



TEEN TALK

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In this issue

Preventing Destructive Decisions: The Contract for Life

Gearing Up for College

Emergency Contraception: Myths VS Truths

Good Night! Teens & Sleep



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Preventing Destructive Decisions: The Contract for Life

— By Erica



Are you familiar with the Contract for Life? Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) designed a contract that facilitates communication

between young people and their parents about potentially destructive decisions related to alcohol, drugs, peer pressure, and behavior. In this contract, a teen acknowledges the many destructive decisions they may face, and promises to avoid risking their well-being and their parent's trust.

The teen agrees to:

- Never drive under the influence or ride in a car with someone that has been drinking
- Always wear a seat belt
- Call a parent or guardian if they are in a situation that could possibly endanger their safety

In return, the parent or guardian of the teen must agree to:

- Try their best to understand and talk to the teen about destructive decisions
- Provide a safe ride home
- Postpone discussions about the situation until they can both talk about it in a calm manner
- Not drive under the influence and avoid riding in a car with someone who has been drinking
- Always wear a seat belt

The Contract for Life is a great way for teens to be responsible about their decisions. It gives teens the opportunity to be more open with their parents about their actions, even if their actions could be destructive. This contract also provides teens with a safe ride home if they don't have a designated driver, or in the event that their designated driver decides to drink. ♥

Be part of the solution:

Read and sign the contract with a parent or guardian. It could save your life. You can get find a copy of the SADD contract online at: <http://www.sadd.org/contract.htm>

Gearing up for College

— By Kayla

Many high school juniors are under the impression that senior year is going to be stressful due to the workload and the college application process; but it doesn't have to be.

If you're planning to apply to college, here are things you'll need to keep in mind:

- Your GPA
- Your SAT scores
- What colleges or universities have the programs you would like to pursue

Having good grades throughout high school is very important, because colleges see your final grades for all four years. However, if you didn't do so well your freshman or sophomore year, and you work hard during your junior and senior year, your GPA will go up and colleges will take into consideration that you are putting in the effort to do better.

Most colleges also look at your SAT scores. Many schools and community organizations offer SAT prep courses, which help to prepare you for the real exam. You'll learn test-taking strategies and take practice tests. The SAT exam lasts about 4 hours so it's very important that you get a good night's sleep the night before, and eat a healthy breakfast the morning of the test.

Since good grades or excelling at a sport don't necessarily guarantee you a scholarship, you should find out about financial assistance as soon as possible. Most colleges and universities offer financial aid, so make sure that you complete the paperwork on time! Some of these forms may include the FAFSA, CSS profile, etc. If at any point you feel stressed because you don't understand what you're supposed to do, make an appointment with your guidance counselor. Don't give up your dream of furthering your education. Remember, there are many resources available to you, you just have to look for them. ♥

Emergency Contraception: Myths VS Truths

— By Kerrin

Emergency contraception (EC) is a backup form of birth control for females. It can be used after unprotected sex, if a condom ripped or slipped off during intercourse, or if a woman forgot to take her birth control pill.

Here are some of the misconceptions about EC and the real truths:

Some say... “You can only take the emergency contraceptive pill on the morning–after unprotected sexual intercourse”

The truth is → Although EC is sometimes referred to as the “morning–after–pill”, it can be taken up to 120 hours (5 days) after unprotected sexual intercourse. However, you shouldn’t wait until the fifth day to take it. Most EC works better the sooner you take it.

Some say... “Emergency contraception is just 1 pill”

The truth is → Depending on the brand/type of emergency contraception, it can be 1–5 pills.

Some say... “Taking an emergency contraception pill causes an abortion”

The truth is → Taking emergency contraception does not cause an abortion. EC will not work if a female is already pregnant. It only prevents pregnancy from taking place.

Some say... “Emergency contraception pills will make you sick”

The truth is → Most women do not have side effects after taking EC. Some women may have mild nausea, but it's temporary (1–2 days) and there is medicine that your health care provider can prescribe, if you need it.

Taking emergency contraception *does not* guarantee that a woman will not become pregnant. However, if it's taken the correct way, it's usually very effective. It's important to understand that emergency contraception shouldn't be taken as a routine form of birth control. If you are sexually active and do not have plans of becoming pregnant, talk with your health care provider about a regular form of birth control. ♡

Good Night!

— By Erica



Most (*if not all*) teens love sleeping, but more often than not they don't get enough. Sleep is vital to our well-being because while we sleep, our bodies carry out important functions such as strengthening our immune system. Teens are supposed to get 8 ½ to 9 hours of sleep on average every night; however, most teens don't get the recommended amount. This results in sleep deprivation, which leads to a decrease in physical and mental functioning. Being sleep deprived can affect your relationships with your friends and family and it can also affect your school performance big time!

It's normal for teens to have difficulty falling asleep before 11 o'clock at night because biologically, our sleep patterns shift during adolescence. Since we naturally fall asleep later and get up early to go to school or work, we often sleep in on the weekends. This actually creates an irregular sleeping pattern which affects the quality of sleep. You can't catch up on lost sleep; therefore the idea of sleeping in to make up for the sleep you didn't get during the week won't actually do any good. Instead, it will confuse your body and stop it from getting a sense of when it should fall asleep and wake up. Consequently, you're likely to feel tired even after sleeping an extra three or four hours.

Aside from the change in sleep patterns, some teens also suffer from insomnia due to things such as stress. People who suffer from insomnia have a hard time falling asleep or feeling well rested after sleeping a long time. It's normal to experience insomnia from time to time, but if you suffer with disordered sleep patterns that last for over a month, you should see your health care provider.

Here are some tips to have a good night's sleep so you'll feel well rested:

- ★ Take short power naps during the day and avoid taking long naps or sleeping before your bedtime, as this can interfere with your regular sleep cycle.
- ★ Establish a consistent bed time and wake time routine—try to keep this routine on weekends. Consistency will allow your body to adjust and it will make it easier for you to fall asleep.
- ★ Relax your brain—turn down the volume on your Ipod and avoid using the computer or watching TV an hour before you go to sleep. ♡