



How do I talk to my child about contraception?

WHAT IS YOUR CHILD GOING THROUGH?

Adolescence is a time when some young people become sexually active. Boys and girls will also have to start thinking about contraception at this age. A lack or inadequate use of contraception during sex can lead to pregnancy. In this case, voluntarily interrupting the pregnancy (abortion) or becoming a teen parent are decisions with their own consequences.

Your child has to know what to do to avoid pregnancy and be familiar with available methods of contraception (condoms, the pill, vaginal ring, contraceptive patch or injectable contraceptive). They need to know where to get them and how to use them correctly. Your support will also encourage your child to use contraception.

Things that kids might be wondering

- What type of contraception should I choose?
- Where do I get the pill?
- My girlfriend is on the pill: do we still need to use a condom?
- Will the doctor tell my parents I'm using a method of contraception?
- We didn't use a condom: what do we do?

Importance of talking to your child about contraception

It's normal for you as a parent to have concerns with talking to teens about contraception. You may be afraid you're encouraging them or giving them permission to have sex or think that your child is simply too young. It's not easy to accept that your child is or will be sexually active.

Talking about contraception doesn't mean encouraging your child to have sex. Instead, it means showing them the importance of using contraception and supporting their choices. It also means making them understand that contraception is a tool that will help them have a child when and how they want.

Did you know?

- A nurse at school or at a CLSC can provide girls with a method of contraception for a six-month period.
- Only condoms can protect against sexually transmitted infections (STI).
- Emergency oral contraception (the "morning after pill") can be taken up to 5 days following a sex that was not protected by contraception or when the contraception was not used correctly.

WHAT CAN YOU DO AS A PARENT?

Know the available resources when it comes to contraception

You may not be aware of or know how to use every single method of contraception. However, it's important to be familiar with resources that are available based on your needs and those of your child.

- **For information on different methods of contraception** → Send your child to the school nurse, a youth clinic or www.sexualityandu.ca
- **To obtain a method of contraception** → Send your child to the school nurse, a youth clinic, a medical clinic, etc.
- **To get emergency oral contraception** → Send your child to the school nurse, a youth clinic, a pharmacy, a CLSC, a medical clinic, etc.



Support your child throughout each step of contraception use

Here are some things that will help you:

- Stress that you want them to use a method of contraception, particularly to avoid pregnancy or an STI during adolescence.
- Give them a brochure on contraception methods and available resources.
- Talk to them about your insurance (private or public) that can provide them with financial assistance to get contraception.
- Explain how to use a condom and help them get some.
- Ask them whether they have talked about contraception with their partner. If not, help them find ways to talk about it.
- Help them explore different ways to react if their partner refuses to use a method of contraception.
- Ask your daughter if she is experiencing side effects from her method of contraception and ensure that she is using it correctly in the first months.



WHAT CAN HELP YOU?

Web sites

www.itss.gouv.qc.ca/accueil_en.dhtml

www.sexualityandu.ca

Do you need a professional resource?

Call Info-Santé at 811 or the parent help line at 1-800-361-5085.

Tips

Talk about contraception **before** your child is sexually active. Don't wait until they ask questions to talk about it. Even if these conversations can be uncomfortable, it's important to have them. Teens need to know that you want them to use contraception.

Also talk to boys. Even though girls are the ones who use most types of contraception, boys also have a role to play. For example, he can talk to his partner about which method(s) to use, tell her it's important for him, ensure that his partner is using the method consistently, always have condoms, etc.

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