

**Contraception and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI's) - Why do we need to know about these issues?**

**AIMS:**

1. To help make young people understand the full impact of early sexual activity on their sexual health.
2. To review the myths surrounding Contraception and STI's.
3. To give young people the confidence to increase their awareness of sexual health.

**RESOURCES:**

**Teacher-** Flip chart and/or White board.

True/False statements with Answers for *Contraception* and for *STIs*.

Useful websites/helplines handout.

**Students-** Pens & paper.

**Sensitivity** - Teachers need to ensure all sex education is delivered within 'a context of the importance of relationships' (PHSE KS3/4). This lesson plan is intended for students as one part of six lessons within the 'Sexuality' module.

**Timing:**

00.00H

**INTRODUCTION**

Preparing young people for their journey onwards into adulthood necessarily includes the teaching of all aspects of sexual health. Although it is often one of the most difficult topics to talk about openly, by exploring these areas in the safe environment of

school, young people are better equipped to make informed choices when presented with a new and potentially dangerous situation.

In general, most students will have had some structured sex education delivered at school, usually Science KS2, and, thereafter, through further sex education in individual schools. They also learn about sex education from their parents, friends, and through the media such as T.V., Film, Magazines & Newspapers, and increasingly from the Internet. For these reasons, each students' knowledge will be individual and varied. Whilst it will be necessary to assume some

pre-knowledge, it will be useful to re-visit sexual health issues to ensure a consistent learning base.

The main purpose of this session is for each student to become better informed, to know where to go for more information/help, and to have increased self-confidence in their understanding of sexual health issues.

#### **LESSON CONTENT AND PROCEDURE**

Using the above introduction as a scene setter for the class, now take them through the Aims of the lesson.

**Task 1**                      **What are the consequences for boys and girls of early sexual activity?**

#### **00.05H**

Divide the class into two i.e. 'A' and 'B', then break into groups of 4-6 students. 'A' groups will look at the above question from a boy's perspective, leaving 'B' groups to consider the girl's point of view, (mainly considering this within their own age range). Each group will need pen & paper, and they should try to note six or more possible outcomes from engaging in a sexual relationship. These consequences/possible outcomes

will be used to feedback to the whole class. It can be done in single sex groups or mixed groups, and this may have some impact on the answers supplied.

Allow 5 minutes.

Report back onto flipchart/white board, taking input from each group, charting by gender their responses, note differences/similarities in the consequences of early sexual activity. Summarise their findings, and get the class to offer their conclusions.

Allow 10 minutes.

The sort of concerns raised could include: unwanted pregnancy, STI's, emotional distress, confusion, parental disapproval, peer group pressure, loss of friendship, reputation, anxiety, change to school performance, etc. Students should be able to see that the potentially negative impact on their health is great, both for boys and girls. As we have now got some degree of understanding about the need for good sexual health awareness, let us look at how much the students really know about Contraception and STIs.

**Task 2 Myths and Misconceptions about Contraception and STI's.**

**00.20H CONTRACEPTION**

In these groups of 4-6 students, give a copy of the True or False Statement sheet about Contraception. Ask the groups to decide whether each of the ten statements is true or false. Encourage discussion within the groups so that they can understand how they arrived at their answer.

Allow 5 minutes.

Chart the answers 'True or False' of each group to all ten statements, in order that a combined class response can be seen. This can then be compared with the answer sheet, taking the class through each question and respective answer, one by one, drawing attention to any inconsistencies.

Allow 10 minutes

**Task 3 Myths and Misconceptions about Contraception and STIs.**

**00.35H SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS**

Again in these groups of 4-6 students, give a copy of the True or False Statement sheet about STIs. Ask the groups to decide whether each of the statements is

true or false. Encourage discussion within the groups so that they can understand how they arrived at their answer.

Allow 5 minutes.

Chart the answers 'True or False' of each group to the statements, in order that a combined class response can be seen. This can then be compared with the answer sheet, taking the class through each question and respective answer, one by one, drawing attention to any inconsistencies.

Allow 10 minutes.

