

BEFORE YOU BEGIN...

We know that talking to your parents, guardians, or other caring adults about sex can be difficult. You might feel awkward, nervous, or be afraid of what your parents will think. Maybe you just don't know what to say. However, after having a conversation with an adult about sex, most teens say it was very helpful. This brochure has been created by teens for teens to use as a guide to figure out the best way to go about talking to adults about this challenging topic.

BE PREPARED

When beginning a tough conversation, it is best to be as prepared as possible. Some teens talk to a friend to see what approaches work or don't work. But it is always a good idea to decide what you want to know. The more time you spend thinking about questions, the more comfortable you will be by the time the conversation begins.

WHO TO TALK TO AND WHEN TO TALK

You may feel more comfortable talking to someone other than your parent – like your aunt or a friend's dad. Whomever you decide to talk to make sure to choose the right time for the conversation. Wait until your parent/other caring adult isn't distracted, because it will be a lot easier to have a conversation if you don't have to do all of the talking.

WHAT IS THERE TO TALK ABOUT?

Many teens report that the easiest topic to talk about with adults is healthy relationships. This may be a good topic for you to discuss with a trusted adult first, or there may be another topic you are more comfortable talking about. If your first conversation is positive, it will be easier to talk about more difficult issues later.

**Birth Control • Your Parent's Opinions on Sexual Issues • Abstinence
Kissing • Unplanned Pregnancy Choices: Adoption, Abortion & Parenting
Sexual Abuse • Emergency Contraception • Sexual Orientation
HPV Vaccine • Sexual Health (STIs/HIV/AIDS) • Sex**

WHAT TO SAY...

There is no perfect way to begin a conversation about sex. Below are a few “tried and true” options teens have used successfully:

- **To the point.** Just come right out and say it. “I have a question about something I learned in my health class.”
- **Beat around the bush.** Start with a broad comment or question and follow up with some more specific questions. “Did you read that article in the paper about schools giving condoms to teens?”
- **I wonder if/how/why/what...** This gives them the perfect opportunity to share their opinions and advice. “I wonder how someone growing up 40 years ago would have felt about teen parenting. What did you think while growing up? Do you feel differently today?”
- **I've heard that...** Tell them what friends or the media have said and see what your parents know. “I heard on the news that there is a new STI vaccine, is that true?”
- **Write a note.** If they are busy, this may be a good way to get their attention. Try asking for a few minutes to talk or just make a list of your questions.

HOW TO SAY IT...

So you've decided to do it. You have the perfect conversation opener and you know what you want to find out. To make sure the rest of your conversation goes well, here are a few tips suggested by teens.

- 1) **Listen.** Teens say it is easiest to talk when someone is actually listening. Listen to what your parents have to say and insist that they treat you with the same respect.
- 2) **Don't Rush it.** Yes, you may be embarrassed, but your parents probably are, too. Don't end the conversation until you are satisfied with how it went.
- 3) **Remain open.** Your parents may ask you some personal questions. Tell the truth. Your parent will appreciate your honesty.
- 4) **Ask questions.** If you don't ask, your parents can't answer.
- 5) **Be polite.** If you disagree with something that is said, explain why, but be respectful of your parent's opinions.

Why do I need to do this, again?

It is your parent's job to protect your health and safety, even when it comes to dating and sexual relationships. Your parent's will also be able to give you more accurate information than a friend and will respect you for the courage you had to begin a conversation. Also, if you have talked to your parents about sex, it will be easier to be open with them about issues that may come up in the future.

WHAT OTHER TEENS HAVE TO SAY...

“Parents are generally more informed than your friends or peers. You’re probably more comfortable with them than you are with your teachers. So who better to go to with your questions? If you want to know, ask! If your parent(s) start the conversation, don’t let it be awkward. Listen, give feedback, and show them that you appreciate their input - even if you find it a little weird.”

-Katie, 17

“If you have questions, they need to be answered about this kind of stuff; it’s more serious than you think. Your friends can’t give you the kind of information you need to know, your parents are your best bet.”

-Tamika, 16

“Be open and start asking questions at a young age. Then when you are older and have more intensive questions to ask them, it won’t be as big of a deal. Just remember too, your parents were once your age.”

-Tré, 17

“Just do it... you will feel closer to your parents afterwards and your parents will feel like they can trust you just a little bit more... because you’re open with ‘em.”

-Jonathan, 15

If you need a little more help getting the conversation started, check out the following resources:

www.familiesaretalking.org

www.teenwisemn.org

www.advocatesforyouth.org

www.annexteenclinic.org/

www.sexetc.org/states/minnesota/

Pro-ChoiceResources

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Created by teens

HAVE A QUESTION?

Contact us at 612-825-2000 or
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