

If you think

saying "NO" is tough,



JUST WAIT 'TIL
YOU SAY "YES."

Revised: November 2007

OPA Office of
Population Affairs
Clearinghouse

For additional copies, please contact:
Office of Population Affairs Clearinghouse
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Office of Public Health and Science
Office of Population Affairs

START HAVING SEX NOW AND THINGS CAN GET REALLY TOUGH

You're a teenager. Time to have fun, learn new things, and look forward to a bright future. Complicating your life, getting pregnant, or ending up with a sexually transmitted disease (STD) like HIV/AIDS is not in your game plan. Thousands of teenagers who said "yes" to sex will tell you they'd be happier and life would be a whole lot easier if they had waited—if they'd just said "no."

**I'm worried that I'll
get dumped.**

A healthy relationship makes you feel good about yourself. Nobody should make you feel bad or say that you do not love them because you say "no" to having sex. Sex is about your body and your emotions. Sex complicates relationships and breaking up with someone after you've had sex can hurt twice as much.

**How can I finish school
and take care of
a baby, too?**

You're right to be thinking about all the things you want to accomplish before you start a family. If you have sex and use birth control, you're having "safer sex," not "safe sex." Birth control can fail, even if you always use it and use it correctly. Then your teen years, which should be a time of freedom and joy, can fill up with dirty diapers, work, and responsibilities that you're not ready for.

Sometimes condoms don't work.

What if I get HIV/AIDS?

The number of American teenagers with HIV/AIDS is higher than ever. It's true that condoms are the only birth control method that provides some protection against HIV/AIDS and other STDs. But sometimes condoms break, sometimes they slip, and sometimes they don't get put on right. Sometimes, they don't get used at all. Is sex worth the risk?

My doctor said
HERPES IS INCURABLE.
*I thought you could get rid of
any STD just by taking medicine!*

Although some STDs can be cured with antibiotics, others—including herpes and HIV/AIDS—can't be cured. If you get the disease, you've got it for life. Maybe you think your friends will think you're cool if you have sex. Not so, especially if you catch an STD. Teens who've had sex say the sex that was supposed to make them so popular, makes them just the opposite. Their friends talk about them and avoid them. What's cool is deciding what you want and feeling pride in your decision.

Is it  **Love?**

Healthy relationships are based on common interests, mutual understanding, and respect. But sex means different things to different people and people don't always care about each other in the same way. It takes time to get to know someone and know what's what in a relationship. Saying "no" can actually take the stress off. It means you can stop worrying about STDs or getting pregnant and focus on developing a relationship that can last.

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