



FROM  
YOUR DOCTOR

## A good reason to have sex—and some bad ones

It's easy to get the idea that all teenagers are having sex—all you have to do is flip on the TV. But everybody isn't doing it, and that's perfectly normal, too. After all, not having sex is the best way to protect yourself against pregnancy and infection, especially with the virus that causes AIDS.

But you were promised a good reason. Sex is right when you and your partner both want to have sex, you both think it feels good, and you are both willing to accept responsibility for preventing pregnancy and disease.

It's best when you are committed to a person who's equally committed to you. Commitment means something more than just wanting to go out with one person. Not only do you love each other, but you know that you can talk about things like birth control. You also know you can count on each other if something happens that you didn't expect—like pregnancy, for example.

There are also lots of bad reasons to have sex. Here are some examples.



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- **The person you love will drop you if you don't.**

You've got to wonder how sincere people are if they say they love you but they need to be with someone who'll have sex.

- **You want to be popular.** It's great when people like you well enough to seek out your company, but sex is the worst way to achieve celebrity. Even if you manage to stay healthy, you'll eventually wonder if anybody would hang around you if you weren't willing to have sex.

- **You're lonely or bored.** Having sex will not turn you into a happy or interesting person. You can explore lots of interesting things—and still have sex later on. Make a list of five other things you'd love to try.

- **Babies are cute.** They are, but they're also the bossiest people alive. If you think you're lonely or bored now, wait until you can't go to the library, the movies, a party, or school because nobody's around to babysit.

- **You've done it already, so why stop now.** Just because you've had sex with one partner doesn't mean you must have sex with everyone you date.

- **People will make fun of you if you don't.** Don't let anybody pressure you into doing something you don't feel you're ready for. Point out that it isn't cool to let other people make your important decisions for you.

### A word about date rape

Like they say, No should always mean No. If someone says No, that's it—stop what you're doing. And if you say No, mean it. If you're thinking maybe, then say Maybe. How much you're respected isn't in any way connected to how long it takes you to make up your mind. But clearly stating your intentions is definitely a mature way to go.

Remember that nobody has the right to touch you unless you really want to be touched. And if you're forced to do something you don't want to do, don't hesitate to report it. Remember, too, it's much easier to get into a situation that's out of your control if you're using alcohol or drugs. □

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care**

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