



Ask your Life orientation educator or the nurse at the clinic about sexual health and reproduction.

The freedoms of Abstinence and Delaying of Sexual Debut

Being in a relationship and having a baby together is a wonderful experience in your life. However if this is done at a very young age and you are not in a position to manage the responsibilities of parenthood, this can become a very difficult time and can impact on your entire life plan, education prospects, happiness and financial security. It is always a smart choice to delay parenthood until you are in a committed, loving relationship, physically, emotionally and financially ready to deal with the responsibilities related to raising a child. Listed below are some of the "freedoms" you will benefit from if you delay parenthood to beyond your teen years:

- Freedom from experiencing an **unplanned** pregnancy and parenthood.
- Freedom from the risk of contracting **incurable and fatal** sexually transmitted diseases.
- Freedom from the **use and side effects of contraceptives**.
- Freedom from **sexual exploitation**.
- Freedom to maintain **self-respect and dignity**.
- Freedom to be in control of **your life and your body**.
- Freedom from possible **severe pain and heartache** from an unhealthy relationship.
- Freedom to **plan and focus** on achieving your future career and life goals.

Identifying your goals and staying focused on your life plan

We all dream, we wish and we hope to live a certain kind of life when we grow up. We dream of the careers we want, the type of family we imagine, our future home and lifestyle. Have you ever thought about this?

Planning for Success

How you plan and manage your thoughts, attitude and behaviour today, will make your vision for your tomorrow a reality. Avoid risky sexual behaviours that could result in an unplanned pregnancy or unintended parenthood. Develop a life and study plan and stay committed to your life plan by:

- **focusing on finishing your schooling.** How and on what you spend your time now, will determine the likelihood of completing your schooling, obtaining good results and living the life you want for yourself.
- **focusing on keeping a healthy body and mind:** Make time to get involved in physical exercise and stay emotionally connected with family and friends. Try to eat healthy.
- **avoid engaging in risky behaviours** such as taking drugs and alcohol, sexual relationships, bullying, engaging in violence or gang activities. These behaviours place risks on your ability to stay focused on your life plan.
- **avoid friends that do not support your plans** but they are likely to distract you from achieving your life goals be aware of your time and extent of engagement on social media platforms. This could limit your available time and concentration on your life and study plan.
- **constantly ask yourself**, if what you are currently doing, will help you achieve the life you envisioned. Is this activity distracting you from your goals? If so, refocus and change your actions so that it supports you in achieving your life goals.
- **review your life and education plan regularly.** Changes in your life circumstances may offer new opportunities or require you to reconsider the pathways to achieving your life goals.

PUT YOUR LIFE, YOUR FUTURE, YOUR EDUCATION FIRST. COMMIT TO DELAYING PARENTHOOD.

Reference

1. Dhlomo S. (January 2019), Head of Health KZN.
2. Gunawardena N. et al, (2013), BMJ - Global health, Predictors of pregnancy among young people in Sub-Saharan Africa
3. Mchunu G. , Peltzer K, Tutshana B. and Seutlwadi L. (2012), African Health Sciences- Adolescent pregnancy and associated factors in South African Youth
4. Lamb S, Markussen E. et al (2011), School dropout and completion: international comparative studies in theory and policy
5. World Health Organisation (2020) Adolescent Pregnancy
6. Neal S. et al (2016), The causes of maternal mortality in adolescents in low and middle income countries, systemic review of literature.



PREVENTION OF TEEN PARENTHOOD

FATHERHOOD IN CHILDHOOD? NOT FOR ME!

I hope to finish matric, get a good job and explore the world before thinking about children.



My Life, My Future, My Education, First!

MOTHERHOOD IN CHILDHOOD? NOT FOR ME!

A child raising a child is hard. At this stage of my life I want to take class tests not a pregnancy test.



Be smart, make good life choices, delay parenthood.



education

Department: Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

DID YOU KNOW?

1 in 10 Teenagers fall Pregnant



Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest rate of teen pregnancy in the world. (N. Gunawardena et al 2013)^{1 and 2}

9 in 10 Teenage Pregnancies are Unplanned



74.1% of teen mothers indicated that their pregnancy was unwanted, unplanned or untimed. (G. Mchunu et al 2012)³

5 in 10 Teenage Mothers drop out of School



This increases the risk of poor academic performance and the likelihood of school dropout. (Lamb & Markussen 2011)⁴

8 in 10 fathers of the baby don't marry the teenage mother or support her emotionally and financially.



