

Healthy Sexual Behaviors

People between the age of 15 and 24 are at highest risk of getting a STI (sexually transmitted infection). Some STIs have no cure and can cause long lasting health problems.

Examples of STIs:

- HIV (human immunodeficiency virus)
- Gonorrhea
- Chlamydia
- Syphilis
- Herpes
- HPV (human papilloma virus)
- Trichomoniasis

Some sex behaviors can increase your risk of getting a STI or unplanned pregnancy.

These behaviors include:

- vaginal, oral, or anal sex without a condom
- having more than one sexual partner
- using drugs or alcohol before or during sex
- using drugs through a needle
- having sex for money, food, or something else

The only sure way to prevent pregnancy and STIs is to NOT have sex. If you chose to have sex here are some safe sex behaviors to help prevent STIs and unplanned pregnancy:

1. Condoms

- Can lower the risk of pregnancy and STIs.
- Must be used correctly **every time** you have sex.
- Condoms can break, slip, or leak. Make sure to learn how to use them correctly.

2. Birth Control

- Can lower the risk of pregnancy but does not prevent STIs.
- There are many kinds of birth control. These include:
 - Pills
 - Shots
 - Implants
 - intra-uterine devices (IUD)
 - patches, and rings.
- Call your primary care provider (PCP) to talk about your choices or request a referral to Children's Mercy Adolescent Speciality Clinic. If you don't have a PCP, you can call the Children's Mercy Adolescent Specialty Clinic at (816) 960 - 4152 schedule a sexual health visit.

3. PrEP or Truvada to prevent HIV

- PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) or Truvada® is a medicine that helps stop HIV from spreading from person to person.

- This pill can be prescribed by your health care provider or by a provider at the Children's Mercy Adolescent Clinic.
- We talk to teens about this everyday so please call if you have any questions. (816) 960-4152

Sexual Health Resources

- Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/sexualbehaviors/>
 - https://www.cdc.gov/teenpregnancy/pdf/Teen-Condom-Fact_Sheet-English-March-2016.pdf
- Children's Mercy Hospital Adolescent Clinic (816) 960 - 4152
 - Offers sexual health visits
 - Can for any questions or to set up an appointment.