

**SEX IN THE 90s:  
KAISER FAMILY FOUNDATION/ABC TELEVISION  
1998 NATIONAL SURVEY OF AMERICANS ON SEX AND SEXUAL HEALTH**

**Questionnaire and Topline Results**

**Methodology**

*The Kaiser Family Foundation and ABC Television 1998 National Survey of Americans on Sex and Sexual Health* is a random-sample telephone survey of 1,204 adults 18 and older living in the United States. It was designed by staff at the Foundation and Princeton Survey Research Associates (PSRA) and conducted by PSRA between April 24 and May 10, 1998. The margin of sampling error is plus or minus 3 percentage points.

INTRODUCTION: Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm calling for Princeton Survey Research of Princeton, New Jersey. We are conducting a national opinion survey about some important social issues, like health and family.

First, I have some questions about some social issues in this country . . .

Q1. Unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases are bigger problems in the United States than in many other Western countries, and people have many different explanations for why this is so. Please tell me whether YOU think each of the following contributes a lot, some, only a little or not at all to these problems in the U.S.

		<u>A</u> <u>lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Only a</u> <u>little</u>	<u>Not</u> <u>at all</u>	<u>DK/</u> <u>Ref.</u>	
a.	A lack of openness about sex and sexual issues	35	34	15	12	4	=100
b.	Poverty and poor education	46	29	15	8	2	=100
c.	A decline in moral values	65	20	8	5	2	=100
d.	Too much casual sex in the movies and on TV	55	25	13	6	1	=100
e.	Inadequate sex education in the schools	32	32	20	13	3	=100

Q2. Do you think the way TV programs show sex and nudity tends to ENCOURAGE irresponsible sexual behavior, DISCOURAGE irresponsible sexual behavior, or don=t you think it has much effect on people=s sexual behavior?

74 Encourages irresponsible sexual behavior  
 3 Discourages irresponsible sexual behavior  
 20 No effect  
3 Don=t know/Refused  
 100

Q3. In your opinion, if TV characters in entertainment programs are talking about or engaging in sexual activity, should they talk about condoms or make other references to Asafer sex,≡ or NOT?

77 Should  
 18 Should not  
5 Don=t know/Refused  
 100

Q4. How well do you think the way sex is usually shown on TV and in the movies reflects your own sex life? Would you say . . .

3 Very well  
 16 Somewhat well  
 23 Not too well  
 50 Not well at all  
8 Don=t know /Refused  
 100

Q5. To what extent do you think TV and movies send the message that. . . (INSERT). Do you think TV and movies send this message a lot, somewhat, only a little, or not at all?

		<u>A</u> <u>lot</u>	<u>Some-</u> <u>what</u>	<u>Only a</u> <u>little</u>	<u>Not</u> <u>at all</u>	<u>DK/</u> <u>Ref.</u>	
a.	To have a great sex life you must change partners often	41	29	14	14	2	=100
b.	You can have spontaneous sex without worrying about the consequences	53	25	11	9	2	=100
c.	Only thin, beautiful people can have great sex	53	22	8	14	3	=100
d.	Older adults can have great sex	14	31	33	19	3	=100
e.	To have a Anormal≡ sex drive means always being in the mood for sex	41	31	13	12	3	=100

READ: On a different topic . . .

Q6. Do you have any children -- either adult children or children who are still growing up?

70	Yes, have children
30	No children
<u>*</u>	Refused
100	

Q7. Are any of your children age 18 or under?

40	Yes, have children age 18 or under
30	No children under 18
0	Don't know/Refused
<u>30</u>	Have no children at all/DK/Ref
100	

Q8. Starting with the older, please tell me the ages of your children who are age 18 or under.

RESULTS NOT REPORTED

AGE OF TARGET CHILD:

49	8-12
<u>51</u>	13-18
100	

READ: Please answer the next few questions thinking about your (AGE) year old . . .

Q9. Have you ever had a conversation about a sexual issue with your (AGE) year old because of something one or both of you saw . . .

***Based on parents with at least one child age 8 to 18, (target child chosen randomly for those with more than one child in age range); n=329***

		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK/</u> <u>Ref.</u>	
a.	On the news	63	36	1	=100
b.	On a television show	70	30	0	=100

- Q10. Thinking about the last time you had a conversation because of something you saw on television, which comes closer to how you felt ...

***Based on parents who had a conversation about a sexual topic with target child because of something on TV; n=257***

65	It was a good opportunity for you and your child to talk about sexual issues
31	It raised a sexual issue you did not want to talk about with your child at that time
<u>4</u>	Don=t know/Refused
100	

- Q11. Thinking about sexual content on television. . . Have you ever (INSERT) because of sexual content you saw (on TV)?

