



## TOP 10 THINGS PARENTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT TEENS (AND SEX) PARENT NOTES

- 1. Most teens are not having sex**
  - Statistics can be scary, but good news too.
- 2. You are your teen's most valuable resource**
  - Say a bit more than you think a bit sooner than you think, recognizing that we often underestimate what our kids have already heard.
  - Questions a huge compliment, take time if needed to think of an answer.
  - Ask general questions.
  - Even a two-minute conversation is valuable.
  - Use teachable moments.
- 3. They think pee comes out of the vagina**
  - Don't assume teens have firm grasp of basic anatomy.
  - Pregnancy myths.
- 4. It's OK to talk about pleasure**
  - Balance: serious stuff, but in most circumstances sex is a wonderful thing.
  - Need to acknowledge natural sexual feelings teens have.
  - Masturbation healthy and normal, brainstorm low risk activities.
  - Still need to talk about STIs and contraception, how they relate to different types of sex.
  - Don't be afraid to make family values and rules clear, but be sex *positive*.
- 5. Sexting is real**
  - Teach good habits early.
  - Be a part of your teen's online life.
  - Teach to represent oneself online as one would in real life.
  - Teach that internet use for social reasons is a privilege, not a right.
  - Teach your son not to ask or pressure a girl to send a naked photo and to be respectful of her boundaries and comfort level.

Smart decisions start here.

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- Teach your daughter the importance of respecting one's body.
- Teach the difference between public and private, with the internet being as private as you can get and our bodies and our sexuality being as private as you can get.
- Remind your teen about the permanence of the internet (even Snapchat).
- Rally the troops. Ask friends and family to help send these positive messages to your teen about the internet. Invite speakers on the topic to visit your teen's school to reinforce what you've taught in a slightly different way. Hearing it from an "expert" is very powerful!
- Take every opportunity to assure your teen that you trust him/her to make good decisions when it comes to the internet. These words will encourage your child to rise to the challenge.

## 6. Consent is Sexy

- Using examples in real life, media to define what a healthy relationship looks like.
- Remember Honesty, Equality, Respect, Integrity.
- Talk about pressure to be in a relationship.
- How express boundaries, comfort level (I statements go a long way).
- Be a good role model.
- What is consent?
  - **Consent is about everyone involved in a sexual or possibly sexual interaction.**
  - **Consent can ALWAYS be withdrawn.**
  - **Nothing makes consent automatic or unnecessary.**  
Doesn't matter if married, only applies to one activity
  - **In some situations, full, informed and free consent cannot truly be given or shared.** Those include: being drunk or wasted, being asleep, being unable to really understand what one is saying yes to.
  - **Nonconsent means STOP: if not, sexual assault.**
  - **A lack of no does not mean yes.**
  - **Age of consent in Canada is 16.**

## 7. Testicle Tuesday is the most important day of the week

- 14-35 year olds.
- High cure rate but spreads fast.
- 9/10 nothing to worry about, but need to go to the doctor.
- One testicle bigger, lower.



- Girls no breast exams yet.
- Teach comfort when going to the doctor.

#### **8. There's a good chance your teen is watching porn**

- 70-80% of teens with first exposure at grade 4 or 5.
- Why problematic:
  - Against the law to watch/purchase under 18.
  - Boys thinking what a typical healthy sexual relationship looks like.
  - Imposing distorted views on girls who get the clear message that they have to dress, act or sext like a porn star in order to get noticed, get attention, be seen as girlfriend material, sexy.
  - Family values, portrayal of women as submissive or objectified, violence.
  - Key message: not real.

#### **9. Your teen may not be heterosexual**

- May be gay or straight or somewhere in between.
- May be transgender, intersex (1% of population).
- Sexual identity vs. gender identity vs. sexual orientation.
- Transgender doesn't mean your gay.

#### **Dos and Don'ts:**

- Don't go home and ask your teen if they are trans/gay.
- Don't assume that feminine acting boy is gay or transgender.
- Don't assume masculine acting girl is gay or transgender.
- Do remember that sexual orientation is fluid...things change.
- Do be non-judgemental, watch your facial expressions.
- Don't gender stereotype (ie. "Act like a man, John!").
- Don't make assumptions (ie. "You're going to break a lot of girls' hearts when you are older?").
- Do offer support...lots of resources in community.
- Don't hope he/she will change his/her mind.
- Do be honest with yourself, check your baggage so you can help your child.
- Don't ever use homophobic language.

#### **10. There is help! (See Resources Handout)**