



# Teen Talk

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## In this issue

Healthy Relationships

Surviving College

Emily's Health Tips

Backpack Safety

Meet Kayla & Connor



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## ♥ Healthy Relationships ♥

— By Erica Cuevas



A relationship with a significant other can be very complex. Since everyone is unique, the people involved may have totally different

personalities, tastes, and interests. Dissimilarities may sometimes cause disagreements (*which is completely normal*), but when two people share mutual feelings for each other, they should try to learn to deal with their differences and build a functional and healthy relationship.

Before getting into a relationship with a partner, it's a good idea to define the type of relationship you want. You both have to be clear on your needs and expectations to avoid confusion. Another idea is to sit down and set your priorities straight. For instance, if you're going away to college, you'll want to find out if you both are comfortable with having a long distance relationship. You can still benefit from having this type of conversation with your partner even if you aren't going to have a long distance relationship. For example, if you're super busy, have a job, play a sport, travel, etc., you'll probably want to think about whether you and your partner are both okay with not seeing or talking to each for a couple of days—or even weeks at a time.

A healthy relationship is about communication, trust, and respect. Couples should be able to talk and be heard. Each partner should feel comforted and supported. Respecting your partner and their privacy also leads to trust. If you trust your significant other it will probably result in fewer arguments because you are sure of his or her feelings and intentions.

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## COLLEGE SURVIVAL TIPS



If you're a freshman in college you may be on your own for the first time in your life. This may feel overwhelming at first. Don't worry, here are 15 tips submitted by local college students that will help you make the most of your college experience!

- ★ **Be confident!** Set high standards! Freshman year is the foundation for college success.
- ★ **If you don't have a planner, get one** and keep track of your homework assignments and tests. If you have a cell phone with a calendar, you can use that too.
- ★ **Set personal deadlines** and reward yourself when you complete projects.
- ★ **Get to know your campus community.** Find out where the closest grocery store, pharmacy, health clinic, and bank are located! You never know when you might need something.
- ★ **Safety first!** Make sure you know where emergency telephones are located on campus and how to contact public safety officers should you need help or an escort home.
- ★ **Always tell someone where you're going.** For example; use a whiteboard or a post-it note and let your roommate or someone else know where you are going and what time you expect to be back.
- ★ **Follow the buddy rule** – When going out at night, go with a friend and never leave a party alone or with someone you don't know.
- ★ **Set ground rules** with your roommate. Discuss borrowing clothes, having guys or girls over, extended stays, and quiet time.
- ★ **Avoid weekday parties.** If you insist on partying, at least wait until your classes are done for the week.

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Having a significant other may be important, but so is your education and other activities. Therefore, you need to make sure to talk to your partner and let them know that you have other things going on in your life and that you need to make time for all of them. If that person doesn't understand, you should reevaluate your relationship. It's not healthy to be with someone who wants to control what you do.

Both females and males tend to use the phrase; "If you love me then you'll....", but the truth is that if your partner loves and respects you, he or she won't give you any ultimatums. This is a common tactic people use to get what they want, so be careful and don't fall into this trap. Feeling pressured to do things that you don't want to do, or feeling pressured not to do things you want to do is unhealthy. Nothing good can come from a relationship that is full of pressure and lacks trust and respect. Remember, you deserve someone that supports and respects you, and if your current partner doesn't appreciate you then someone else will. ♥



## Emily's Health Tips: Chlamydia

Teens sometimes joke about sexually transmitted infections, but there is nothing funny about having one. For example, chlamydia is on the rise — over 4 million American women and men are diagnosed with chlamydia every year. It can be transmitted with any kind of unprotected sex. It can cause burning with urination, vaginal discharge, abdominal pain, and irregular periods but studies have shown that 70% of females who have chlamydia don't have symptoms.

### You are more likely to get chlamydia if:

- You have more than one sexual partner
- Your sexual partner has multiple partners
- You don't use a condom
- You are under 25

If you have symptoms, you're likely to see your healthcare provider, but one of the problems with chlamydia is that you may not even know you have it. So every girl who has had sex should be screened/tested at least once a year.

Testing involves either a urine test or a swab sample from the vagina or cervix. Some STI's can have similar symptoms, but the treatment is different, so your healthcare provider will likely check you for other STI's as well. Early treatment can lower your risk of serious complications such as pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), infertility, or tubal pregnancy.

### If you think you might have chlamydia, you should:

- Stop having intercourse, get tested & treated
- Contact all current and past sexual partners
- Do not have sexual intercourse while receiving treatment

The best way to avoid contracting chlamydia and other STI's is to not have sexual intercourse. If you do decide to have sex be sure to use a condom every single time. ♥

*For more information on chlamydia, you can read the health guide on our website at: [youngwomenshealth.org/chlamydia.html](http://youngwomenshealth.org/chlamydia.html).*

## Meet Kayla & Connor!



Kayla & Connor are our new Youth Advisors! They assist with organizing monthly outreach activities and editing health information guides to make them teen-friendly. They participate in mock clinical interviews with resident physicians and help with informational tables in the adolescent outpatient clinic. They also serve on the Children's Hospital Boston Teen Advisory Committee (TAC). You can read their blogs on [yapblog.typepad.com!](http://yapblog.typepad.com/) ♥



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- ★ **Stock your room with healthy snacks.** You never know when you'll need to eat breakfast or lunch on the go because you're late for class.
- ★ **Fit in exercise every day.** It's a great way to release stress. Try a new fitness class at school or at a local fitness center.
- ★ **Join clubs** and attend school social events. This is a great way to meet friends and get involved in your college community.
- ★ **Don't fall for credit card freebies.** Credit card companies often target college students. Pass up the free T-shirt. Interest rates are usually very high and you can rack up high bills before you know it.
- ★ **Make it a habit to go to your professors' office hours.** It is a good idea to meet with your professors to show that you are serious about learning.
- ★ **Call your parents** at least once a week to check in. If you don't live too far from home, consider taking a weekend trip home every once in a while to rejuvenate. ♥

## BACKPACK SAFETY



Perhaps you got a new backpack when you started school. It expresses your style, but does it do the job? Besides being fashionable, your backpack should be able to handle the weight of your books. According to the American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc., your backpack should not weigh more than 15% of your weight. Here are 5 tips to help you lighten your load:

- Carry only what you absolutely need
- Go to your locker in between classes and unload extra books
- Don't carry extra items that can add weight to your backpack
- Use the different compartments to spread out the weight evenly
- Plan ahead and complete assignments so you're not carrying all your books home each night ♥