancy prevention program that focus on teen boys can be found right here in your local community.

*According to The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, www.teenpregnancy.org

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Does Summertime Give Teens Too Much Freedom?	2
Authoritative Parenting	2
Who Influences Teens?	2
Teen Mothers' Health Behavior	3
6 Quick Facts	3
Media Messages	4

Summertime: More Susceptible?

Summertime marks the beginning of a teen's freedom, and some think that this is the most susceptible time for a teen to engage in risky sexual behavior.

Wondering the same thing, The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy (NCPTP) went straight to the source: the teens themselves. Using their weekly survey, The NCPTP asked teens whether they think that summer can be a riskier time of year for young people in terms of sex, love and relationships.

According to a sampling of responses found on The NCPTP's website, teens have mixed feelings about the topic. Here are four anonymous teens' responses:

"Of course, parents aren't home during the day and teens are. There is no better time to take advantage of the opportunity at hand."

"I think it really can be a riskier time. Kids are stuck in school for most of the day during the school year. Yet in the summer, teens often stay out later and there can be more parties and such. There seems to be a lot more freedom and many people may take advantage of that."

"Not really because during school it seems the same because teens like to ditch and go to their house and fool around with the opposite sex. It doesn't make much of a difference if it is summer or not."

"No. I don't think there is any particular season/time that more teens have sex. I think the more unsupervised freedom that they have is more of a risk situation for teens to have sex."

While some of this information may be difficult to read, it is important that as parents, you use this information to your advantage. One of the most important things that you can do is to make sure that your teen continues to follow the rules you have set. In addition, set a standard curfew for your teen to follow throughout the summer. You can also help your teen find a summer job to fill his or her time, as well as pay attention to who your teen hangs out with and what their common hangout spots are.

*According to The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, www.teenpregnancy.org

Are Authoritative Parents On To Something?

What is the ideal parent?

Is it someone who disciplines their children and demands respect, yet is warm and encouraging?

According to the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health, yes. And these parents even have a name: authoritative parents.

Authoritative parents set limits for their children, making it known that they are in charge. However, authoritative parents are also firm with kindness, warmth and love. The balance allows for children to learn from their own experiences.

According to *The Washington Post*, authoritative parents may hold the

key to developing the most beneficial relationship with children. The most beneficial relationships that parents can have with their children, including teens, are those that go beyond just talking.

The National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health has found that it is the actual connection a parent and child have that can make a difference. In other words, conversations with your teen that just touch on a subject do not typically consist of a deep connection. Rather, a parent must truly understand who their child is, and vice versa.

Furthermore, it is those parents who manage to both set high expectations for their children, and spend time with their children, that develop the best

connections. Create environments where your children are not afraid to come to you with their questions and problems. Make sure to set standards and rules, including curfews, that both you and your child take seriously. Be firm when disciplining, but also remember to demonstrate love and affection openly and frequently.

Most importantly, remember to parent. Remember to tell your children what is right so that they are able to develop similar beliefs and values. Open, warm and firm communication helps to distinguish friendly relationships from those that can help make a difference.

*According to "Just Talking Is Not Enough," *The Washington Post*

**Parents:
Pay attention to this!**

Teens Tell Who Influences Them Most

It seems that no matter how many times they are told, parents forget how influential their teens consider them to be.

According to The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy (NCPTP), the majority of adults, those 20 years old and over, believe that teens' friends most influence teens' decisions about sex.

However, a 2006 national survey published by The NCPTP proves otherwise. The 2006 national survey *With One Voice 2006* asked teens aged from 12 to 19 years old: "Who most influences your decisions about sex?"

The answers may surprise you:

Parents 47%

Friends 18%

Someone Else 10%

Religious leaders 7%

Siblings 5%

Teachers and Sex Educators 4%

Themselves 4%

The media 3%

While teens' friends do have some influence over one another's sexual decisions, it is clear that the majority of teens surveyed believe their parents to be the most influential. This should be a helpful fact when talking to your teen about the pressures of adolescence. It is also important that you speak to all of your children about teen pregnancy since siblings account for a portion of influence.

*According to The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, www.teenpregnancy.org

Health-Related Behavior & Teen Pregnancy: How are teen mothers measuring up?

Although the teen pregnancy rates in the United States declined between 1990 and 2002 by 36%, the issue still remains a problem. According to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy (NCPTP), approximately 84 out of every 1,000 girls between 15 and 19 become pregnant. And of the 84 teenage girls, approximately 41 give birth.

While the 36% decline in teen pregnancies in the U.S. is commendable, the issue remains significant for many reasons. A primary concern of professionals and researchers are the health risks that both the teen mothers and their babies face. One organization that is particularly concerned with these increased health risks is the March of Dimes. And because the mission of the March of Dimes is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects and infant mortality, they have good reason to be concerned.