**Task 4 Information Exchange (handout and/or OHP)**

**00.50H**

This last section is all about giving information - see handout titled 'Contraception & STIs - Useful Web sites/Helplines'. This gives details of where young people can find further reliable information that is easily accessible, and also details of where they can go for medical help and advice. More information may be available at their GP's surgery, at local health clinics and through searching on the Internet.

**FINAL DISCUSSION**

**00.55H**

Hopefully, students will be encouraged to continually update

and be aware of sexual health issues. We can all 'pick up' information daily from a wide variety sources from tabloid newspapers to conversations with friends. Not all of these will be completely correct, and young people need to be selective, and learn to look for information from sources they can trust.

The main purpose of this session is for each student to become

better informed, to know where to go for more information/help, and to have increased self-confidence in their understanding of sexual health issues.

#### **00.60H**

Our next lesson at this level is No.B.6.1

Other modules with links to this subject matter are: C.4



## TRUE OR FALSE STATEMENTS

### CONTRACEPTION

1. A GIRL CANNOT GET PREGNANT WHILST HAVING A PERIOD
2. WITHOUT USING CONTRACEPTION THERE IS A 1 IN 3 CHANCE OF GETTING PREGNANT
3. CONTRACEPTION IS DIFFICULT TO GET HOLD OF AND IS EXPENSIVE
4. WITHDRAWING BEFORE EJACULATION IS A METHOD OF CONTRACEPTION
5. IF A GIRL GOES TO THE LOO AFTER HAVING SEX, SHE WON'T GET PREGNANT
6. A DOCTOR CANNOT TELL YOUR PARENTS YOU ARE HAVING SEX
7. THE PILL DOES NOT HAVE ANY SIDE EFFECTS
8. PREGNANCY TESTING KITS BOUGHT FROM CHEMISTS ARE TOTALLY UNRELIABLE
9. THE BARRIER METHOD OF CONTRACEPTION STOPS THE SPERM GETTING THROUGH
10. IF YOUR CONDOM SPLITS OR YOU FORGET TO TAKE YOUR PILL YOU CAN CROSS YOUR LEGS AND FINGERS



## TRUE OR FALSE STATEMENTS

### CONTRACEPTION - THE ANSWERS

#### 1. A GIRL CANNOT GET PREGNANT WHILST HAVING A PERIOD

**False.** In order to get pregnant, an egg needs to meet a sperm, and the fertilised egg needs to implant in the womb. This will only be possible at certain times of the menstrual cycle. The chances depend on the length of the menstrual cycle, and it is important to be aware that the cycle can be affected by various factors, including stress, and change of diet. In addition, sperm can survive inside the woman's body for a number of days, so having sex during a period can be risky.

#### 2. WITHOUT USING CONTRACEPTION THERE IS A 1 IN 3 CHANCE OF GETTING PREGNANT

**True.** Even with it, whatever method is chosen, it must be used as directed to be sure of reliability.

#### 3. CONTRACEPTION IS DIFFICULT TO GET HOLD OF, AND IS EXPENSIVE

**False.** Contraception is not expensive or difficult to get hold of. Most forms of contraception are free on the NHS, GPs or local family planning clinics.

#### 4. WITHDRAWING BEFORE EJACULATION IS A METHOD OF CONTRACEPTION

**False.** This is not safe as often a tiny amount of sperm is released before ejaculation, which can lead to pregnancy.

#### 5. IF A GIRL GOES TO THE LOO AFTER HAVING SEX, SHE WON'T GET PREGNANT

**False.** It is unlikely that anyone would believe this.

#### 6. A DOCTOR CANNOT TELL YOUR PARENTS YOU ARE HAVING SEX

**True.** Under the law, a doctor can provide contraception for young people under the age of 16 without parental agreement, if the young person is considered mature enough.

#### 7. THE PILL DOES NOT HAVE ANY SIDE EFFECTS

**False.** The combined pill can cause weight gain and/or skin problems. In a small number of women it can cause serious side effects such as blood clots, and cancer of the breast or cervix: but it protects against cancer of the ovary and womb. The progestogen-only pill may cause minor side effects such as irregular bleeding. Not all methods of contraception are suitable for everyone.