		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK/</u> <u>Ref.</u>	
	<b><i>Q11a based on parents with at least one child age 18 or under; n=491</i></b>				
a.	Not allowed (one of your children/your child) to watch a certain show	76	24	*	=100
	<b><i>Q11b-f based on total</i></b>				
b.	Turned off the television	60	39	1	=100
c.	Learned something new about a sexual health issue like sexually transmitted diseases or preventing unplanned pregnancy	46	52	2	=100
d.	Talked to a health care provider about a sexual topic	9	91	0	=100
e.	Had a conversation with a sexual partner about a sexual topic	44	54	2	=100
f.	Tried something new sexually	13	85	2	=100

READ: Next I have some questions about sex education . . .

- Q12. In general would you say that young people today get information about sex and birth control at...

22	About the right time
24	Too soon
47	Too late
<u>7</u>	Don=t know/Refused
100	

Q13. In general do you SUPPORT or OPPOSE sex education courses being taught to . . .

		<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>	
a.	High school age students -- that is children age 15 to 18	85	12	3	=100
b.	Junior high school age students -- that is children age 12 to 14	76	21	3	=100
c.	Elementary school age students -- that is children 6 to 12	35	60	5	=100

Q14. If sex education is taught in HIGH SCHOOLS, do you think it should or should not...

		<u>Should</u>	<u>Should Not</u>	<u>DK/Ref.</u>	<u>Sex education should not be taught at all</u>	
a.	Tell young people NOT to have sexual intercourse before marriage?	68	27	4	1	=100
b.	Tell young people who ARE sexually active to use protection, such as condoms, to prevent against pregnancy and disease?	92	5	2	1	=100
c.	Teach the basic facts of human reproduction?	94	4	1	1	=100
d.	Discuss how to know when you are ready to have sex?	74	19	6	1	=100
e.	Discuss how to talk about sex with a partner?	74	21	4	1	=100

Q15. Some people believe that whether or not young people are sexually active, they should be given information to protect themselves from unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. Others believe that telling young people about birth control and sexually transmitted diseases only encourages them to have sex. Which come closer to your view?

83 They should be given information  
 14 Information only encourages them to have sex  
3 Don't know /Refused  
 100

Q16. Do you think sex education courses should ONLY teach abstinence -- that is NOT having sex until marriage -- OR should courses teach about BOTH abstinence AND give teens enough information to help them prevent unplanned pregnancies and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases if they DO decide to have sex?

18	Only abstinence
81	Both
<u>1</u>	Don=t know/Refused
100	

Q17. Do you think that HIGH SCHOOL health clinics should provide young people with condoms and other forms of birth control if students ask for them?

57	Yes
40	No
<u>3</u>	Don=t know/Refused
100	

Q18. In general, at what age do you think most young people have sexual intercourse for the first time?

Teens= (13-18) Perceptions

Fall 1997 Survey\*

15	12 or younger	2
11	13	5
15	14	12
21	15	18
17	16	29
6	17	16
5	18 or older	14
<u>10</u>	Don=t know/Refused	<u>4</u>
100		100

\*PSRA for The Kaiser Family Foundation and YM Magazine

Q19. When you were growing up, did you have sex education courses in school?

41	Yes
59	No
<u>*</u>	Don=t know/Refused
100	

Q20. Still thinking back to when you were growing up, would you say you got a lot of information about sex from (INSERT), some, only a little or no information at all?

		<u>A lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Only a little</u>	<u>No info. at all</u>	<u>DK/ Ref.</u>	<u>Did not have sex education in school (Q19)</u>	
a.	Sex education in school							
	<b><i>Based on total</i></b>	6	17	16	1	1	59	=100
	<b><i>Based on those who had sex ed. in school; n=510</i></b>	15	43	39	2	1	NA	=100
b.	Your parents	13	22	27	38	*	NA	=100

Q21. Thinking about your (AGE) year old, have you ever talked with him or her about...

***Based on parents with at least one child age 8 to 18, (target child chosen randomly for those with more than one child in age range); n=329***

		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK/ Ref.</u>	
a.	The basics of reproduction -- that is Athe birds and bees≡	79	21	0	=100
b.	HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases	80	20	0	=100
c.	Issues about relationships and becoming sexually active	63	37	*	=100
d.	The importance of using protection, such as condoms, to prevent pregnancy or disease if they become sexually active	52	48	0	=100

Q22. When you were growing up did your parents talk with YOU about (INSERT) or not?

