

## Adolescent Pregnancy

Adolescent pregnancy in ninety nine percent of the cases is unwanted and is the major consequence of adolescent sexual activity, other than STDs. This issue has affected youth, families, educators, health care professionals, and government official. A study on the high school adolescents has concluded that forty eight percent of the males and forty five percent of the females are sexually active. One fourth of the high school students had sexual contact by fifteen years of age. The average age of boys is sixteen and a girl is seventeen, who have had intercourse. Ninety percent of adolescents, in the age range of fifteen to nineteen, say their pregnancy is unintended.

Seventy four percent of females above fourteen years and sixty percent of females below fifteen years have reported to have involuntary sex. Fifty percent of the adolescent pregnancies are within the time period of six months after the initial sexual intercourse. More than nine hundred thousand teenagers are reported to have become pregnant every year in the United States. Fifty one percent of the adolescent pregnancies result in live birth, thirty five percent result in induced abortion and fourteen percent result in stillbirths or miscarriages. Four out of ten adolescent females get pregnant, before they turn twenty, at least once. Twenty five percent of adolescent deliveries aren't the mother's first child. When a teenager gives birth to her first child, she increases the risk of begetting another child. One third of the adolescent parents are themselves result of adolescent pregnancies.

There are many reasons why adolescents choose to become sexually active at an early stage in life. The reasons can be early pubertal development, poverty, sexual abuse in childhood, lack of parent's attention, lack of career goals, family and cultural patterns of early sex, substance abuse, dropping out from school and poor school performance. Factors which discourage an adolescent to become sexually active are stable family environment, parental supervision, good family income, regular prayers, connectedness with parents and living with complete family and both the parents. The factors which are responsible for the consistent use of contraceptive among adolescents are academic success, anticipation for successful future, and involvement in a stable relationship.

There are many medical risks associated with adolescent pregnancies. Adolescents who are less than seventeen years are at a greater risk of developing medical complications, when compared to adult females. The risk is even more in teenagers below seventeen. The weight of the child, given birth by an adolescent, is very low in these pregnancies. It is usually below 2.5 kilogram. The rate of neonatal birth is also three times greater in adolescents, when compared to adults. Other problems caused by adolescent pregnancies are

prematurity of the child, birth of underweight child, poor maternal weight gain, poor nutritional status, anemia, STDs and hypertension induced due to pregnancy.

Although there is an increase in the use of contraceptive methods by adolescents during their first sexual contact, only sixty three percent of the high school students have said to use condom while having sex previously. Adolescents, who use prescription contraceptives, delay their doctor's visit until the time they become sexually active for over a year.

According to a research, youngsters who have participated in sex education programs which gave them knowledge about contraception methods, abstinence, sexually transmitted diseases and youngsters who involved in discussions in order to get a clear picture, used contraceptives and condoms effectively without any increase in sexual activity. The Center for Disease Control & Prevention has said that the solution for unwanted adolescent pregnancies and STDs are barrier contraceptive use and abstinence.

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Word Count 598