**8. PREGNANCY TESTING KITS BOUGHT FROM CHEMISTS ARE TOTALLY UNRELIABLE**

**False.** Exact figures for all the testing kits are not available, but they are claimed to be very accurate if done at the right time.

**9. THE BARRIER METHOD OF CONTRACEPTION STOPS THE SPERM GETTING THROUGH**

**True.** One of the easiest and most effective ways of preventing pregnancy is to put a barrier in the way. In other words, physically stop the sperm from reaching the egg. There are several barrier methods available. Male and female condoms are probably the best known, however, the female diaphragm and cap are also available.

## TRUE OR FALSE STATEMENTS

### CONTRACEPTION - THE ANSWERS (cont'd)

10. IF YOUR CONDOM SPLITS OR YOU FORGET TO TAKE YOUR PILL YOU CAN CROSS YOUR LEGS AND FINGERS

False. It is unlikely anyone would really believe this.

*The information given here is correct at the time of going to press but may not be fully inclusive. Marriage Care strongly recommends that GP/NHS clinics should be referred to for expert advice on all issues relating to sexual health. In providing this information, it should not be assumed at all that Marriage Care is recommending the use of Contraception or Sexual Activity for young people. However, the organisation is concerned at current levels of teenage pregnancy in the UK and the relative lack of helpful and straightforward information available for young people in this area of their lives. Clearly, just telling young people not to engage in sexual activity is not something that is working, and might be ill-considered or naïve. We have therefore provided these lesson plans on the basis that teachers in schools will use the material wisely in order to offer information and support to the young people in their care. We would also recommend a wide number of teaching programmes on sexual health matters and these can generally be found on websites on this issue.*

## TRUE OR FALSE STATEMENTS

### SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

1. THERE ARE VERY FEW TYPES OF SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STI's)
2. YOU CAN TELL WHEN SOMEONE HAS AN STI
3. THE PILL IS GREAT FOR PROTECTING YOU FROM PREGNANCY AND STI's
4. USING A CONDOM WILL STOP MOST STI's
5. IF YOU'VE GOT THRUSH, YOU MUST BE SEXUALLY ACTIVE
6. HIV IS THE MOST SERIOUS STI
7. SAFE SEX IS ABOUT NOT GETTING PREGNANT OR INFECTED
8. IF I THINK I AM INFECTED, I SHOULD JUST STOP HAVING SEX



## TRUE OR FALSE STATEMENTS

### SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS - THE ANSWERS

#### 1. THERE ARE VERY FEW TYPES OF SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STI's)

**False.** There are at least 25 different sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including chlamydia, gonorrhoea and genital herpes. STIs are some of the commonest infections around the world, and affect people of all ages, races, and sexuality. As well as being easy to catch, a person is more at risk from HIV if they have sex with someone who is already infected with an STI.

#### 2. YOU CAN TELL WHEN SOMEONE HAS AN STI

**False.** Often there are no obvious symptoms, so it is not possible know if someone has or has not got a STI just by looking at them. In the case of chlamydia, in women, this infection often produces no symptoms, but can block the fallopian tubes, causing fertility problems later. There may be a slight discharge or pain on peeing. In men, it often affects the urethra (the tube that carries urine from the bladder, and semen), and causes marked symptoms such as discharge or pain on peeing, described as 'non-specific urethritis' ('NSU').

#### 3. THE PILL IS GREAT FOR PROTECTING YOU FROM PREGNANCY AND STI's

**False.** The pill is the most fool proof method of contraception, but it won't protect from STI's.

#### 4. USING A CONDOM WILL STOP MOST STI's

**True.** STIs are usually passed on by sex with an infected person, though some can be passed on in other ways as well. They can be caught during oral, vaginal or anal sex. Using a male or female condom will stop the transmission of most STIs.

