

How do I have "The Talk" with my child?

You may be afraid that talking to your child about sex will be uncomfortable and embarrassing. It's still worth the effort!

On average, people become sexually active at 17, and your child's friends are their most common source of information on sex. Without formal sex education, a person is half as likely to use a condom during sex.

Teens report that parents have the biggest impact around their decisions about sex. Messages about sex are everywhere, but you can make sure your child has the facts to make the best decisions. You can be the difference!

Why should you to talk to your child about sex?

- How would you feel if your child had a sexually transmitted infection (STI)? How would your child feel? The more you educate your child, the less likely this becomes.
- Half of new STIs occur in people ages 15-24
- 50% of sexually active people will have an STI by the age of 25
- US teen pregnancy rates are the highest in among all developed countries
- 13-24 years old make up 21% of the new HIV diagnoses and are the age group least likely to get timely care
- 69% of sexual assault victims are 34 years old or younger

How do you get the conversation started?

- ✓ **Make sure you are informed.** Contact VOA FIT or use the resources below
- ✓ **Start talking early and often.** If you provide your child with age appropriate and factual information as they grow, they will be more likely to feel comfortable talking to you when they have serious questions.
- ✓ **Stress the importance of condoms.** Condoms are still the best way to prevent pregnancy and avoid the spread of STIs. Make sure your child knows the importance of barriers even if they are on birth control.
- ✓ **Consent is a must.** Remember the acronym "FRIES." Consent must be Freely given, Reversible, Informed, Enthusiastic, and Specific
- ✓ **There is no normal.** Sexual development is a life long process and each person has their own journey. The most important thing is that your child learns to accept them-self and knows that you are always there to support them.

Resources

voamid.org/hiv

(For all ages. Info on free HIV testing and safer sex supplies)

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sexetc.org

(For teens. Info on sexual health and social issues)

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amaze.org

(For educators, parents, and children. Info on sexual health and development)

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kidshealth.org

(For parents, educators, and children. Info on wellness and sexual health)

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healthysexuals.com

(Produced by Gilead. For teens and adults. Resources on sexual health)

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plannedparenthood.org

(For teens and adults. Sexual health materials and healthcare access resources.)

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goaskalice.columbia.edu

(For teens and adults. Offers general wellness info and sexual health content)