



## MYTH OR FACT?

### 1998 Kaiser Family Foundation Survey Of Americans' Knowledge On Teen Sexual Activity and Pregnancy

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#### Survey Question:

#### Fact:

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#### *Teen pregnancy rate*

1. Among those teens who are sexually active, which of the following do you think best describes their pregnancy rate?

69% It has INCREASED over the last 20 years  
 10% It has DECREASED over the last 20 years  
 15% It has stayed about the SAME over the last 20 years  
 5% Don't know  
 1% Refused  
 100%

- The teen pregnancy rate among sexually active teens has declined 15% in the last two decades, from 247 per 1,000 sexually active teens in 1974 to 210 in 1994.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Unintended teen pregnancy*

2. Thinking about the number of unintended pregnancies in the U.S. today, how many do you think occur among teenagers. Would you say that about 1 out of every 10 unintended pregnancies occurs among teenagers, about 2 out of 10, about 5 out of 10, or would you say about 8 out of every 10 unintended pregnancies occurs among teenagers?

7% 1 in 10  
 21% 2 in 10  
 42% 5 in 10  
 16% 8 in 10  
 13% Don't know  
 1% Refused  
 100%

- Nearly 610,000 of the 2.65 million unintended pregnancies (about 2 in 10) that occur each year to U.S. women (excluding miscarriages) are to teenagers.<sup>2</sup>

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**Survey Question:****Fact:**

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*Age of teen girls' sexual partners*

3. When teenage girls start having sexual intercourse, do you think that their sexual partners are typically: about their age -- that is within a year or two, about 3 to 4 years older, OR five or more years older than the teenage girls themselves?

49%	About their age -- that is with in a year or two,
34%	About 3 to 4 years older, OR
9%	5 or more years older?
7%	Don't know
1%	Refused
100%	

- More than half of teen girls' first sexual partners are no more than two years older than themselves (18% same age or younger, 43% 1-2 years older). A quarter of teen girls' first sexual partners are three to four years older (27%) and the remaining 12 percent of girls have partners who are five or more years older.<sup>3</sup>

*Teen contraceptive use*

4. When teens today have sex, how many do you think use contraceptives such as birth control pills or condoms? Do you think:

12%	Most do
41%	Some
32%	Very few
2%	None do
11%	Don't know
2%	Refused
100%	

- 93% of sexually active teen girls 15-19 years old report using some contraceptive method.<sup>4</sup> However, teens do not always use contraceptives consistently or correctly.<sup>5</sup>

**Methodology:**

The Kaiser Family Foundation's 1998 *Survey of Americans' Knowledge On Teen Pregnancy And Sexual Activity* was a national, random-sample, telephone survey of 1,018 adults aged 18 years or older. It was designed by staff from the Kaiser Family Foundation and Princeton Survey Research Associates (PSRA) and conducted by PSRA between February 25 and March 1, 1998. The margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points.

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<sup>1</sup> Henshaw S. U.S. Teenage Pregnancy Statistics. The Alan Guttmacher Institute, New York, NY, August 15, 1997.

<sup>2</sup> Henshaw S, Unintended Pregnancy in the United States. *Family Planning Perspectives* 1998;30(1):24-29, 46.

<sup>3</sup> Moore K, Driscoll A, Lindberg L. *A Statistical Portrait of Adolescent Sex, Contraception, and Childbearing* Washington, D.C. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy: March 1998.

<sup>4</sup> Piccinino L, Mosher W. Trends in Contraceptive Use in the United States: 1982-1995. *Family Planning Perspectives* 1998;30(1):4-10,46.

<sup>5</sup> Peterson L, Oakley D, Potter L, Darroch J. Women's Efforts to Prevent Pregnancy: Consistency of Oral Contraceptive Use. *Family Planning Perspectives* 1998;30(1):19-23; and Kaiser Family Foundation. *The 1996 Kaiser Family Foundation Survey on Teens and Sex: What They Say Teens Today Need to Know, And Who They Listen To*. Menlo Park, CA: June 1996.