

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

Sexual
Health!



WHAT MY CHILD NEEDS TO KNOW

1. Birth control methods should be used if a person does not want to have children. Having sexual intercourse without using birth control is a high-risk behavior. It can result in an pregnancy or a sexually transmitted infection (STI).
2. There are many effective birth control methods, but they must be used the right way. These include condoms, birth control pills, intrauterine devices (IUDs), diaphragms, birth control shots, cervical caps, spermicide, and implants.

continued on next page



Birth Control and Sexually Transmitted Infections

Birth Control and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) are sensitive topics that can be hard to talk about, but it is important that your child learns about them so that they can stay safe and healthy. When and how you share information about these topics is a decision only you can make. Some parents will be more comfortable talking about all topics and areas; other parents may have religious or cultural beliefs to which they want to abide or may want to leave the topic to family life education in school. Remember, your child will learn about sex and the results of sex somewhere and somehow. It is better coming from you so that it is accurate and so your child knows they can come to you for help and support. Having these discussions before your child is sexually active is important. Pre-puberty is the best time to start.



TIPS FOR TEACHING YOUR CHILD ABOUT BIRTH CONTROL AND SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

1. Be open to your child's questions and answer honestly without embarrassment. Your child may ask questions about things you may be opposed to like premarital sex. It is appropriate for you to ensure your child understands your values, but at the same time it is important to answer their questions and concerns or they will go elsewhere for information.
2. Describe the different forms of birth control. There are charts and books with realistic pictures and videos that show how different forms of birth control are used. If your child is embarrassed, they can watch the videos alone but let them know you are there to answer any questions.

continued on next page

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What my child needs to know continued...

3. There are many different STIs. You should know STI symptoms, ways of transmission, whether an STI is curable, how to test for it, and how to protect yourself. Using a condom is one way to protect against STIs.
4. Using alcohol or drugs can lower inhibitions and the ability to consent to sex. This can result in sexual assault, an STI, unwanted pregnancy, or other trauma.

Birth Control and Sexually Transmitted Infections

Tips for teaching your child about birth control and sexually transmitted infections continued...

3. Use facts when you talk about pregnancy, birth control, and STIs. Educate yourself on the most current science and use reliable resources. Your child's pediatrician or your local health department may have information you can use.
4. You can also use social stories to talk about pregnancy, birth control, and STIs. Don't talk about sex as being a bad thing. Think about framing the stories on how to make good decisions and understand the impact of those decisions.
5. Talk honestly about the impact of unwanted pregnancy with your child so that they understand that babies require a lifetime commitment that can impact their goals and dreams for the future. You can try an experiment by giving them a baby doll for several days that they must take care of, feed every two hours, get up during the night, etc. They make special dolls for this which cry and wet.
6. If you think your child is having sex, don't judge them; let them know you are there to support them and if they need access to birth control, you will help them so that they can stay safe and healthy.

