

# Cause and effect of teen pregnancy

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Teen pregnancy is considered an on-going problem in today's society. Teens today are not well educated and don't always take the right steps to prevent pregnancy, even if they are educated within the area. Teen pregnancy affects many people in the process and could end up having long term affects and health risks on the mother and child. Many people are very judgmental when it comes to teen pregnancy but they don't truly understand that not every child is educated correctly and go straight to blaming the teen rather than truly understanding what the potential cause of the issue could be.

Teens these days aren't always well educated when it comes to pre-marital sex and early pregnancy. Some aren't aware of contraceptives and some don't truly understand the way their body works to fully understand that pregnancy is not uncommon. Some teens aren't comfortable at all with the topic of sex and pregnancy so it scares them from being more open about it and learning everything involved with pre-marital sex and contraceptives.

Parents are a major reason that teens suffer from not being properly educated and not being fully comfortable with the topic of sex, contraceptive use, and effects pre-marital sex can have on them long and short term. Many parents fear that if they talk to their kids about having pre-marital sex and pregnancy, that their teens will engage in sexual intercourse and in turn become pregnant, or in the guy's case, impregnate a girl. What many parents don't fully understand is that by avoiding the topic all together can lead to just the opposite effect, leading to curiosity and experimentation without the correct knowledge in mind.

Many teens who experiment with minimal knowledge know little about correct contraceptive use and the health risks involved. Many teen girls are not on birth control and if they are they aren't using it properly, and many guys don't use condoms, don't use them correctly, or in some occasions, the condom breaks. Parents of teenage girls also have a problem with actually talking to their daughters about birth control and have problems allowing their daughter to be put on the pill or another form of birth control.

They fear that by putting them on birth control it will give girls the impression that it's ok to have sex. Parents have all these fears about what they think the reaction will be if they talk to their teens about this when in reality parents need to lose the fear and talk with their teens about this openly and frequently. When parents talk about it openly and frequently it gives their teens knowledge, consistency in the topic so it's always fresh in their minds and shows to them that their parents are open to talk about it and gives the teen a sense of comfort for further questions and issues that arise.

What parents don't understand is that even if their daughters are on birth control it doesn't necessarily mean that they are having sex. Birth control is also be used to help reduce the pain of cramps during the menstrual cycle, control acne, lighter menstrual bleeding, and help to regulate their cycle. Many girls think that just because they are on the pill they will never get pregnant, so they engage in sexual activity when in reality the teens can also be at fault too, pills can be forgotten to be taken and can be taken inconsistently leading to gaps where pregnancy can occur.

Girls need to understand that birth control is not 100% affective but is 99% affective if it is taken and taken properly. Teens need to be aware of the proper way to use their birth control otherwise consequences will be faced. Many parents don't understand that they could be helping contribute to teen pregnancy rates by avoiding talking to their teens about these things. Teens who's Parents avoid the topic of sex and pregnancy, start finding themselves involved in pre-marital sex a lot sooner than most teens.

Parents who avoid these topics can have teens that fear the willingness to have “ open” conversation with them about sex, pregnancy, or any other topic for that matter. This could cause the teens to never find comfort in talking to their parents and could face consequences of their actions. Many teens will engage in sexual activity and wait months to tell their parents or ask to be put on the pill leading back to that “ open-ness” factor with the adults around them and also leading to teen pregnancy.

When parents are more open and always talking about the subject and saying how supportive they will be as long as their kids come to them for anything at all, could find themselves not engaging in sexual intercourse until later in life and sometimes even waiting until marriage. Teens who engage in sexual activity and typically wait to ask their parents for birth control. They sometimes engage in sex multiple times before asking and as a result, they become pregnant. When teens become pregnant many wait to tell their parents in fear of embarrassment, getting in trouble, being rejected, breaking family values or relationships, etc.

By the time they gain the courage to tell their parents sometimes it's too late to do anything about it and in turn have to have the child. If they do find

the courage to tell their parents sooner than most, teens need to be aware that they have options. Early pregnancy can also be a cause of not having a close relationship with their parents and using it as a rebellious method. Parents aren't the only ones at fault of not properly educating their teens about sex and pregnancy, but schools are as well.

