

# Facts About Teens and Sex:

## Parents Can Make a Difference

**If parents are going to help keep kids healthy and safe they need to know the facts:**

- Among teens as a whole about 47% report having had sex. By grade 12, about 62% of all teens have had sex at least once.
- More than half of teens say they have had oral sex.
- One out of three teenage girls get pregnant at least once before they reach the age of 20. There are 820,000 teen pregnancies each year.
- Every year, one in 4 teens contracts a sexually transmitted disease (STD). Some of these STDs will affect their ability to have children later on.



**The good news is parents can help turn these numbers around. Here's what the latest research is showing:**

- Twenty studies looked at the relationship between parents and their children and risky sexual behavior among teens. Nearly all found that when parents and teens are close, the risk of teen pregnancy is reduced.
- Teens who feel supported by their parents are more likely to abstain from sex altogether and wait until they are older to have sex. When they do start having sex, teens who feel connected to their parents have fewer sexual partners and use birth control more consistently.
- A study among Latino teens found that family togetherness was "critical" in preventing problem behaviors and in promoting positive behaviors.
- A study among African-American teen girls found that teens who talked more often with their parents were more likely to use birth control or condoms if they had sex.
- In a national survey of teens, 80 percent said their decisions about sex and relationships are influenced by "what their parents have told them" and "what their parents might think."



**The bottom line is that parents can make a difference in keeping their kids safe and healthy.**

**Talk with your kids about sex!**

**CEHC** Talk *with*  
*your* Kids