

Talking Tips For Parents of Teens

Because Ignoring Teen Sex Won't Make It Go Away!

Parents Are the Best Protection

Studies show that parents have the single greatest influence on the sexual decisions their children make. That's why it's so important to talk openly and honestly with your kids about the risks of sexual activity and the many benefits of saving sex for marriage. Effectively discussing the topics, however, can't be seen as a one-time event. It's an ongoing process that involves educating your child; making natural observations; and responding naturally to the things your kids see and say when you're together.

Unsure of What to Say?

There's no magic set of words for talking with your children about the risks of sex and the benefits of abstinence. It's more important to speak from your heart—not from a script. The key is to reach your kids early and stress your desire for them to have the best chance at building a bright and healthy future. Tell your kids you don't want anything to get in the way of them reaching their dreams—including sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, guilt or regret. Get your facts straight about the emotional and physical risks of non-marital sex and make sure your young person understands them.

Talk With Your Teen, Not at Them

Ask open-ended questions to start the conversation. Work hard to be a good listener and seek to understand what your child is thinking and feeling, even if you disagree with it. This will give you a much better idea of what you do and what you don't need to discuss with your child at various stages of their development.

Questions to Ask Your Teen

The following questions can be used as a starting place for meaningful conversation:

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| What do you want your life to look like as an adult? | What's the downside to waiting for sex? What's the upside? |
| What kinds of things could keep you from reaching your dreams? | Do you want to be married? |
| What makes you feel loved and valued? | What type of spouse are you looking for? |
| Why do you think parents set rules and limits on their teens? | What are the benefits of marriage? |
| What do you think I expect of you when it comes to sexual activity? | What can you do now to increase your chances of having a happy marriage in the future? |
| What are the risks of premarital sex? | What do you think love feels/looks like? |
| How would your life be affected by a pregnancy? A sexually transmitted disease? | What are some things you can do to make it easier to abstain from sex until marriage? |
| Do you think most people your age know the risks of sexual activity? | How can I better support your efforts to abstain from sex until marriage? |
| Does what your friends think about sex help shape your perspective? | What can I do to help you reach your dreams? |
| With all the associated risks, why would a teenager choose to have sex? | |

TIP: For more help, be sure to request a free copy of "The Parent of Teens' Survival Guide" by visiting www.makeasoundchoice.com or calling 701.297.7548



Encourage Your Kids to Ask You Questions

Be an ever-available resource to your teen. Encourage them to ask you questions and be honest with your answers. While it might be tempting to keep your own past in the past, the truth is, your life can be a beneficial example to your children, both in terms of the choices you make today and the way you overcame your past mistakes. If you have regrets, you can tell your kids...so they don't have the same ones. Your kids need to see authenticity, not perfection.

Questions Your Teen Can Ask You

The following questions can be a starting place for meaningful conversation:

What do you wish for my life as a grown adult?

What were some of the biggest obstacles you faced growing up?

What made you feel loved and valued when you were my age?

What kind of rules and limits did your parent(s) set on you as a teenager?

What are your expectations of me with regards to sexual activity?

What are the risks of premarital sex?

Did you know anyone whose life was negatively affected by a pregnancy? A sexually transmitted disease?

When did you learn about the risks of sexual activity?

Do you think my friends have a positive or negative impact on my sexual decisions?

Why do you think some teens choose to be sexually active, and others choose abstinence until marriage?

What do you think are the biggest benefits to saving sex for marriage?

What's the value of marriage in today's society? Is it worth striving for?

What can I do now to increase my chances of having a happy marriage in the future?

What can I expect from you as my parent to help me keep a commitment to abstinence until marriage?

What kinds of things will make it more difficult to save sex for marriage?

What kinds of things will make it easier to save sex for marriage?

What can I do to have a fresh start?



make a sound choice

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