Schools tell teen's information about getting older and changes to their body without really stressing the effects of pre-marital sex. Many parents and school boards are against schools going into more detail on the topic, with fear of getting in trouble and arising issues within their communities, state, and sometimes nationally. Parents and school boards need to be aware that teen pregnancy and pre-marital sex is arising problems across the world and we need to keep teens up to date with facts and information about it.

Teens need to understand ALL the things that will start happening to their body and urges they will begin to feel, rather than just learning about when girls start their menstrual cycle and the meaning of that and when boys have their first wet dream. It is said that, " boys and girls are hitting puberty a lot earlier than in past years, leading to earlier experimentation of sexual intercourse. " (Farber) By boys and girls hitting puberty earlier, we need to realize this and start educating them sooner to avoid teen pregnancy.

It is also said that, " Girls aged 13 who have started puberty by age 11 are 40% more likely to already be engaging in sexual activity. " (Farber) When girls have already begun their menstrual cycle they aren't well aware of the fact that their period will be irregular giving them a hard time judging when the next period will come, which could cause potential pregnancy. Sex and contraceptives is a big thing that teens need to have knowledge on and in

today's society it needs to be a more common topic to help avoid teen pregnancy.

If it was more commonly talked about, more teens would be more knowledgeable and would feel more open to talk about it if they do have questions and concerns. It will help reduce the rates of teen pregnancy and could even help lower other rates such as STD rates. Our society today makes it seem that talking about teen pregnancy and pre-marital sex are a bad thing and should only be brought up by the parents if they “choose” to talk about it with their teens. Then you find parents who get mad at their teens when incidents do end up happening when they are somewhat at fault for what happens due to the lack of communication.

Many teens don't realize the other harms teen pregnancy and pre-marital sex can cause and not many people know the current statistics on teen pregnancy and if statistics have dropped or risen in recent years. “Many people don't realize, but about 820, 000 teens get pregnant in the United States annually, meaning teens 20 years of age and younger. About 79% of them are pregnancies to unmarried mothers and 80% of those 820, 000 pregnancies are unintentional. ” (“Teen Pregnancy Statistics”) Teen pregnancy is currently at a dropping rate and has been dropping in numbers for the past several years.

“Parents seem to forget that back in the 60's and 70's teenage pregnancies were extremely common and almost expected. Teens were supposed to be married between the ages of 16-18 and shortly after marriage were to begin starting a family. ” (Jorgensen, Nancy. Interview) It's interesting how times can change and having teen pregnancy going from being the norm to being

such a bad thing. It is a bad thing but teens need to understand why. Teens today don't realize that pre-marital sex leads to not only pregnancy but can cause diseases and health risks that affect not only the mother but the child as well if the teen ends up pregnant.

Many sexually transmitted diseases (STD's) can occur in which teens don't fully understand and don't take the correct precautions to help avoid them. Teens don't fully understand the true outcomes of the diseases and don't realize that some diseases could last a lifetime with no cure which could lead to death. Many sexually transmitted diseases can affect the mother and even the baby during pregnancy. STD's that are common in affecting pregnant women are; Chlamydia, bacterial vaginosis, genital herpes, trichomoniasis, gonorrhea, hepatitis B, HIV/AIDS, and syphilis.

Many of them are curable and can be treated during pregnancy but if untreated they can harm the baby. If untreated, " Chlamydia can cause sterility in the affected individual and eye infections and pneumonia in the newborn and syphilis can cause blindness, maternal death, and infant death. " (" Medical Resources, Teenage Pregnancy") HIV and genital herpes are the two that are non-curable and can affect the baby at birth and constantly throughout their entire life. When women have either HIV/AIDS the baby is prone to preterm birth meaning they are born at 37 weeks or earlier.

