

Tips for parents: RAISING A SEXUALLY HEALTHY SON OR DAUGHTER

The more accurate the information your teen has, the more sexually responsible he or she will be!

How can you help?

- 1 Take the time to talk with your teen.** By starting early and making time for good communication, you can build trust and give them the information they need to be safe.
- 2 Use accurate and mature language** when you talk to your teen about the body and sex. This will help teach your child that you are a good source of information, and that sex is a serious topic.
- 3 Know as much as you can!** Explore the resources available to you and your teen in the community, on the web and through your teen's health care provider.
- 4 Know what you think about sexuality** and consider where your beliefs and information about sexuality came from. This will help you communicate your values to your teen.

Teach your son or daughter...

- 1 That no one has the right to force sex** on him/her for any reason.
- 2 To listen to his/her partner's thoughts** and limits about dating and sex. Knowing is better than assuming.
- 3 To plan ahead.** Discuss how he/she can get out of an uncomfortable situation, such as always having money for a taxi or pay phone.
- 4 To say no,** loudly and in public if needed, and to respect that no means no.
- 5 To stay sober.** Alcohol and drugs can change how your child makes decisions.
- 6 To avoid pressure** from friends and partners about dating and sex.
- 7 To communicate his/her sexual limits** by practicing ways to talk to a date about what he/she is comfortable with.
- 8 To ask questions** if he/she is uncertain about situations and behaviors with his/her partner.
- 9 To be especially careful** if a date is more than one or two years older than him/her. A big age difference might make him/her more vulnerable.
- 10 To always let someone know** where he/she will be.
- 11 To trust his/her instincts.**
- 12 That you trust him/her.** Your child will be more likely to make rational decisions if he/she knows you trust and support him/her.

If your son or daughter has been sexually assaulted

- 1 Believe your child!**
- 2 Do not blame your child.** Victims of sexual assault did not do anything wrong.
- 3 Help your child get immediate medical attention.**
- 4 Help your child find local resources** for counseling and support.
- 5 Help your child decide** whether or not to contact the police or other authorities.
- 6 Find someone to talk to,** so that your anger and fear are not directed toward your child.

Online resources

For more information about encouraging healthy attitudes and discussions with your teens visit:

- www.advocatesforyouth.org
- www.talkingwithkids.org
- www.familycommunication.org