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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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 STIs 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 STIs 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.