

Sex? Choices for Teens



Waiting

Contraceptive Services

Adoption

CHOICES

Abortion

Guardianship

Keeping the Baby



**Have fun in your relationships
BUT BE SAFE!**

Why is it important to be clear about what YOU want?

To Avoid:

Mixed Up Thoughts

- Think about how far you want to go before you spend time with your partner. Knowing your own boundaries will make communication a lot easier between you two.
- If you don't tell your partner where your boundaries are, they might be confused as to how far you are willing to go. Being firm about what you want and expect will allow your partner to not feel teased.

Confusing Feelings

- One partner may feel that the other is leading them on if they are not clear about how far they want to go.
- The other partner may feel hurt or confused as to why the other person made them move faster than they wanted to.
- Or vice versa

Bad Outcomes

- Having sex when you don't want to.
- Getting pregnant.
- Getting diseases.

How can you communicate what you want?

Be Clear!

- Figure out what you want.
- **Be honest. If you don't know someone well enough to talk about sex with him/her, you probably don't know the person well enough to have sex.**
- Talk about how you feel before you get involved sexually and keep communicating!
- Set your boundaries.

Don't Say One Thing and Do Another!

- Mean what you say and stick by it – your honesty will be respected.
- Flirting when you don't mean it can be confusing.

No means No!

- A partner who doesn't respect your decision, doesn't respect you. Call them on it.

...Remember, You're in Charge

- Some teens choose not to have sex for religious, emotional, or legal reasons.
- If you choose to have sex, you should know that sexual intercourse between two minors or between an adult and a minor is “statutory rape” and it is against the law.
- To learn more about how the law might affect you, read Public Counsel’s brochure about statutory rape.

BIRTH CONTROL

The only guaranteed way to prevent having a baby is to NOT have sex. If you choose to become sexually active and you are at least 12 or older, you can receive birth control without your parents knowing you asked about it at:

- School Health Clinics
- Family Planning Clinics
- Public Health Clinics
- County Hospitals

Many clinics offer these services for free or at low cost. Also, you may qualify for the “Medi-Cal Minor Consent” program. See page 13.

Using confidential family planning services can help you:

- Prevent unwanted pregnancy
- Help avoid contracting HIV (the virus that causes AIDS)
- Help avoid some other sexually transmitted diseases like herpes (STD’s)

At drug stores, teens are allowed to buy the following types of birth control:

- Condoms
- Sponges
- Spermicide cream or jelly

You can go to Planned Parenthood, other family planning clinics and public health clinics for family planning services, and they will not tell your parents. These places can give you birth control that requires a prescription, such as:

- Birth control pills (“the pill”)
- Depo-Provera (“the shot” that lasts 3 months)
- Diaphragms (rubber cup that gets placed inside the vagina)

EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION

In California, a person can buy Emergency Contraception (EC) (also known as the “morning after” pill) at a pharmacy without a prescription and without having to go to a doctor first. EC can be taken up to 72 hours (3 days) after sexual intercourse. It is used for an emergency. For example, the condom broke, you didn’t use birth control, or you were forced to have sex. A new form of EC can be taken up to 120 hours (5 days) after sexual intercourse, but it requires a prescription.



PREGNANT?

If you are pregnant, you can choose to keep the baby, place the baby for adoption or with an adult guardian, or have an abortion.

You also may legally, confidentially, and safely surrender your baby within three (3) days of birth to any hospital emergency room in California under the **Safely Surrendered Baby Law**. As long as the baby has not been abused or neglected, you will not be arrested or prosecuted. The baby will be examined by a doctor and placed in a foster home or a pre-adoptive home. For more information, call 1 (877) 222-9723.

Here are some things to think about before you make a decision:

- Your rights and responsibilities toward your baby are the same as an adult parent's.
- Your ability to meet the baby's needs, especially if the baby has special health care needs.
- Your school and career goals.
- Your relationship with the baby's father.
- Getting child support.

KEEPING THE BABY

As a parent, you have the right to keep and raise your child.

If you are under 18, you can choose to:

- Marry, but your parent must consent to the marriage and the judge must also approve it.
- Live with your boyfriend or girlfriend and/or their family, but your parents must agree or do nothing to stop you.
- Live on your own with the baby, but your parents must agree or do nothing to stop you.

If you need cash aid, where you live may make a difference.

For more information read Public Counsel's booklet, California Welfare and Health Programs – *A Guide For Teens*.

ADOPTION

ADOPTION is a legal process where you give up all your rights to be a parent to your child permanently. Agreeing to place your baby for adoption is called **RELINQUISHMENT**.

At any time, regardless of your child's age, you can get counseling at an adoption agency, if parenting becomes too overwhelming and begins to feel like maybe you made the wrong choice. The final choice is up to you.

Consent. Teens do not need permission from their own parents to place their baby for adoption. A child can be placed for adoption through:

- A private adoption agency.
- A public agency like the County Department of Social Services.
- A private agreement with the adoptive parents.
- Placing the child with an adoptive family and signing an "AD 22" form. In this type of adoption, nothing is final until the birth mother and/or birth father later signs a "consent to adoption" form.

Usually both of the baby's parents must consent (or say "yes") to adoption whether or not they are married. There are some exceptions to this rule:

- If the parent who has not agreed to the adoption, has not paid for the care, support, and education of the child for at least one year.
- If the parent who has not agreed to the adoption, has not talked to or contacted the child for at least one year.
- If the birth parents were never married, AND the parent who does not consent either does not want custody or cannot prove his or her custody is in the best interest of the child.

