



## TALKING TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT...



# Sex

## Honesty Is the Best Policy

**D**iscussing the “facts of life” with teenagers is often difficult for parents. Some parents may fear that talking about sex will encourage their child to become sexually active. But youngsters find out plenty about sex from other children. The only trouble is that much of what they learn from friends is plain wrong. Teenagers pass around many myths about sex, as well as ineffective folk remedies for preventing pregnancy and disease. Your children could be headed for trouble unless they get guidance and accurate information from you.

### **Teens Need Good Information**

Your children are going to be naturally curious about the changes going on in their bodies. A girl will want to find out about menstruation and pregnancy. She'll also be curious about the physical development going on in her body. A boy will be curious about the physical development going on in his body, and may want to know what causes erections and wet dreams. Assure him that wet dreams are natural and not a danger to his health. You may

also want to mention that masturbation is not harmful for either girls or boys.

### **Honesty Encourages Safer Sex**

Whether you have a son or a daughter, you should discuss pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. You'll probably want to tell your teenager that it's best to postpone sex until adulthood. But don't assume that your advice will be followed to the letter. Emphasize that under no circumstances should your child engage in sex without a condom.

### **Help Your Teens Resist Peer Pressure**

In addition to repeating false information about sex, your teenager's friends may persuade him or her to begin having sex before he or she is ready. Boys, in particular, can make sexually inexperienced friends feel left behind. Girls may also feel pressured into sexual activity because they think “everyone else is doing it.” And, of course, boyfriends and girlfriends sometimes put pressure on their partners to have sex. Your teen will need a lot of

self-esteem to resist peer pressure. Discussing sex in an honest and caring way can help provide the support your son or daughter needs in order to take a strong stand.

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