According to the March of Dimes, teenage girls often have various unhealthy habits, and when pregnant, these habits become more problematic. Some of these unhealthy habits include neglecting to take vitamins, eating poorly, drinking alcohol, smoking, and taking drugs. In fact, pregnant teens are more likely to smoke than pregnant women over age 25. In 2002 (the most recent data available), 13.4% of pregnant teens between 15 and 17 years old and 18.2% of pregnant teens between 18 and 19 years old smoked, compared to 11.4% of all pregnant women. While certain health risks of smoking, such as the development of emphysema and lung

cancer are well known, other health risks such as birth defects are not. In fact, smoking during pregnancy double's a woman's risk of having a low-birth weight baby (less than 5 and a half lbs.) The risks of stillbirth, premature birth and pregnancy complications are also increased.

“While teenagers have control over certain habits that can increase their risk for an unhealthy pregnancy, there are some risk factors that they do not simply because of their young age.”

In the Harrisonburg-Rockingham community we have a group dedicated to improving pregnancy outcomes for teens. The Hand in Hand Resource Mothers

program is committed to supporting pregnant and parenting teens throughout their pregnancy and up until the baby's first birthday. They help pregnant and parenting teens get to their doctors visits, encourage them to stay in school, advocate for them, and try to connect them to available community services. If you would like more information about the Hand in Hand Resource Mothers program please contact Debbie Bullis at 540-433-4340 or email dbullis@rhcc.com.

While teenagers have control over certain habits that can increase their risk for an unhealthy pregnancy, there are some risk factors that they do not control simply because of their young age. Some of these risk factors include their weight, the amount of prenatal care that they receive, and various pregnancy complications. Here are some statistics on these risks factors:

- Teenage girls are less likely than older women to be of adequate pre-pregnancy weight.
- Teenage girls are less likely to gain the

adequate recommended amount of weight during pregnancy, 25 to 35 pounds.

- Pregnant teens are the least likely of all maternal age groups to receive early and regular prenatal care, with 6.6% of teen mothers between 15 and 19 years old receiving late or no prenatal care compared to 3.6% for all pregnant women.
- Teen mothers are at a higher risk for developing pregnancy complications such as anemia, premature labor, and high blood pressure than those women over the age of 20.
- Those teen mothers who are 15 years old and younger are at the highest risk for developing such pregnancy complications, and may be more than twice as likely to die of such complications than those women between 20 and 24 years old.

Furthermore, teen mothers are more likely than mothers over the age of 20 to give birth prematurely, or before 37 completed weeks of pregnancy. Infants born prematurely face an increased risk of newborn health problems, lasting disabilities, and even death.

Due to their young age, teenage girls face many risks if they become pregnant. Physically, teenage girls are unable to support as healthy of a pregnancy as those women 20-years-old and over. These risk factors speak for themselves in terms of whether teens are ready for sex.

*According to The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, www.teenpregnancy.org & The March of Dimes, www.marchofdimes.com

6 Quick Facts*

- 85% of teens believe that sex should only happen in a long-term, committed relationship.
- Approximately 50% of teens believe that it's acceptable to be in a relationship with someone three years or older, even though research shows that the majority of relationships like this include sex.
- 2/3 of teens think it's acceptable to have sex with someone they have strong affection for and to live with someone outside of marriage.
- Approximately 60% of teen girls aged 15-17 and 73% of those aged 18-19 approve of unwed childbearing.
- Teen boys are less likely to approve of non-marital childbearing.
- Approximately 50% of teen girls approve of divorce as a remedy for a troubled marriage compared to 40% of teen boys.

*According to The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, www.teenpregnancy.org

**Check out our new
website!**

www.findyourreason.org

**teen pregnancy
prevention**
Harrisonburg-Rockingham

FutureBuild offers the following in Harrisonburg:

TRAIN THE TRAINER*

PURPOSE: TRAIN PROFESSIONALS TO HELP THEIR CLIENTS IN THE 20-29 AGE RANGE.

COMMUNITY CLASSES*

PURPOSE: PROVIDE EDUCATION TO UNMARRIED, 20-29 YEAR OLDS REGARDING FAMILY PLANNING METHODS AND THE BENEFITS OF MARRIAGE AND FATHERHOOD.

WORKPLACE INITIATIVE

PURPOSE: ON-SITE TRAININGS ABOUT COMMUNITY RESOURCES.

**In 2005, 48% of births in
Harrisonburg were
to unmarried parents.**

Think this is a problem? Want to know how to prevent non-marital births, about the benefits of marriage, the importance of both parents' involvement in a child's life, or learn about community resources? FutureBuild can help!

*** Dinner and childcare are provided. For completing the classes, participants receive a \$100 gift card. Classes fill up quickly, so contact us to find out about class dates and locations!!**

FutureBuild is funded through the Virginia Department of Health and Harrisonburg-Rockingham Teen Pregnancy Prevention.

VDH VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH
Protecting You and Your Environment

**teen pregnancy
prevention**
Harrisonburg-Rockingham

Promoting Healthy Families Through Marriage
Partners in Prevention



If you are interested in receiving our Toilet Talk posters, or other media materials for your business, agency or school, please contact Jennifer Rea at (540) 568-7083 or e-mail reajl@jmu.edu

Thank you for your continued support!