		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK/ Ref.</u>	
a.	The basics of reproduction -- that is Athe birds and bees≡	41	58	1	=100
b.	Sexually transmitted diseases	21	78	1	=100
c.	Issues about relationships and becoming sexually active	31	68	1	=100
d.	The importance of using protection, such as condoms, to prevent pregnancy or disease if you became sexually active	25	75	*	=100

Q23. Compared to your parents when you were growing up, do you think, (you were/you are/you would be) more open with your child(ren) about sex and sexual issues in general, less open, or about as open as your parents were with you?

79 More open  
 2 Less open  
 17 About as open  
2 Don't know/Refused  
 100

Q24. Americans have different views about sexual issues. For each of the following statements, please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree. (First/Next)

	Strongly <u>agree</u>	Somewhat <u>agree</u>	Somewhat <u>disagree</u>	Strongly <u>disagree</u>	DK/ <u>Ref.</u>
a. Americans overall are uptight about sex and sexual issues	27	36	21	14	2 =100
b. I personally have a hard time talking about sex and sexual issues	11	22	25	41	1 =100
c. If Americans were more OPEN talking about sex there would be LESS of a problem with unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases in this country	41	27	16	14	2 =100
d. Sexual issues are private and should only be discussed among intimate couples	26	25	25	23	1 =100

Q25. In general, which do you think makes for a BETTER SEX life. . . .

85 Long-term monogamous relationships  
 9 Several relationships with different partners over a life time  
6 Don't know /Refused  
 100



Q26. What is your opinion about a married person having sexual relations with someone other than their marriage partner--is it always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all?

		<u>January 1991*</u>
79	Always	71
12	Almost always	17
6	Sometimes	10
2	Not wrong at all	1
<u>1</u>	Don=t know/Refused	<u>1</u>
100		100

\*PSRA for Troika Productions and Lifetime Television

Q27. For each of the following statements, please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree.

		<u>Strongly</u> <u>agree</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>agree</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>disagree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>disagree</u>	<u>DK/</u> <u>Ref.</u>
a	In general Americans have a hard time talking about sex and sexual issues	27	39	19	13	2 =100
b.	Making sex a forbidden subject only encourages young people to want to have sex	36	29	18	16	1 =100
c.	Sometimes it is harder for couples to TALK about sexual issues like birth control and sexually transmitted diseases than to HAVE sex	29	38	17	13	3 =100

**READ:** Now some questions about you . . .

Q28. How would you rate your SEX life these days? Please use a ten point scale, where ten means great and one means terrible.

15	10
7	9
18	8
11	7
7	6
11	5
1	4
2	3
2	2
8	1
10	Not applicable/Abstinent (VOL.)
<u>8</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

6.77 *Mean*

7.00 *Median*

Q29. Are you currently married, LIVING AS married, widowed, divorced, separated, or have you never been married?

56	Married
4	Living as married
8	Widowed
10	Divorced
3	Separated
19	Never married
*	Gay (VOL.)
<u>0</u>	Refused
100	

Q30. Are you currently involved in a sexual relationship?

***Based on those not currently married or living as married; n=479***

38	Yes
60	No
<u>2</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

## CURRENT RELATIONSHIP STATUS (Q29, Q30):

60	Married/Living as
15	Unmarried and involved
24	Unmarried and not involved
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

Q31. How long have you (been married /been together with this person)?

*Based on those married, living as married, or involved in a sexual relationship; n=916*

20	2 years or less
25	3 to 9 years
20	10 to 19 years
35	20 years or more
<u>*</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

Q32. These next few questions are about your sexual health and behavior. Please keep in mind that all of your answers are private. First, have you had sexual intercourse within the last TWELVE months?

75	Yes
20	No
<u>5</u>	Don't know /Refused
100	

Q33. Have you ever had sexual intercourse?

98	Yes
2	No
<u>*</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

Q34. Did you have sex before you got married?

*Based on those currently or ever married, n=910*

66	Yes
30	No
<u>4</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

- Q35. Since you become sexually active, about how many sexual partners have you had? Would you say more than twenty, eleven to twenty, seven to ten, three to six, two or one?

*Based on those who have had intercourse; n=1173*

29	One
11	Two
24	3 to 6
11	7 to 10
10	11 to 20
9	More than 20
<u>6</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

- Q36. How often (do you and your spouse /do you and your partner/did you and your most recent partner) have sex . . .

*Based on those who have had intercourse (excluding widows and widowers not currently involved in a relationship); n=1109*

9	Everyday or almost everyday
33	Several times a week
28	About once a week
11	About once a month
10	Less often than that
<u>9</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

- Q37. In general, how do think you compare with most of Americans your AGE...

- a. Are you MORE comfortable talking about sexual issues than most Americans your AGE, LESS comfortable, or about as comfortable?

