

SAFE SEX ??? 'SAFE' SEX ??? SAFE 'SEX' ???

What is 'safe sex'?

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Can you think of ways young people put themselves at risk when having sex?

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Do you think it's possible to have 'safe sex'? How?

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Can you think of any risks to do with having sex - even 'safe sex'?

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- 3 4

Think of ways that sex can be made safer...

- 1 2
- 3 4

Some questions for you to discuss...

1. Is sex the only important part? What about love?
2. Do you know how to put on a condom properly?
3. Can you think of the emotional cost of casual sex for you and others?
4. The UK has the highest teenage pregnancy rate in Western Europe and the US. Can you think of ways to reduce this? Do you think we need to?
5. Can you think of the advantages of having sex in a loving & trusting relationship?

SAFE SEX ??? A LEADERS GUIDE

What is safe sex?

Safe sex is any attempt to make sex safer. It is not about making sex 'safe'. It includes using contraception and educating people in safer ways to have sex.

Is it possible to have safe sex?

It is possible but today there are increasing risks to having sex. Condoms are reckoned to be the most safe way of having sex with the smallest risk of pregnancy/infection. Surveys put the success rate at somewhere between 98% (highest) and 80% (lowest). The only real way to have safe sex is with one faithful partner for life, however difficult some people may find that!

How can young people put themselves at risk?

A key word here is alcohol mainly but sometimes drugs such as ecstasy can make people more 'loved up'. Young people need to think about sex rather than rushing into it.

Can you think of any risks to do with having sex?

1. unwanted pregnancy
2. the emotional, physical and social cost (family breakdown)
3. venereal diseases (gonorrhoea and syphilis)
4. HIV - the virus which causes AIDS
5. other sexually-transmitted infections (herpes, urethritis, pubic lice, scabies and viral warts)
6. many abortions - post abortion counselling is increasingly frequent among teenage girls and women sometimes years later. Some research says abortions can affect behaviour of teenagers.
7. acquired infertility
8. cancer of the cervix
9. anal sex can and often does damage or rip the tissue around the backside. There are a number of these cases in casualty departments.

'Safer sex'

1. Sex with another person always carries a risk. The safest form of sex is with one partner where they have both been faithful to one another.
2. A number of countries are advocating abstinence for teenagers. In Uganda and the US this is credited with lowering teenage pregnancy rates. Not having sex shouldn't be seen as un-cool
3. Obviously petting and getting off with someone is safer than intercourse.
4. The diaphragm or cap do offer some protection against infection but very little.
5. If you are only having oral sex, this carries rather less risk of transmitting sexual infection, but most certainly can happen. For this reason some people use protection.
6. If in doubt whether it would be safe to have sex with someone - don't.

What are condoms used for?

Condoms are sheathes that trap the sperm when a man climaxes. Using them reduces the chances of pregnancy. They also provide some protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV. But this protection is far from 100%.

Notes for using a condom

You don't put the condom on before intercourse starts

Be careful using it so it doesn't split. Put it on carefully and fully

There's usually a 'teat' at the end. Squeeze the air out of it.

Fun condoms are less effective

There are also female condoms - the same kinds of rules apply

Never try to 're-use' a condom

- 8 out of 10 teenagers use contraception in Denmark, Switzerland, Holland. Only 50% do in the UK. UK has highest teenage pregnancy rate in Western Europe, recording a rise of 11% between 1996 and 1998
- First experience of sexual intercourse (survey of 18-24s): Up to 14 (18%), 15 (15%), 16 (17%), 17 (14%), 18 (12%), 19 (4%), over 20 (6%), Never (20%)
- The majority of under 16s who have had sex wish they'd waited or didn't enjoy the experience