

Healthy Sexual Behaviors

People between the ages of 14 and 24 are at the highest risk of getting an STI (sexually transmitted infection). Some STIs have no cure and can cause long-lasting health problems.

Examples of STIs

- HIV (human immunodeficiency virus)
- Chlamydia
- Herpes
- Trichomoniasis
- Gonorrhea
- Syphilis
- HPV (human papilloma virus)

Some sex behaviors can increase your risk of getting an STI or an unplanned pregnancy.

These behaviors include

- Vaginal, oral, or anal sex without a condom
- Having more than one sexual partner
- Using drugs or alcohol before or during sex
- Using drugs through a needle
- Having sex for money, food, or something else

The only sure way to prevent pregnancy and STIs is to NOT have sex. If you choose to have sex, here are some safe sex behaviors to help prevent STIs and unplanned pregnancy:

Condoms

- Can lower the risk of pregnancy and STIs
- Must be used correctly **every time** you have sex
- Condoms can break, slip, or leak. Make sure to learn how to use them correctly

Birth Control

- Can lower the risk of pregnancy, but does not prevent STIs
- There are many kinds of birth control. These include:
 - Pills
 - Shots
 - Implants
 - Intra-uterine devices (IUD)
 - Patches and rings
- Call your primary care provider (PCP) to talk about your choices or request a referral to Children's Mercy Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine Clinic. If you don't have a PCP, you can call the Children's Mercy Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine Clinic at (816) 960 - 4152 to schedule a sexual health visit.

PrEP to prevent HIV

- PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) is a medicine (daily pill or shot every 2 months) that helps stop HIV from spreading from person to person
- This can be prescribed by your health care provider or by a provider at the Children's Mercy Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine Clinic
- We talk to teens about this every day, so please call if you have any questions. (816) 960-4152

Sexual Health Resources

- Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/sexualbehaviors/>
- Children's Mercy Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine Clinic (816) 960 - 4152
 - Offers sexual health visits
 - Call for any questions or to set up an appointment