34	More comfortable
10	Less comfortable
51	About as comfortable
<u>5</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

*Question 37 continued . . .*

- b. Do you think (you and your spouse have/you and your partner have/you and your most recent partner had) a BETTER sex life than most of Americans your age, NOT as good as sex life, or about the same?

*Based on those who have had intercourse (excluding widows and widowers not currently involved in a relationship); n=1109*

29	Better
9	Not as good
53	About the same
<u>9</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

- Q38. How often do you think the average American couple your AGE has sex . . .

7	Everyday or almost everyday
28	Several times a week
36	About once a week
10	About once a month
4	Less often than that
<u>15</u>	Don't know /Refused
100	

- Q39. Thinking about (your SEXUAL relationship with your spouse, how often do you feel that the SEXUAL relationship is/your SEXUAL relationship with your partner, how often do you feel that the SEXUAL relationship your most recent SEXUAL relationship, how often did you feel that the SEXUAL relationship was) (INSERT) always, often, sometimes, or hardly ever?

*Based on those who have had intercourse (excluding widows and widowers not currently involved in a relationship); n=1109*

		<u>Always</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Some- times</u>	<u>Hardly ever</u>	<u>Never (VOL.)</u>	<u>DK/ Ref.</u>	
a.	Loving	62	17	12	4	1	4	=100
b.	Passionate	40	26	21	6	1	6	=100
c.	Routine	10	13	32	32	6	7	=100
d.	Creative	19	22	37	12	2	8	=100

- Q40. How often (do you and your spouse/do you and your partner/did you and your most recent partner) (INSERT) very often, often, sometimes, or hardly ever?

***Based on those who have had intercourse (excluding widows and widowers not currently involved in a relationship); n=1109***

	<u>Very often</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Some- times</u>	<u>Hardly ever</u>	<u>Never (VOL.)</u>	<u>DK/ Ref.</u>	
a. Do romantic things like eat by candlelight	8	18	35	30	6	3	=100
b. Act out your fantasies together	4	10	28	39	12	7	=100
c. <b><i>Based on women; n=564</i></b> Wear sexy lingerie	9	10	28	35	12	6	=100
d. Try different sexual positions	11	19	35	23	4	8	=100
e. Read books or watch videos about improving your sex life	2	3	14	52	26	3	=100
f. Go out on special evenings or A dates= or go away for weekends alone	11	22	37	22	5	3	=100

- Q41. Still thinking about (your sexual relationship with your spouse, your sexual relationship with your partner/your most recent sexual relationship) please tell me whether each of the following topics is something you would (like/have liked) to talk about MORE, something you (talk/talked) about enough, or something that you (don=t/didn=t) need to talk about at all?

***Based on those who have had intercourse (excluding widows and widowers not currently involved in a relationship); n=1109***

	<u>More</u>	<u>Enough</u>	<u>No need to talk about</u>	<u>DK/ Ref.</u>	
a. Concerns about AIDS or HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases	12	34	51	3	=100
b. Birth control	8	27	62	3	=100
c. Your sex life generally	19	44	33	4	=100
d. Your sexual wants and desires	21	45	30	4	=100

READ: Now I have just a few more questions so we can learn more about the people who took part in our survey . . .

**Q42. RECORD RESPONDENT=S GENDER**

48	MALE
<u>52</u>	FEMALE
100	

**Q43. And, what is your age?**

23	18-29
21	30-39
19	40-49
14	50-59
22	60 plus
<u>1</u>	Refused
100	

**Q44. What is the LAST grade or class you completed in school?**

4	None, or grade 1 to 8
13	High school incomplete (Grades 9 - 11)
34	High school graduate (Grade 12), GED
3	Business, technical or vocational school after high school
23	Some college, no four-year degree
14	College graduate, four-year degree
8	Post-graduate or professional schooling, after college
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

**Q45. Are you, yourself, of Hispanic or Latino background, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or some other Spanish background?**

7	Yes
92	No
<u>1</u>	Don't know/Refused
100	

Q46. What is your race? Are you white, black or African American, Asian or some other race?

84	White
11	Black
1	Asian
3	Other or Mixed race
<u>1</u>	Don=t know/Refused
100	

Q47. Last year, that is in 1997, what was your total family income from all sources, BEFORE taxes? Just stop me when I get to the right category.

6	Less than \$10,000
12	\$10,000 to under \$20,000
18	\$20,000 to under \$30,000
16	\$30,000 to under \$40,000
18	\$40,000 to under \$60,000
13	\$60,000 to under \$100,000
6	\$100,000 or more
<u>11</u>	Don=t know /Refused
100	

**READ:** Thank you very much for taking the time to answer the questions on this survey. We really appreciate it. Have a nice day/evening.