This doesn't necessarily mean you will always have a premature baby but in some cases it is possible. " HIV positive mothers can also face stillbirth -baby is dead at birth- and intrauterine growth restrictions meaning that their birth weight is below the 10th percentile. " (" HIV/AIDS during Pregnancy") When mothers have HIV/AIDS they are suggested a caesarean section, which

means “ they make one or more incisions through the mother’s abdomen and uterus to deliver the baby. ” (This doesn’t always mean the baby won’t be born with an STD but it’s a helping precaution.) (“ Caesarean Section”)

Not all mothers with genital herpes are suggested a C-Section if they are not encountering an outbreak when the water breaks and going through labor. STD’s aren’t the only thing that can affect the child during the pregnancy. “ Children born to teen mothers can have long term problems such as; low birth weight which can cause them to suffer numerous medical and developmental issues, behavioral problems, higher risk of being abused and neglected, achieve lower levels of education, can become poorer adults, and they can in turn become young unmarried teen parents as well.” (Farber)

“ Low birth weight babies can have other problems internally such as: undeveloped organs which can lead to death in the child shortly after birth, they can also have problems controlling body temperature and their blood sugar levels can be low, and mental retardation is more prone. ” (“ Babies having Babies”) Drug and alcohol abuse are two other ways mothers can cause complications in pregnancy and eventually putting their baby at risk of more serious problems.

Some pregnant mothers find drug and alcohol abuse as coping methods, endangering the child and causing problems affecting their future. Mothers who abuse drugs and alcohol as a way of coping with their pregnancy are putting their baby at risk of having fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) or can cause an addiction to the same drugs they were abusing before and during pregnancy and other affects on the baby. Have you ever heard the term “

crack baby” or also known as prenatal cocaine exposure? It refers to fetuses that were exposed to cocaine use by their mother’s during pregnancy.

Mothers who use cocaine during pregnancy can harm their child in a multiple of ways such as: miscarriage, low birth weight, premature delivery, neonatal seizures, attention deficit disorder and in some cases their child will be born with a cocaine addiction. “ Neonatal seizures are epileptic fits occurring from birth to the end of the neonatal period -first 28 days of life-, the neonatal period is the most vulnerable of all periods of life for developing seizures. There are 4 types of neonatal seizures: subtle seizures, tonic seizures, clonic seizures, and myoclonic seizures.

Most of these won’t last past the neonatal period but if they do there are medications for them to take to help reduce the effects and occurrences of them. ” (“ Neonatal Seizures”) Women who smoke or ingest caffeine can put their babies at risk as well; both are central nervous system stimulants, meaning that they are both appetite suppressants causing the mother to not eat much. During pregnancy this is not smart at all because they are not giving their child the proper nutrients which then causes the unborn child to not grow at a steady rate and not to grow properly. This can cause complications at birth too.

Women who drink during pregnancy are putting their child at risk of fetal alcohol syndrome. This means it harms the baby’s developmental process; causing poor growth while the baby is in the womb and growth after birth, decreased muscle tone and poor coordination, delayed developmental and functional problems in 3 or more major areas such as; thinking, speech, movement, or social skills, and it can cause heart problems. One problem of

the heart is, Ventricular Septal Defect, meaning one or more holes appear in the walls of the heart. My cousin was diagnosed with this as a baby and you would never know he had it just by looking at him.

Every now and then the symptoms of it would show but you would never think he was diagnosed with VSD. “ Common symptoms he encountered were shortness of breath, paleness, failure to gain weight, and sometimes a fast paced heart rate. ” (Delgado, Gabe. Interview) The second heart problem is, Atrial Septal Defect, meaning the opening between the two upper heart chambers doesn't fully close but eventually closes by the time the baby is born. If it continues past birth it allows blood to flow from the left side to the right side and sometimes one side will get more blood flow than the other leading to other problems.

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome can also cause structural problems with the face such as; narrow or small eyes with large epicanthal folds -meaning there's a skin fold of the upper eyelid covering the inner corner of the eye-, along with a small head, small upper jaw, amongst other problems. Alcohol is known to be the most dangerous and most effecting during the first 3 months of pregnancy when most teens may not even be aware if they are pregnant or not and are too scared to find out the answer or don't know the signs to look out for to tell them they could be pregnant.