



# TEENAGE PREGNANCY

In high school or college, you may start to explore your sexuality. How you define your own personal boundaries is completely up to you! It's always important to make sure, though, that you practice safe sex and communicate that with your sexual partner(s). It's just as much their responsibility as it is yours. If you aren't using birth control, there's a possibility that you'll become pregnant.

While pregnancy can be an amazing experience, if you aren't on the same page as your partner or if you have other plans for yourself besides being a mother, pregnancy can be stressful. Waiting to have children can help you to finish high school without interruption, pursue a college degree, and even find a meaningful job. In other words, you can discover and understand yourself before being responsible for someone else. See the "Family Planning" page to learn how to prevent pregnancy and STI's while still being sexually active.

*How does being pregnant as a teen affect you?*

Having a baby can have far-reaching effects for you. It may mean deciding

about marriage, changing education and career plans, finding a place to live, and learning how to handle finances. It comes with increased responsibilities. You will have the responsibility of taking care of all of a baby's physical needs, like feeding, changing, bathing, dressing, etc. Being a mom means taking care of your baby in good times and in bad, like when your baby is crying, fussy, or sick. It can also take a lot of energy to provide the love and attention that a baby needs to thrive.



## *How can you handle teenage pregnancy?*

If you're a teenager and just found out that you're pregnant, you may be feeling overwhelmed or helpless. There are so many resources and people on the reservation that can help you through this experience. It's important for you to feel a sense of support during this time, so that you can best plan for your future and your baby's future.

Talk with:

- ◇ Your partner
- ◇ Your parents
- ◇ Your brothers and sisters

- ◇ Your other family (aunts, uncles, cousins)
- ◇ Your friends
- ◇ Your IHS doctor and nurse

If you are feeling too overwhelmed with trying to balance your pregnancy, your future baby's needs, and your own future goals, you can talk to the IHS Behavioral Health Department.

When you speak with your doctor and other community members, use this opportunity to find out what resources are available to you on the reservation. You can also use this app to better understand where you can go to seek help. Places like the IHS and WIC are here to support you! If you are worried

about cost, you can speak with Marsha Renville, the SWO Benefits Coordinator. The costs are also listed on each resource's page in this app.