

## Contraception Questions and Answers from the AAP

### *I'm thinking about having sex. What do I need to know to stay healthy?*

Before you make any decisions, or even if you have had sex but are unsure if you should again, remember this: not everyone is having sex.

Half of all teens say "no" to sex. There's nothing wrong if you decide to wait; in fact, it's a great idea.

Whether or not you decide to have sex, it's important that you know the facts about birth control, diseases, and emotions.

### **Why wait?**

- **Sex can lead to pregnancy.** Ask yourself: "Am I ready to be pregnant or a teen parent?"
- **Sex has health risks.** You could become infected with one or more sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) like herpes, Trichomonas, or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) (the virus that causes acquired immunodeficiency syndrome [AIDS]). One type of disease called human papillomavirus (HPV) may cause cancer.
- **You may feel sad or angry** if you let someone pressure you into having sex when you're not really ready.
- **You also may feel sad or angry** if you chose to have sex and then your partner leaves you. He may even tell other people that you had sex with him. Can you handle that?

### **Stay Healthy**

If you're going to have sexual intercourse, you need a reliable form of birth control!

- **Condoms** used the right way have a 90% chance of preventing pregnancy. Condoms are also the best way to avoid getting STDs.
- **"The pill"** is the most popular type of birth control used by women. There are many brands of the birth control pill. For the pill to work, a woman must take it every day. When used correctly, the pill is 99% effective at preventing pregnancy.
- **The birth control patch** is similar to the pill and looks like an adhesive strip. The patch is placed on the skin and changed every week for 3 weeks. Side effects are similar to the pill.
- **Depo-Provera** is a shot that you get every 3 months. It is a popular choice for women who have trouble remembering to take the pill.

### **It's your choice!**

The choice to become sexually active is your choice. Talk with your pediatrician about birth control—how safe and effective these methods are, what side effects they can cause, and how much they cost.