

# TEEN SEXUALITY

The physical and emotional changes that happen to everyone as they grow up can be exciting and confusing. It may seem like you wake up one morning and everything about you is different or strange. Your friends are probably feeling the same way, but that doesn't make it easier.

Many of the changes you are experiencing are sexual. You are developing into an adult and your feelings can be very strong. Having good information and understanding these changes can make them less confusing.

There are lots of messages around about love and sex. Parents, friends, church, television, and magazines may have different ideas about being in love or being sexually active. It is important that you get the facts and sort through **your feelings**. You are the one who must make choices and be willing to live with the consequences, good or bad. The more you know about and like yourself, the more likely it is that you will make decisions that are right for you.

Lots of people have sex for reasons that have nothing to do with intimacy and love such as:

- curiosity about sex .
- hoping to become more popular.
- getting pushed into sexual intimacy by their partner or peer pressure.
- thinking sex is glamorous as it is shown on TV and movies and in books and magazines.

You should not feel pressured into doing something you don't want to do. There are many ways of showing people you care about them or that you "fit in" without making yourself uncomfortable. Keep in mind that sexual experience can result in lifelong consequences: pregnancy, STD's or AIDS. The only way to prevent this from happening is to say no to sex. Talk with your parents or others whom you trust and respect.

No person under the age of 17 nor one who is mentally incapacitated or physically helpless can legally consent to sexual relations. Sexual relations between close relatives may be considered incest and is illegal. And, sexual relations with persons who are under the age of consent can be considered sexual abuse. The decision to become sexually active is that of the individual. It is a big decision, and there are things to be considered.

Anyone, regardless of age, has the right to birth control information and/or materials as well as the right to medical services for pregnancy. Parental consent or permission is not required in New York State to obtain these services.

Teens have a variety of sources available for information regarding sexuality. These

include parents, counselors, health teachers, physicians, and family planning agencies, and the Chautauqua Health Department.

In addition, some other options for information are the local community library or school/college based libraries. Many of these have a variety of resources available to teens who have questions about their sexuality such as pamphlets, books, and videos. The pamphlets are available free of charge in many cases.

As a teenager, you may face important decisions concerning relationships and sexuality. If you are sexually active, pregnancy prevention and prevention of disease should be your main concern. Your parents, personal physician and the following agencies can provide you with helpful information about pregnancy prevention.

High school students in New York were asked to respond in writing to the following question: "If you and your girlfriend or boyfriend had decided to postpone sexual intercourse, how would you let the other person know you loved her or him?" Here's what they said:

Tell her I love her.

Kiss her.

Hug him.

Have deep, meaningful conversations.

Send flowers.

Hold hands.

Arrange a date where we first met.

Treat her nice.

Write her a poem.

Talk about my feelings.

Dance together.

Discuss problems.

Tell her I don't want to be with anyone else.

Just be together.

Take him out.

Sort out disagreements.

Go to a drive-in.

Ask how she's feeling.

Pay attention to her likes and dislikes.

Put up with his friends.

Let him do my hair.

Go to a concert together.

Give gifts.

Play pool.

Observe the stars together.

Kiss him on the ear.

Share the same hobbies.

Give a token from the heart.	Whisper that I love him.	Be nice to each other.
Call him just to say, "hello" or "good night".	Visit his mother.	Write love letters.
Carry pictures of each other.	Blow her kisses.	Give her a ring.
Have a romantic picnic in the park.	Take her someplace.	Show my affection.
Talk about the reasons for our decisions to wait to have sex.	Buy him nice things.	Go swimming together.
Sit and talk for a long time.	Go hiking together.	Be her best friend.
Watch a sunset together.	Share thoughts.	Kiss his neck.
Do the things we used to do when we first met.	Sing her a song.	Ask to be with her more.
Build a stronger relationship.	Communicate.	Do her housework.
Stick up for him if he gets in trouble.	Tell her I care.	Caress each other.
Tell her I'll always be there for her.	Listen.	Be sensitive.
Tell her I appreciate how she treats me.	Go camping.	Respect each other.
Carry her books home from school.	Never let him go.	Go to a party.
Buy him something sentimental.	Cook for each other.	Take a walk together.
Dedicate our favorite song on the radio.	Just touch each other.	Send him a card.
Tell her that the longer you wait the better it will be.	Arrange a date where we first met.	Be faithful.
Watch him compete in a sports event.	Spend a day at a carnival.	Smile at each other.

Eat at a romantic restaurant with elegant music and a dance floor.	Do homework together.	Slip a note into her notebook.
Draw a heart on a tree and put both names in the middle.	Make sure he's comfortable.	Give him a back rub.
Leave a little love note in his pocket.	Call her every night.	Treat her like a queen.
Hold each other close.	Support each other.	Trust him.
Sit really close while watching a movie.	Go for a drive.	Take him skiing.
Take care of him when he's sick.	Make him a present.	Play footsie.
Go to a sports event together.	Cuddle.	Be close.
Speak the love language, French, to him.		Share secrets.

Remember: **THE SAFEST SEX IS NO SEX.** If you do have sex, always use a condom. Only a condom can help protect you from sexually transmitted diseases, such as **AIDS** But **THE SAFEST SEX IS NO SEX.**

## **PEER PRESSURE**

No matter how old they are, people care about what others think and want to fit in. When you are just starting to make decisions for yourself, the influence of your friends and people your age - your peers - can be powerful. It can affect how you feel, dress and act. **Peer pressure** is when your friends try to influence you to say or do something, even if you don't want to. You feel you need to do it so that you can stay friendly with them.

Peer pressure can be positive and negative. Positive pressure from your peers might lead you to play sports, study hard, or join clubs. Negative pressures might lead you to make fun of someone, to tell a lie or to cheat on a test. Sometimes the pressure may be about actions that have more serious results, such as skipping school, using drugs or alcohol, shoplifting, having sex before you are ready, or joining a gang.

It is important to think about what could happen if you go along with the crowd. Make up your own mind, even if your peers don't agree with you.

You have decisions to make everyday. Some decisions are more important than others. There is a big difference between deciding what to wear to a party and deciding whether or not to have sex with someone. The decisions you make say a lot about what kind of person you are. When you uncomfortable with what you are being asked to do, stop and talk to someone who will listen and believe you - you parents, another adult who cares or maybe a close friend you respect.

There are different kinds of peer pressure. It can seem like friendly teasing or it can be more forceful. Try these ways to handle peer pressure: change the subject, avoid the situation, have something else to do, leave or make it clear that you don't have to go along with other people to have a good time. When your peers see you stand by your decisions, it may help **them** to better deal with peer pressure.

## JAMESTOWN 10% NETWORK (Chautauqua County GLBT Organizations)

### [10% NETWORK WEBSITE](#)

- **Phone:** (716) 484-7285

An all inclusive group providing social events for gay, lesbian and bi-sexual singles and couples of all ages in Chautauqua County and neighboring counties.

## INTERWEAVE (Chautauqua County GLBT Organizations)

- **Phone:** (716) 488-1902

GLBT - Inclusive religious organization through the Unitarian Universal Church of Jamestown