

# Sex comes with a price

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Regardless of the lessons on Sex Education or the contraceptives local health clinics provide, the rate of teen pregnancy and STD infections still continue to rise, and the consequences are costly. The United States of America has one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the western industrialized world. Twenty-five percent of those teen moms get pregnant again within the next two years, according to Guttmacher Institute. Contraceptives such as male condoms and birth control pills are widely available preventive measures that lower the risk of contracting STDs or becoming pregnant but only if they are used properly. "The average age for sexual intercourse among boys and girls is 15 years old" said the Illinois Department of Public Health which means that most high school freshman and sophomores engage in sexual activities before the age of consent, which is 17 years old in the state of New York.

According to the same study, the risk of teens contracting STDs is higher in some ethnic groups compared to others such as African-Americans who made up fifty percent of reported AIDS cases in adolescents between 13 and 19 years old just last year compared to Caucasians who made up twenty-eight percent of reported AIDS cases that same year. "...[Teens who are sexually active] account for nearly half of the 18.9 billion new cases of STIs each year.

" said representatives from Guttmacher Institute. The government spent over \$38 billion dollars to provide services for families that began with a birth from a teen and invested in \$138.1 billion dollars to prevent pregnancy according Advocates for Youth. Lizzette Colon, NYC iSchool Guidance Counselor, has served as a guidance counselor in both middle school and <https://assignbuster.com/sex-comes-with-a-price/>

elementary school, and this is her third year as a high school counselor at the New York City iSchool. In a recent interview, she revealed that the iSchool has a strict confidentiality policy when it comes to discussing issues such as pregnancy and infectious diseases with those who seek adult help, meaning that she won't tell their parents without talking to the student about it first.

She also went on to say that the school gives out condoms and promotes safe sex by encouraging those who are thinking about being sexually active to get to know their partner first. “ If you're freaking out about sex, you are not ready to have it. Think about your self-worth and whether or not you're ready to give yourself to someone. The most effective way to practice pre-safe-sex is getting to know your partner and making sure that you both are ready for that next step,” Colon said. Most teens find it hard to talk to their partner about sex, but it is the first step to practicing the act safely according to the CDC. Mutual monogamy, the decision to be sexually active with only one person who also wants to be sexually active with you, is a highly recommended method for couples who plan to be in long term relationships because it is one of the most reliable ways to avoid STD infection, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

Teen pregnancy and STD rates are consistently on the rise in spite of all efforts in place to prevent them because “ people don't think it can happen to them,” said Ms. Colon. In a recent survey conducted by Smartgirl. org about teen pregnancy and STDs, twenty-four percent of respondents said that they won't contract an STD or become pregnant, but thirty-six percent of respondents went on to reveal that the possibility of getting an STD does <https://assignbuster.com/sex-comes-with-a-price/>

not influence their decision when it comes to having sex. Teens who receive comprehensive sex-education are sixty percent less likely to become pregnant or get someone else pregnant than those who received no sex education at all, according to Pamela Kohler, a program manager at the University of Washington in Seattle who conducted a research study about effective methods of contraception. Although proven by doctors that abstinence is the safest form of contraception, research has shown that states with abstinence-only policies in their sex education curriculum are states with some of the highest teen pregnancy rates.

According to Guttmacher Institute, one-in-four adolescents aged 15-19 received abstinence education without receiving any instruction about birth control or other forms of contraception. A federal report was conducted by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. on abstinence-only programs in 2007 and the results showed that they have had “ no impacts” on sexual abstinence. However, researchers from Guttmacher Institute concluded that a stress on abstinence-only policies could “ deter contraceptive use” among teenagers which then leads to more unintended pregnancies. The dictionary classifies abstinence as “ any self-restraint, self-denial, or forbearance”, but there is a difference from being abstinent for only short periods of time and being abstinent for long periods of time.