Lack of adequate emotional, financial and social support increases the risk of the teen mothers' ability to provide an environment for the optimal development of the baby.

Health and other risks to Teenage Parents and their Babies.

Young mothers, due to their developing bodies are not ready for pregnancy and child birth. This together with the high risk of not accessing prenatal medical care puts the mother and baby at a higher risk for serious medical complications. Listed below are the risks to the teen parents and their baby.

Health risks to the Teen Mother

- Pregnant teens are at risk of not getting the correct **prenatal care** especially if they don't have parental support. Prenatal care includes early detection and management of medical problems for mother and baby, nutritional care, monitoring babies' development and preparation for delivery.
- **Health risks** to the teenage mother include amongst others: anaemia, high blood pressure, hypertension and cephalopelvic

disproportion (baby's head is wider than the pelvic opening) eclampsia (seizures), puerperal endometritis and systemic infections. (World Health Organisation, 2020)⁵



- Globally the leading cause of **death amongst adolescent girls** is pregnancy and child birth complications. (World Health Organisation, 2020)⁵
- In South Africa, **45% of all maternal deaths** (mothers who die during or shortly after giving birth) are that of teenage mothers. (Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo 2019)¹
- **Post partum depression** is also common amongst teen mothers, which can prevent her from taking good care of the baby.

Health Risks to baby



- Babies born to teenage mothers are more likely to be born prematurely and suffer from low birth weight, respiratory, feeding, digestive, visual, cognitive and other health and developmental delays and/or impairments. (World Health Organisation, 2020)⁵
- 2.5% - 3.8%, of babies born to teen mothers die due to medical or health complications. (S. Neal 2016)⁶
- Given the importance of nurturing, stimulation, nutrition and access to health care in the first three years of life, children of teen mothers' are in all areas of development at greater risk due to the teen mothers' lack of life experience, access to resources and a support system.

Risks to the Babys' Future

A teen mother may not always be in a position to adequately cope with the demands of parenting and completing her education simultaneously. This is further exacerbated by the lack of parenting skills. Children of teen mothers:



- are likely to repeat a grade
- are less likely to complete their schooling
- have increased risk of socio-economic difficulties
- often fall victim to abuse and neglect
- are more likely to become teen parents themselves
- more likely to be under employed or unemployed as a young adult. (G. Mchunu et al 2012)³

Risks to Teen Fathers



- Having an unplanned baby launches the teenage boy into the full-time and all consuming commitment to fatherhood. Teenage fatherhood causes one to fast track the end of ones' boyhood. A situation that most teenagers are not emotionally ready for.
- The teen father has to deal with additional responsibilities from that of his peers. He has to be concerned about:
 - o sharing in responsibilities for caring of the babys' daily needs such as feeding, bathing, safety and stimulation
 - o meeting the financial costs to cover the babys' medical, nutrition, clothing, and education needs.

- The added responsibilities of fatherhood can increase the teen fathers' stress levels and can have implications for his physical and mental well-being.
- Teen fathers are up to 30% less likely to finish high school than other teenage boys.
- Facing challenges to complete his education is bound to have negative implications for his career and future livelihood.

Don't be pressurized into a sexual relationship when you are not ready.

Pressuring someone to have sex is never okay! It's a sign of an unhealthy relationship and you could be at risk of abuse and exploitation. You have the right to decide for yourself as to when you're ready for sex and being a parent.

A partner who is pressurizing you to have sex will commonly say things like:

- Prove your love to me by having sex with me.
- I need to have sex right now, I can't wait.
- I will leave you (threatening) if you don't have sex with me.
- All of our other friends are having sex, so we should do so as well.

REMEMBER!!!!

Simply say "No"



If you have unprotected sex, remember, with just one sexual encounter there is a risk that you could fall pregnant. Even if your boyfriend withdraws before he ejaculates, you could fall pregnant.

To have the courage to say **NO** you must:

- Be confident and know how far you want to take your relationship. Think through why you want to delay a sexual relationship or delay parenthood before you get yourself in a situation where sex is expected of you.
- communicate clearly, firmly and early in your relationship to your partner as to what your stance is when it comes to sex.
- know that you don't owe anyone an explanation for why you don't want to engage in sexual relations. You may choose to explain if you want but you don't have to.