



# TEEN TALK

A quarterly newsletter from the Children's Hospital League's Resource Center

## Summer 2011

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## Summer Fun!



Summer is finally here and everyone is excited to get out of "hibernation". Many of you may have summer activities already planned, but for those of you who

don't know what to do with your free time, here are some suggestions:

- ★ **Volunteer:** Volunteering your time opens the door to experiences that you may not otherwise have, and also looks good on your resume. Depending on the school you attend, it may also be required.
- ★ **Summer employment:** Working gives you the chance to save money that you can put towards college or another important event that may be coming up.
- ★ **Take a free tour:** Tour colleges and universities that you're curious about. A tour will give you the chance to check out the campus, dorms, classrooms, etc. and you will likely learn more about the programs offered.

- ★ **Attend a sporting event:** Whether you're a baseball fan or you prefer being a spectator at another sports event, have fun cheering your team on.
- ★ **Start journaling:** Writing is a great way to express yourself. It's also a great way to release stress too. You can write in a notebook or if you prefer, electronically.
- ★ **Sign up for a library card:** Visit your local library and sign up for a library card. You'll get a head start on your summer reading list – all for free! Be sure to check out other freebies. For example, many libraries have free passes to local museums that you can borrow for a day.
- ★ **Plan a family reunion on a budget:** Talk to your parent(s) about having a family reunion and get their permission. You could hold it at a public place such as a park or beach. Have everyone bring their favorite food. Save on stamps by sending the invitations via e-mail. ([Try evite.com](http://tryevite.com))

Whatever you decide to do this summer, have a great time and stay safe! ♥

— By Kayla

## HEALTHY SEXUAL DECISIONS

Sex; it's everywhere. You see it on TV, through advertising, and you hear about it through song lyrics. It might seem like everyone is doing it, but it's not the case. As a teen, it's completely normal to think about sex, have sexual feelings, and a desire to learn more about your own body, but deciding to have a sexual relationship is an important decision, because it involves both your body and your emotions. Before you decide to become sexually active, you should think things through and make sure that both you and your partner are ready.



As a young woman, you might feel pressure to have sex in order to sustain a relationship. This is not a good reason to have sex. You shouldn't feel pressured by anyone or anything, and your decision to have sex should only be made when you feel ready emotionally and physically, and when you have a partner you can trust and communicate with. In fact, both you and your partner should feel comfortable talking to each other about everything, including why you want to have sex, what's going to happen afterwards, STD and pregnancy prevention methods, and your past sexual history. ♥

— By Erica

## HEALTHY SEXUAL DECISIONS QUIZ

Ask yourself the following questions to see if you're ready for a sexual relationship:

- ♥ Is your decision to have sex completely your own (you feel no pressure from others, including your partner)?
- ♥ Is your decision to have sex based on the right reasons? (It shouldn't be based on peer pressure, a need to fit in or make your partner happy, or a belief that sex is the only way to make your relationship with your partner better, or closer. If you decide to have sex, it should be because you feel emotionally and physically ready. Your partner should be someone you trust.)
- ♥ Do you feel your partner would respect any decision you made about whether to have sex or not?
- ♥ Are you able to comfortably talk to your partner about sex and your partner's sexual history?
- ♥ Have you and your partner talked about what both of you would do if you became pregnant or got an STD?

After you have all your questions answered and you've talked to your partner, you should be able to make a healthy decision about whether or not to have sex. Also remember that if you have sex and you didn't feel comfortable with it for any reason, you don't have to do it again until you're ready. ♥

- ♥ Do you know how to prevent pregnancy and STDs?
- ♥ Are you and your partner willing to use contraception to prevent pregnancy and STDs?
- ♥ Do you really feel ready and completely comfortable with yourself and your partner to have sex?

If you answered NO to any of these questions, you're probably not ready to have sex.

If you feel that you are ready:

- Talk with your parents to learn their values and advice.
- Talk with your health care provider about birth control options, and figure out what's right for you.
- Be honest and talk to your partner about all your concerns.
- Make sure that all your questions are answered and that you get rid of all your doubts.

## Protecting the Skin You're In



It's easy to get too much sun exposure outdoors, and it's important to take the necessary precautions to absorb the least amount of UV rays possible. Being exposed to the sun without sunscreen and using tanning booths dramatically increases your chances of getting skin cancer.

First, you should know that you're beautiful regardless of your skin color. You should also know that there are sunless tanning techniques available that give you color without the exposure to harmful UV rays. For instance, you can use a tanning lotion or spray, which tans your skin temporarily and washes away after you shower. Most importantly, you can lower your risk of damaging your skin by following the advice below.

- Find shade. Try to limit time in direct sunlight to 15 minutes or less.
- Use a sunscreen with an SPF (sun protection factor) of at least 30 even on cloudy days. Choose a sunscreen that protects against both UVA and UVB rays. Apply to any part of your skin that might be exposed to the sun, including your scalp.
- Apply sunscreen BEFORE you go out in the sun, even on cloudy days. Remember to reapply sunscreen every 2 hours.
- Limit sun exposure between the hours of 10am and 3pm when the sun's UV rays are the strongest.
- Cover up with clothing, a hat, and sunglasses that block UVA and UVB light. There are special brands of swimwear and clothing made to block the sun.
- Avoid tanning beds/booths. Tanning beds/booths use UV light that can damage your skin just as much as the sun's rays.
- Check your skin regularly. Know your birthmarks, moles, and freckles. Make an appointment with your health care provider or dermatologist if you notice any changes. ♥

— By Erica

## Celebrating Our 13th Birthday!

Thirteen years ago we opened our doors to the public with the goal of helping teen girls, their parents, teachers and health care providers improve their understanding of normal health and development, as well as specific diseases and conditions. Now, we're one of the most recognized sources of reliable health information. In addition, our website receives over 1 million unique website visitors each month and positively impacts the next generation of women around the world. We're so excited to finally be a teenager! We just celebrated our birthday in June, complete with a party, cake, and balloons! ♥