GUARDIANSHIP

GUARDIANSHIP is a legal process where a court appoints an adult to act as your child's caretaker. It can last until your child is 18. Guardianship does not have to be permanent, but it can be hard to undo later if the guardian or the judge does not agree.

Some reasons to establish guardianship are:

- As a teen, you may not be able to take on the responsibilities of caring for your child.
- The adult may be in a better financial situation to care for your child.
- Grandparents or your other relatives may be able to extend their health insurance to cover your child if they have guardianship.
- You may want to focus on finishing high school before taking on full responsibility for your child.

If you have questions regarding guardianship, you may call Public Counsel's Children's Rights Project at 213/385-2977 ext. 500. You may also visit Public Counsel's Pro Per Guardianship clinic located at:

Los Angeles Superior Court
111 North Hill Street, Room 230
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Walk-In Clinic

Monday - Wednesday 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 1:30-3:30 p.m.

(arrive by 9 a.m.)

ABORTION

If you are a pregnant teen in California:

- You can get an abortion without anyone else's consent.
- The fact that you are pregnant and making such a decision is confidential.
- No one can force you to get an abortion.
- A doctor performing the abortion may NOT tell your parents or your boyfriend without your written consent.
- An abortion must be obtained within the first 20 weeks of pregnancy in most cases.
- A licensed medical doctor in an office, clinic or hospital must perform the abortion.
- Medi-Cal Minor Consent Services covers the cost of an abortion.

CONFIDENTIAL

MEDI-CAL MINOR CONSENT SERVICES

If you are between 12 and 21, you may qualify for the Medi-Cal Minor Consent Services (MCS) Program that pays for birth control, pregnancy care, abortion, and other kinds of health care without involving your parents.

To apply for Medi-Cal Minor Consent Services:

You have to complete the regular Medi-Cal application as well as a shorter MCS application. You are not required to give information about your parents' income, and Medi-Cal information will not be sent to your parents' home unless you request this.

- You need to renew your MCS/Medi-Cal application monthly to remain eligible for services.
- Many clinics have a worker on-site who will help you fill out the applications, or you can go to your local welfare office.
- Be sure to ask about free or low-cost health care services before applying for Minor Consent Services.

You do not need a “green card” to receive Medi-Cal Minor Consent. You do not need immigration papers or a social security number. And - enrolling in Medi-Cal Minor Consent or for other health care benefits will not hurt your chances of getting your “green card” or becoming a U.S. citizen.

If you have trouble getting care through Medi-Cal Minor Consent Services, you can call Maternal and Child Health Access (MCHA) in Los Angeles at (213) 749-4261 or Health Consumer Center (HCC) at 1(800)896-3203.

Numbers You Can Use!

(Referrals & Resources in English and Spanish)

Adoption Services

Adoption Unit, Department of	
Children & Family Services	888/811-1121
Institute for Black Parenting	310/807-3350
St. Anne's Maternity Home	213/381-2931
Vista Del Mar	310/836-1223
Westside Children's Center	310/390-0551

Pregnancy Choices

Children's Hospital,	
Division of Adolescent Medicine	323/361-2153
Planned Parenthood	800/230-7526
	or 213/284-3200
Westside Family Health Center	310/450-2191

Health Benefits

CHDP (Community Health Services)	800/993-2437
Family Planning and	
Reproductive Health Services	800/942-1054
Healthy Families	888/747-1222
Immunizations	800/427-8700
Medi-Cal	877-597-4777
WIC	888/WIC-BABY
	888/942-2229
Comprehensive Perinatal Services Program	213/639-6419

Helpful Resources for Sexual Assault Victims

RAINN 24 hour hotline	800/656-4673
	or 800/656-HOPE
The East Los Angeles Women Center	800/585-6231
	(24-hour hotline)
	or 323/526-5819
	(Office)
Peace over Violence	213/626-3393

Rape Treatment Center

At Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center310/319-4000

Cal-Learn/Adolescent Family Life Programs

(Parenting Support Group, Counseling)

East Los Angeles: AltaMed.323/722-8300
Hollywood: NATEEN.323/361-5982
South Central Los Angeles: Mother Net L.A..310/764-0955
Youth and Family Center323/307-0160

Foothill Family Services

(Parenting Support & Education, Counseling)

Foothill Family Service.866/304-4337
(intake)
Pasadena/San Gabriel Valley Area626/564-1613
(home office)
West Covina626/338-9200

El Nido

South Central, Los Angeles (Manchester):323/971-7360
Pacoima818/896-7776

Legal Assistance

Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles800/399-4529
Public Counsel800/870-8090

Job Training

Hire LA Youth Program (age 16-24).213/744-7206
or www.hirelayouth.org

Food Referrals

211 L.A. County800/339-6993
or 211

Utilities Assistance

LIHEAP – Electricity800/447-6620
Gas Company800/427-2200

HOTLINES

24-Hour California Youth Crisis Line	800/843-5200
Child Abuse Hotline	800/540-4000
Domestic Violence Hotline	800/978-3600
GED Contact Center	800/626-9433
211 L.A. County	211
Planned Parenthood	800/230-7526
Teen Line	800/852-8336
Early Childhood Parenting Center	310/281-9770
First 5 L.A.	800/211-5672



Notes:

Notes:

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