

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Sex? Choices for Teens¹

- It's okay to say "**No**". You don't have to explain, but if you chose to, you can say, "I've made up my mind to wait" or "I'm not ready to take that next step". Say whatever you're most comfortable with;
- Some teens and young adults choose not to have sex for religious, emotional or legal reasons;
- Be clear about what you want. It is easier to be clear once you've figured out exactly what you want. Be clear to yourself about the reasons for having sex; and
- Some people have sexual intercourse before they're ready. The following are a few of the reasons young people have sex before they're ready.
 - Falling to the pressure of a partner who pushes sexual intercourse;
 - Fear of losing a boy/girlfriend;
 - Wanting to be popular;
 - To prove you're not gay or lesbian; and
 - To experience the fireworks as seen on television, movies, music videos.
- Talk about how you feel before becoming involved sexually, and keep communication open;
- Do not say one thing and do another. Mean what you say and stick to it. A partner who doesn't respect your decision, doesn't respect you. Call them on it; and
- If you don't know someone well enough to talk about sex with him/her, you probably don't know the person well enough to have sex.

Birth Control

- If you choose to have sex, be responsible about it;
- If you're having sex and don't want to get pregnant, use regular birth control;
- The only guaranteed way to prevent having a baby is **NOT** to have sex;
- There are several types of birth control. Visit your doctor or a family planning clinic (such as Planned Parenthood) to determine what's best for you. Prescription birth control includes:
 - Birth control pills ("the pill");
 - Depo-Provera ("the shot" that lasts 3 months);
 - Diaphragms (rubber cup that gets placed inside the vagina).
- Birth control at drug stores (non-prescription) includes condoms (male & female), sponges, and spermicidal cream/jelly; and

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- Condoms are the most common form of birth control, but are not always the most effective in preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease (STD) due to tears, leaks or misuse.

Emergency Contraception (*the morning after pill*) is another option. **THIS SHOULD ONLY BE USED FOR EMERGENCIES AND MUST NOT BE USED AS A REGULAR FORM OF BIRTH CONTROL.** *The morning after pill* can keep you from getting pregnant if your condom broke or if you didn't use any birth control during sex.

For more information on birth control contact a family planning clinic (such as Planned Parenthood) or visit the following websites:

- Planned Parenthood (800) 942-1054 or www.plannedparenthood.org;
- Emergency Contraception: (888) 668-2-5283 (NOT-2-LATE) or www.not-2-late.com ;
- www.teenwire.com;
- www.advocatesforyouth.org/youth/health/contraceptives/index.htm;
- www.avert.org/ynqindx.htm

For more resources, please refer to the *Additional Resources* section located at the end of this directory.

STDs

- Prescription or over-the-counter birth control is not effective in preventing STDs (sexually transmitted diseases);
- The most common forms of STDs are;
 - HIV (the virus that causes AIDS);
 - Syphilis;
 - Chlamydia;
 - Hepatitis B & C;
 - Gonorrhea;
 - Herpes;
 - Genital warts; and
 - Pubic lice & Scabies.
- The most effective method for preventing the transmission of STDs is protected sex and single partners (versus multiple partners); and
- Condoms are the most effective in preventing most types of STDs, but not all.

For more information on STDs, visit the following websites:

www.teenwire.com
www.teensource.org
www.iwannaknow.org/basics2/index.html
www.avert.org/teenstd.htm

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Where you can go for Sexual Health Services

ACCESS: English (800) 375-4636 Spanish (888) 442-2237

The hotline has counselors to help women and teens understand their options, and find free or low-cost services they need.

Emergency Contraception (888) 668-2-5283 (NOT-2-LATE) or www.not-2-late.com

Toll free hotline for the names and phone numbers of places where you can get emergency contraception, or the 'morning after pill'.

Family PACT: (800) 942-1054 or www.familypact.org

Family PACT can help you find a provider who can help you sign up for an alternate way of paying. You can also find medical providers on their website. Just type in your zip code and it will list all the health care providers in your area who take Family PACT.

Planned Parenthood: (800) 230-7526 (PLAN) or www.plannedparenthood.org

You can get affordable and confidential health care at Planned Parenthood health centers across the state. They offer a wide range of services for both teens and adults. Call to connect with the nearest center and make an appointment, or just ask a question. You can also find your local center by typing in your zip code.

Pregnant

If you're pregnant, **you have a right to choose** to keep the baby, place the baby for adoption or with an adult guardian, safely surrender your baby, or have an abortion.

Some things to think about in your decision of being or not being a parent.

- your rights and responsibilities toward your baby are the same as an adult;
- consider your ability to meet the baby's needs, especially if the baby has special health care needs;
- your school or career goals; and
- your relationship with the baby's father.