#### 5. IF YOU'VE GOT THRUSH YOU MUST BE SEXUALLY ACTIVE

**False.** Common symptoms include unusual discharge and itching in the genital area. Thrush is not necessarily sexually transmitted; for instance, it could be the side effects of taking some medication. However, as the symptoms of thrush could also be the sign of sexually transmitted infections, it is always a good idea to get a check up with a doctor or at a sexual health clinic.

## 6. HIV IS THE MOST SERIOUS STI

**True.** Human Immunodeficiency Virus is the most serious STI. It damages the body's defence system so that it cannot fight off certain infections. Most people who have HIV look and feel healthy, often for 10 years or more, and they may not know they have the virus. However, they can pass it on to other people through semen, blood, and vaginal fluids. When someone with HIV goes on to get certain illnesses, this condition is called AIDS

## 7. SAFE SEX IS ABOUT NOT GETTING INFECTED

**True.** It can be difficult and embarrassing to confront a partner about the possibility of infection. However, without some form of protection, individuals could be putting their health and life at risk. Safer sex means considering all of these issues, and actually doing something about them.

## TRUE OR FALSE STATEMENTS

### SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS - THE ANSWERS (Continued)

## 8. IF I THINK I AM INFECTED I SHOULD JUST STOP HAVING SEX

**False.** Some STI's can cause permanent damage to health if left untreated. Anyone concerned that they might have an infection should visit their GP, or NHS sexual health clinic, for free confidential treatment.

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## CONTRACEPTION & STI's - USEFUL WEB SITES/HELPLINES

Some sources of information and help about all aspects of sexual health - always consult your GP for expert advice.

**AVERT** for teenagers thinking about sexual health and relationships. [www.avert.org.uk](http://www.avert.org.uk)

**Boots Learning Store** This interactive guide to many methods of contraception lists the pros and cons of each. Aimed at 11-16 year olds, the guide includes a quiz with exam-style questions. <http://www.bootslearningstore.com/ks4/contra.htm>

**I Wanna Know** From the American Social Health Association. Answers to your questions about teen sexual health and sexually transmitted infections. Includes various games, and a glossary. <http://www.Iwannaknow.org>

**Like it is.** The site includes an interactive guide to methods of contraception, contraception and the law, and what to do if you've had unprotected sex and don't want to get pregnant. <http://www.likeitis.org.uk/contraception.html>

**Pupiline** Written for people like you, by people like you. Includes real stories by girls who have become pregnant themselves.

<http://www.pupiline.net/features/sexandyou/0105087231337.cfm>

**Ruthinking** Includes a search engine to help you find and make an appointment with a variety of services in your local area, dealing with everything from 'Pregnancy Testing' and 'Free condoms' to 'Rape/Abuse' and 'Counselling'.

<http://www.ruthinking.co.uk/>

*The above listed sites were taken from the **A pause** website at [www.ex.ac.uk](http://www.ex.ac.uk)*

[www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk) Try the BBC website for very useful information on all the above and much more. See links to Women's Health, and Sex and Sexual Health.

[www.teen4info](http://www.teen4info)

[www.fpa.org.uk](http://www.fpa.org.uk) The Family Planning Association web site together with the Contraceptive Education Service (England) - a confidential helpline providing information on all methods of contraception, sexual health. and local clinics **Tel** 0845 310 1334

[www.hpe.org.uk](http://www.hpe.org.uk) the National Health Service site for Health Promotion England.

[www.lovelife.uk.com](http://www.lovelife.uk.com) another NHS health promotion site with information on HIV & sexual health.

National Aids Helpline (NAH), always staffed for free and confidential telephone information. **Tel:** 0800 567 123

London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard, offering a range of services about sexual health. **Tel:** 020 7837 7324

Terrence Higgins Trust national helpline on STI's, **Tel:** 020 7242 1010

[www.teenagehealthfreak.org.uk](http://www.teenagehealthfreak.org.uk) Information about all aspects of health.

*Marriage Care has provided the above information on contraception and sexual issues but is, in no way, promoting the use of any method or effectiveness of any organisation or agency referred to.*