

Abstinence vs. teen birth control

Life



For the past fourteen years, teen births in the United States has enjoyed a low rating. However, in 2007, this low birth rate was disrupted as there is a sudden surge in the number of teenagers getting pregnant. Based on the record of the National Center for Health Statistics, there is a three percent increase among 15 to 19 year-old girls from 2005 to 2006 after a thirty-four percent decrease between the years 1991 to 2005 (Riley, n. pag.).

According to government officials and physicians concerned with teen health, there is a need for a better sex education among teens for them to be able to fully understand the consequences of having sex and the responsibilities that go along with it. There is also a need to advocate for abstinence or the “shunning away” from any sexual act to decrease the number of teens who are getting pregnant. It has been observed that sex education among teens focuses only on the use of contraceptives and does not promote abstinence, which according to physicians, is the best solution to the problem on teen pregnancies.

According to Hirsch (n. pag.), abstinence is the safest way of not getting pregnant as this will prevent the egg and sperm cells from meeting and connecting with each other. Without the connection of the egg and sperm cells, pregnancy will be impossible. Aside from this, there are also other advantages of abstinence. Among these are the prevention of sexually transmitted infections, infertility and the development of cancer of the cervix. It has been medically found out that women who engage in sex during their younger years have higher risk of developing cancer as compared to those who don't.

Abstinence is the practice or commitment of two single persons not to engage in pre-marital sex. Unlike most birth control methods that rely on pills and equipment to take effect, abstinence requires self-control and a strong commitment to inhibit from any sexual act. Many medical practitioners and parents advocate abstinence among the teens because it is the most ideal method where they can be sure that teen pregnancy can be eliminated or, if not, reduced. It is healthy and safe as compared to other birth control methods which rely on medications and equipments.

Aside from this, it is also the only birth control method that is advocated by the Catholic faith and other religious beliefs. However, this method seem to be very difficult to follow especially for teenagers who are at their aggressive stage and are in the mood for experimentation and experience. It is very difficult for them to control their emotions especially if they are not deeply grounded morally and have not fully understood the pros and cons of sex and abstinence, thus, making the promising effect of this method useless.

There are actually other forms of birth control methods aside from abstinence that could help reduce teen pregnancies and these include the following: information based methods, barrier methods, hormonal methods and longterm methods. The information based birth control are methods that are underpinned on facts such as the occurrence of pregnancy and how the female and male reproductive organs work. They include lactation amenorrhea method, withdrawal and natural family planning. Barrier methods, on the other hand, prevent the egg and sperm cells from meeting and some can also be used to prevent sexually transmitted diseases.

There are male and female condoms, diaphragms, cervical and female caps, lea's shield and spermicides. The hormonal method includes birth control pill, shot, patch and ring and emergency contraceptive pills. They work in varying ways, but essentially their two main functions are to keep the eggs from leaving the ovary and change the mucus created in the cervix to kill the sperm and prevent it from travelling to the egg. The long term methods which are the sterilization methods, intra-uterine devices and implants function for several years, some even permanently.

These methods work well in preventing pregnancy but unlike other methods, it does not provide protection against HIV or STD (Teen source, n. pag.). However, based on article reviewed by Dr. Hirsch, not all birth control methods are effective and can outrightly prevent the occurrence of pregnancy; some are even more risky for teens. A risky method is the fertility awareness or the rhythm method. This may be more risky for teens because their body might have not yet adjusted to the normal menstrual cycle.

According to the article, in choosing the best birth control method, the following must be kept in mind: the ease of using it, the cost of the birth control material and the health condition of the person using it. It would be wise to educate the teens of these methods to know which are more effective in their system. The greater the information that teens receive, the more likely will they be able to respond positively to situations that come their way. Promoting birth control methods does not mean advocating sex among teens. This is just a precautionary method just in case they find abstinence difficult.

It is better for them to utilize these methods and be aware of its effects rather remain ignorant of the procedures. To reiterate, teenagers are very aggressive and they are always out to try something new, and sex is definitely one of the experiences they want to go through. Its better for them to be forewarned so that early pregnancy can be eliminated or at least trimmed down, rather than attempt to shield them from these methods and suffer the grim consequence of children bearing their own children. Sex education in the United States should be well explained to teenagers.

They should be educated on pros and cons of engaging in a sexual act. They should also lecture on abstinence and birth control methods and have a balanced presentation so that the teens can weigh which is more effective to their body system, practices and beliefs. It is better to have a choice than merely impose something which is not palatable to ideals. Parents should not only foster abstinence because if teens lose their virginity and they are only educated on abstinence, there is a greater possibility that they will engage in unprotected sex because they are not fully aware of the other contraceptive methods that they can use.