Adoption

- The legal process where you give up all your rights to be a parent to your child permanently;
- Regardless of your child's age, you can get counseling at an adoption agency if parenting becomes too overwhelming and begins to feel like maybe you made the wrong choice;
- A baby can be placed for adoption through
 - A private adoption agency;
 - A public agency like the Department of Social Services;

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- A private agreement with the adoptive parents; and
- Placing the child with an adoptive family and signing an “AD 22” form. In this type of adoption, nothing is final until the birth mother later signs a “consent to adoption” form.

Information about adoption

To learn about adoption in California (your options, how to get help, how it works) contact or visit the following organizations.

- **Adoption Unit DCFS** (information & application intake) (888) 811-1121
- **Adoption Connection** (800) 972-9225 or www.adoptionconnection.org
- **Pact** (800) 750-7590 or www.pactadopt.org
- **Gravity Teen.com** www.gravityteen.com/adoption/
- Teen advice.com www.teenadvice.about.com/od/optionsadoption/

Guardianship

- The legal process where a court appoints an adult to act as your child’s parent.
- It can last until your child is 18; and
- Guardianship does not have to be permanent, but it can be hard to undo later if the guardian or the judge does not agree.
- Reasons to establish guardianship:
 - You may want to focus on finishing high school or college before taking on full responsibility for your child;
 - As a teen, you may not be able to take on the responsibilities of caring for your child;
 - The adult may be in a better financial situation to care for your child; and
 - Grandparents may be able to extend their health insurance to cover your child if they have guardianship.

If you have questions regarding guardianship

- Contact Public Counsel’s Children’s Right at (213) 385-2977 Ext. 500; and
- You may also visit Public Counsel’s Pro Per Guardianship clinic located at: Los Angeles County Courthouse 111 North Hill Street, Room 260 B
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Hours: 9:00am to 3:00pm, Tues., Wed., Thurs. **(arrive by 9:00am)**.

Safely Surrendered Baby Law

This law makes it easier for a parent who might otherwise abandon their baby in an unsafe place. The *Safely Surrendered Baby Law consists of the following*:

- Permits the parent(s) or surrendering person to safely and confidentially surrender a baby within three (3) days of birth;
- In the state of California, the baby may be surrendered to any hospital emergency room or to any fire station;

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- It provides a safe place for babies;
- It protects the parent(s) or surrendering person from prosecution for child abandonment.;
- The parent(s) are not required to give their names. They may be asked general health questions, which they have the option to answer; and
- Allows the parent(s) or surrendering person at least 14 days to reclaim the baby.

Abortion *If you are a pregnant teen in California:*

- You can get an abortion without anyone else's consent;
- Being pregnant and making such a decision is confidential;
- No one can force you to get an abortion;
- The doctor performing the abortion may NOT tell your parents or your boyfriend without your written consent;
- An abortion must be obtained within the first 20 weeks of the pregnancy in most cases;
- A licensed medical doctor in an office, clinic or hospital must perform the abortion;
- Medi-cal may cover the expense. There are low-cost/no-cost services available to you; and
- For more information contact Planned Parenthood at **(800) 230-7526 (PLAN)** or visit their website at www.plannedparenthood.org.

Medical Services

- Many youth are not aware that they can access medical services without parental consent;
- Youth (males & females) can apply for *minor consent Medi-Cal services* through the *Department of Public Social Services for Minor Consent Services*;
- Minor consent services are: pregnancy and pregnancy related care, family planning services, sexual assault services, sexually transmitted disease treatment, drug and alcohol abuse treatment/counseling, and mental health outpatient care;
- The age requirement is for youth between 12 to 21 years;
- Eligibility depends on the living situation and the parental responsibility;
- Youth who do not wish to identify parental information can apply for Medi-cal services through the Minor Consent Program; and
- If a youth requests services covered by the Minor Consent Program, the parents are not financially responsible and the child may sign an application and have a case opened in his/her own name through the Department of Public Social Services.

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Protecting Your Rights

The following groups help protect your right to make your own decisions about pregnancy and birth control. Call them if you think your reproductive rights have been violated.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

- Northern California (415) 621-2493
- Southern California (213) 977-9500 (Los Angeles) / (619) 232-2121 (San Diego)

NABRAL Pro-Choice California (415) 890-1020 www.caral.org

Educates voters about reproductive rights in California and provides resources/information.

Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California (916) 446-5247

TEEN DATING AND VIOLENCE

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence involves a pattern of abusive behavior. Domestic violence (also known as *dating violence*) can be physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional, or a combination of some or all of these. It can happen in casual dating, or in long term relationships.

Physical Abuse – includes such things as scratching, hitting, slapping, biting, pinching, shoving, pushing, pulling hair, choking, kicking, or using a weapon against a boy/girlfriend.

