



## How do I answer questions about sex?

Has your child asked you a question about sex that embarrassed or surprised you? Did you know how to answer? Were you afraid of saying too much or not giving the right answer?

Many parents go through this at one point. Here are some ways to help you answer the sometimes embarrassing questions that children may ask.

### YOUR CHILD ASKS YOU A QUESTION

#### 1. Determine what he or she knows based on the context of the question

Before answering, it's important to find out what children know about this topic and understand why they are asking. Pay attention to the tone you use to ask questions. Avoid being too nosy or direct!

- Do you have an idea of what that could be?
- What does this mean to you?
- Where did you hear about that? Where did you see that?
- Who told you about that?

This first step will give you an idea of what your child needs to know. Do they want to be informed or reassured? Are they afraid of being laughed at because they don't know what a word or expression means? Do they want to talk about something that they saw or heard and that made an impression? Did they witness a situation?

By understanding the context, it will be easier for you to give an answer that meets your child's needs.

#### 2. Answer the question as simply as possible

First, answer the question without going into too many details. Answer from the point of view of a young teen and not an adult.

Think about what would be important for your child to know at his or her age. Use words that your child knows and give an answer that makes sense based on the specific need. Above all, don't limit yourself to simply answering the question. Take the opportunity to support them, establish rules, let them know about your values and opinions, and share your experiences. These are good opportunities to communicate messages that are important to you.

- What are the messages you want to give your child?
- What do you want them to remember?

### 3. Ensure that your answer is clear

Ask your child whether your answer is clear and give more details if necessary. In most cases, short and simple explanations are enough.

- Does that answer your question?
- Was my answer clear?
- Did you understand?

**Above all, leave the door open to discussion!**

- Don't hesitate to ask me more questions.
- I really want to discuss this with you.
- I'm always available to answer your questions.

**Finally, take time to think about your child's questions and the answer you gave.**

- How do you feel about the question?
- Why did you feel uncomfortable?
- Are you satisfied with the answer you gave? Why?
- Do you need to talk about it again?

**Know that it's never too late to bring up the subject with your child. Above all, don't hesitate to discuss the topic again with your teen.**

- "I want to talk about our discussion from yesterday."
- "I forgot to tell you... I want you to know that..."
- "Before you make a decision, I want you to consider ..."



### Your child asks you a question

#### You don't know what to say or you don't know the answer

Tell your child that you're glad she asked you this question. Tell her that her question is an excellent one but that you want to think about it before giving an answer. This will give you time to think about how to respond and to get information, if necessary. Above all, don't forget to talk about it again.

#### You think that your child is too young to have this information

Not sure what information is age-appropriate? Remember to find out what they already know and stress the message you want them to remember instead of the right answer. Don't feel obligated to go into details. You can also decide not to answer the question. However, keep in mind that if you don't give an answer, your child may try to find the information somewhere else. In this case, find reliable resources (other adults who are important to your child, books, websites, etc.).

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