

**GUIDELINES FOR SEXUAL HEALTH INFORMATION AND DISEASE PREVENTION:**  
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Evidence suggests that sex education programs that provide information about both abstinence and contraception can delay the onset of sexual activity in teenagers, reduce their number of sexual partners and increase contraceptive use when they become sexually active. These programs:

- ❑ Are age and culturally appropriate.
- ❑ Use information and materials that are medically and scientifically accurate and objective.
- ❑ Encourage and improve communication, especially around growth and development, with parents/guardians and other trusted adults. (The quality of parent-child communications about sex and sexuality appears to be a strong determinant of adolescents' sexual behavior).
- ❑ Identify resources to address individual needs, for present and future concerns and questions.
- ❑ Enlighten young people to develop and apply health-promoting behaviors, including disease prevention and detection and accessing accurate health information that is age appropriate.
- ❑ Provide information about sexual anatomy and physiology and the stages, patterns, and responsibilities associated with growth and development.
- ❑ Stress that abstinence from sexual activity is the only certain way to avoid pregnancy and to reduce the risk of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV.
- ❑ Acknowledge that people may choose to abstain from sexual activity at various points in their lives.
- ❑ Address the health needs of all youth who are sexually active, including how to access health services.
- ❑ Provide accurate information about STDs including how STDs are and are not transmitted and the effectiveness of all FDA approved methods of reducing the risk of contracting STDs.
- ❑ Provide accurate information about the effectiveness and safety of all FDA-approved contraceptive methods in preventing pregnancy.
- ❑ Provide information on local resources for testing and medical care for STDs and pregnancy.
- ❑ Promote the development of intrapersonal and interpersonal skills including a sense of dignity and self-worth and the communication, decision-making, assertiveness and refusal skills necessary to reduce health risks and choose healthy behaviors.
- ❑ Recognize and respect people with differing personal and family values.
- ❑ Encourage young people to develop and maintain healthy, respectful and meaningful relationships and avoid exploitative or manipulative relationships.
- ❑ Address the impact of media and peer messages on thoughts, feelings, cultural norms and behaviors related to sexuality as well as address social pressures related to sexual behaviors.
- ❑ Promote healthy self-esteem, positive body image, good self-care, respect for others, caring for family and friends and a responsibility to community.
- ❑ Teach youth that learning about their sexuality will be a lifelong process as their needs and circumstances change.
- ❑ Encourage community support and reinforcement of key messages by other adults and information sources.