Sexual Abuse – includes any unwanted or forced sexual activity or rape. It refers to sexual activity that is pressured or coerced (you didn't want to do it, but were pressured into it). It also refers to engaging in sexual activity (or trying to) with someone who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Verbal or Emotional Abuse - anything that your boy/girlfriend says or does to you in order to try to control you, or which causes you fear, and affects your self esteem. The following are examples of verbal/emotional abuse. If your boy/girlfriend:

- humiliates or insults you, or your family and friends;
- swears at you or calls you names;
- tries to control your activities (who you call, where you go);
- tries to isolate you from your friends and family;
- yells and screams at you;
- constantly orders you around and tells you what to do;
- threatens to harm you, your loved ones, or him/her self;
- threatens suicide;
- becomes violent, he/she blames you and makes you feel responsible; and
- stalks you.

How do you know if you have a friend who's involved in an abusive relationship?

- Clues that someone may be in trouble in their relationship;
- bruising or other signs of physical injury;
- changes in mood or personality;
- difficulty making decisions and avoiding eye contact;
- changes in school attendance/performance, or dropping out of school;
- social isolation; and
- crying easily or overreacting to minor incidents.

What you can do if someone you know is being abused?

- Listen without judging;

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- Help your friend talk to a trusted person to get help and/or call the hotlines/counseling/ legal referrals listed in the *Resources/Referrals* section ahead;
- Remind your friend of his or her strengths and positive attributes;
- Invite your friend to spend time with you and to take part in activities with you;
- While your friend stays in the relationship, continue to be as much support as possible; and
- If your friend decides to leave the relationship, continue to be supportive and active with him/her once he/she is alone.

What if you are the one doing the hurting?

- You're not a bad person, just someone who needs help to stop a bad behavior;
- The problem of hurting people when you're angry, frustrated or jealous is not going to go away on its own;
- Even if you think you're justified in your actions, you can get new ideas about how to handle your feelings;
- You can learn new ways to deal with anger, fight fair, to communicate and to give and receive love in a relationship;
- Drinking alcohol or using drugs does not make you hurt someone;
- You can never use drugs or alcohol as an excuse for abusive behavior;
- Nobody is ever justified in hurting someone else to get their way;
- You won't get what you're looking for (love, respect, a happy time with someone who loves you and trusts you) unless you learn to deal with your frustration in a way that is not harmful to others; and
- Do not let shame or fear stop you. Talk to someone you trust or a teacher, doctor, religious leader, or counselor.

If you suspect you're in an abusive relationship, *trust your feelings/instincts and take it seriously*. If you're not sure, please contact the agencies/phone numbers listed below and confidentially speak with someone about your concerns. You can also check out the websites listed below.

Do not feel ashamed! Domestic violence and dating violence occur frequently and to a lot of young people.

IF YOU'RE EVER IN A SITUATION WHERE YOUR BOYFRIEND OR GIRLFRIEND HAS HURT YOU OR IS THREATENING TO HURT YOU, CALL THE POLICE (911) FOR HELP. There are a lot of people, agencies, and services to help you. **You are not alone.**

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Referrals/Resources for Help

Get help. Talk to a trusted friend or adult. Get informed.

Los Angeles County Domestic Violence Hotline (800) 978-3600

Valley Trauma Center 24-hour hotline (818)-886-0453 for sexual assault victims in the San Fernando Valley

National Domestic Violence Hotline (800) 799-7299 (TDD (800) 787-3224)

Teen Line (800) 852-8336 (TLC-TEEN)

National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center (866) 723-3968 (8:00 am to 6:00 pm EST) www.safeyouth.org

National Center for Victims of Crime www.ncvc.org

- look for the link to “dating violence resource center” under *Resource Centers*

Domestic Violence Restraining Orders

- A domestic violence restraining order is a court order that orders your boy/girlfriend (the abuser) to not come near you and not have contact with you.
- The Requirements of a Restraining Order:
 1. a “*domestic relationship*” – which means one of the following:
 - current or former spouse;
 - someone you’ve lived with, dated or been engaged to;
 - the parent of your child; and
 - a relative by blood, marriage or adoption.
 2. abusive behavior, which is any of the following:
 - bodily injury (either cause or attempt by abuser);
 - sexual assault; and
 - threat of serious bodily harm/injury and belief that the threat will be carried out.
- Where do you get a Restraining Order?
 - If it is an emergency, call 911. When the police come, ask for an Emergency Protective Order, which is good for 5-7 days, until you can go to court to get a long restraining order; and
 - If it is not an emergency, there are people who can help you. Call one of the numbers listed below

Legal Assistance

- Asian Pacific American Legal Center (Mon.-Fri. 9:00 am to 5:00 pm) (213) 977-7500;
- Break the Cycle Legal services and referrals related to teen/youth domestic violence (310) 286-3366 or (888) 988-8336 (TEEN);
- Legal Aid Foundation of Long Beach (562) 435-3501;
- Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice (323) 980-3500; and
- Public Counsel (213) 385-2977.