



TEEN TALK

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Center for Young Women's Health



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PEER PRESSURE

— By Kerrin Gibbs



Most teens are affected by peer pressure in some way but they may not consciously realize it. Peer pressure is when a friend, classmate, or someone you know tries to convince you to do something

you don't want to do, or you know is wrong. The "something" is usually an activity that comes with some sort of risk. Most of us have been pressured by our peers in some way. For example, some teens have been pressured to have smoke, cut class, drink alcohol, or try drugs.

Peer pressure often works because the person who pressures uses guilt and insults to wear the person down and make their target feel like they have to do what they say. But, the truth is you don't have to do anything; it's up to you to decide what the best choices are for you. It's okay to say "No" especially if you feel uncomfortable or if you know the activity comes with a lot of risks. Before making any decision you should consider the possible consequences of your choices; both positive and negative.

It's important to remember that true friends are supposed to support and care for each other. If someone you consider to be your friend is pressuring you into doing something you don't want to do, then you should reconsider whether that person really is worthy of your friendship. Don't fall into the trap – "Do this or you can't hang out with us." This is a tactic that is often used in order to intimidate you into doing what others may want you to do. A true friend wouldn't give you an ultimatum because they value you as a person and friend. Maintaining friendships is important; however, having healthy and positive friendships is more important.

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* Winter Health Tips *

It always makes good sense to take good care of yourself but during this time of year it's particularly important to do all you can to reduce your risk of catching the flu. Winter is the time of year when flu germs are lurking all around us. That's why it's especially important to be prepared, so you can stay well and not miss a lot of school or fun activities with your friends. What can you do to stay healthy during the winter season? Here are 7 tips to get you started.

- * GET A FLU SHOT as soon as possible.
- * Wash your hands frequently – this is the #1 way to stop the spread of germs.
- * Sneeze into your elbow instead of your hands.
- * Avoid hanging out with people who are sick. Wait until they are germ-free to lower the chance of catching their germs.
- * Drink plenty of water to keep your body hydrated.
- * Eat balanced meals and healthy snacks. Include lots of fruits and veggies. Healthy food (with lots of vitamins and nutrients) enhances your immune system, which helps your body fight off infection.
- * Get at least 9 hours of sleep each night to avoid getting run down.

Erica's Advice: Social Networking



Social networking has become very popular, especially among adolescents. The sites range from older networks such as Migente, Blackplanet, Xanga, and Myspace to the newer and more popular ones, such as Facebook and Twitter. Social networks definitely have advantages; they allow you to keep in touch with family and friends both locally and internationally. They also help you reconnect with old friends. However, the truth is that social networking sites can be dangerous if the appropriate safety measures aren't taken. For example, did you know that you really can't take back anything once you post it on the internet? You may post a photo and later regret it and delete it, but your photo still remains in the archives of older versions of your profile. So anything you post on the internet stays online forever.

There are several safety measures that should be taken into consideration when you create a profile on a social networking site. For example:

- ★ Make sure that you are comfortable with the content on your profile. Aside from your friends, parents, and relatives, your current or future employers, colleges, and teachers may be looking at your profile too.
- ★ Make sure that you set your privacy settings to "private" so that only your friends can view your profile.
- ★ Do not accept friend requests from people you don't know.
- ★ Don't meet up with anyone you've chatted with. Although it may seem like you know them because you've talked to them online for so long, you don't! Therefore, you don't know if they are lying about their identity. Most importantly, you don't know their real intentions.
- ★ Don't post personal information – full name, age, location, social security, phone number, etc., because all of this information identifies who you are. These are clues for predators.

Facebook has a new application that allows you to "check in" to places. Although this may seem cool, it can be very dangerous. By checking into places, you are becoming an easy target to be victimized. By identifying your location people will know where you are and can easily find you.

Twitter users update their statuses frequently and often tweet about where they are and what they are doing. This is also dangerous for the same reason; because you could give a lot more information than you might realize.

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Some Ways To Deal With Peer Pressure:

- Think about your choices – What would happen if you do it? What if you don't?
- Follow your instincts *(If something doesn't feel right, it probably isn't right for you.)*
- Hang out with people whose choices make you feel comfortable!
- Be assertive
Say what you think
Talk about what you feel
Say "No"
Suggest a healthier alternative
If you are still being pressured, walk away

Best Wishes For A Happy, Healthy New Year!



- The Youth Advisors & Staff of the CYWH

5th ANNUAL ENDO CONFERENCE

FOR TEENS, FAMILIES, & FRIENDS | SATURDAY APRIL 2, 2011

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