**Current Information on Adolescent Sex and Sexuality**
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*With rapid change being a hallmark of this generation, parents might find it difficult to stay on top of the culture when it comes to adolescent sex and sexuality. Knowing what your kids are facing in the culture is key to helping them navigate the sea of adolescence. The following information is provided to help parents gain a better understanding of today's youth culture, specifically in regard to adolescent sex and sexuality. Articles and interpretations of research and surveys are not specifically endorsed by HomeWord.*

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• **47.8% of Teens Have Had Sexual Intercourse.** Every other year, the National Youth Risk Behavior Survey, is conducted by the U.S. Center for Disease Control. The survey is conducted every two years during the spring semester and provides data representative of 9th through 12th grade students in public and private schools throughout the United States. The 2007 results of the YRBS reveal that there was no statistically meaningful change in the percentage of teens who have engaged in sexual intercourse since the 2005 survey. (Since 1991, the percentage rate has fallen from 54.1% to its current level.) 61.5% of sexually active teens said they used a condom during their last sexual intercourse. This too remained statistically unchanged from the 2005 survey. *Source: National Youth Risk Behavior Survey.* To read more, click here.

• **Teen Survey Shows Virginity Pledges Can Work.** Virginity pledges do deter some teens from having sex, according to a study by the RAND Corp. that surveyed teen virgins over three years to see whether they stayed that way. Of 1,517 adolescents ages 12 to 17 in 2001 when the research began, teenagers who vowed to remain virgins until they were married were less likely to be sexually active than others who didn't make a pledge. About one-quarter of the adolescents surveyed (23.8%) made a promise to wait until marriage to have sex; 34% had broken it by 2004, compared with 42% of those who didn't make the pledge and had sex during that time. *Source: USA Today.* To read more, click here.

• **Study: Oral Sex Not Means of Preserving Virginity for Teens.** Contrary to widespread belief, teenagers do not appear to commonly engage in oral sex as a way to preserve their virginity, according to the first study to examine the question nationally. The analysis of a federal survey of more than 2,200 males and females aged 15 to 19, released recently, found that more than half reported having had oral sex. But those who described themselves as virgins were far less likely to say they had tried it than those who had had intercourse. *Source: Washington Post.* To read more, click here.

• **Teen Dating '08: Nude Pix On Cell Phones.** Forget about passing notes in study hall; some teens are now using their cell phones to flirt and send nude pictures of themselves. The instant text, picture and video messages have become part of some teens' courtship behavior, police and school officials say. The messages often spread quickly and sometimes find their way to public Web sites. *Source: CBS News.* To read more, click here. In one such situation, a Wisconsin teen was charged with felony counts of possessing child pornography and sexual exploitation of a child, after posting nude pictures of a 16-year-old girl on his MySpace page; pictures that the girl had taken of herself and emailed to him. *Source: Minneapolis – St. Paul Tribune.*

• **U.S. Teen Pregnancy Rate Near Historic Low; Abortion Rate Falls.** The teen pregnancy rate in the United States has fallen to historic lows, abortion rates have declined dramatically and more women are having children out of wedlock, according to a recent study. The teen pregnancy rate dropped 38 percent from 1990 to 2004, with abortion rates down by half and birth rates down by more than a third, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Study said. *Source: AFP.* To read more click here.

• **Teen Sexuality: The New Third Base.** According to Logan Levkoff, author of the recent book, "Third Base Ain't What It Used to Be" when it comes to teen sexuality, the old third base was touching below the waist; the new third base is oral sex. The new definition seems to indicate sexual behavior inflation among today's teenagers, since, as Ms. Levkoff pointed out, under the old scoring system, many would have counted oral sex as a grand slam. But as the teenagers explained, "they feel with oral sex they can still call themselves virgins." In short, they feel safe at third. However, as Ms. Levkoff pointed out, things are not so safe at third, given the latest mind-boggling news for parents of teenagers: one-fourth of teenage girls in America have a sexually transmitted disease, according to a recently released federal study. *Source: New York Times.* To read more, click here.

• **CDC: At Least 1 in 4 Teenage Girls Has Sexually Transmitted Disease.** At least one in four teenage girls nationwide has a sexually transmitted disease, or more than 3 million teens, according to the first study of its kind in this age group. A virus (HPV) that causes cervical cancer is by far the most common sexually transmitted infection in teen girls aged 14 to 19, while the highest overall prevalence is among black girls — nearly half the blacks studied had at least one STD. That rate compared with 20 percent among both whites and Mexican-American teens, the study from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found. Among girls who admitted ever having sex, the rate was 40 percent. While some teens define sex as only intercourse, other types of intimate behavior including oral sex can spread some infections. *Source: Fox News*

• **That 'Sex Talk' With Your Kids Should Be Ongoing.** Parents may not want to hear this, but new research suggests it's not a good idea to just have that one big "sex talk" with your kids. Instead, the study recommends that you encourage an ongoing dialogue about sex with your children -- even if it makes you uncomfortable -- so your kids are less likely to engage in risky sexual behaviors. "It's important that parents set a foundation early on in talking with their kids about sex so that it becomes part of the

norm in their household," said study lead author Steven Martino, a behavioral scientist at RAND in Pittsburgh. "As children grow and have experiences, you want them to feel it's natural to talk to their parents. When asked where they'd like to get their information, kids say from their parents more than anyone else." *Source: U.S. News & World Report.* To read more, click here.

• **Most Americans Have Had Premarital Sex.** Almost all Americans have premarital sex, says a report published in December, 2006 that analyzes federal data over time and suggests programs focusing on sexual abstinence until marriage may be unrealistic. The study, which used statistics from the 1982, 1988, 1995 and 2002 National Survey of Family Growth, asked about 40,000 people ages 15-44 about their sexual behavior and traced the trends in premarital sex back to the 1950s. Of those interviewed in 2002, 95% reported they had had premarital sex. *Source: USA Today.* To read more, click here.

• **Teens Twice as Likely to Have Sex in Evenings Compared with Afternoons.** What kids do during their unsupervised afternoons has long been a source of concern for parents. A study researched the time of day kids engaged in sexual activity and found that teens were more than twice as likely to report having sex in the evening compared with afternoons. The researchers found that less than one-third of all teen sexual encounters reported took place on weekday afternoons. Source*: Reuters.*

• **Oral and Anal Sex on Rise in Teenagers.** During the past decade, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of teenagers and young adults engaging in oral sex and, less commonly, having anal intercourse, according to data from STD clinics in Baltimore, Maryland. *Source: Yahoo News / Reuters.*

• **Depression Tied to Risky Sex in Teens.** Teens with depressive symptoms are more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviors, according to a new study appearing in the July 2006 issue of the medical journal, *Pediatrics. Source: Reuters / CNN.*