



# Sexual Health Reality Check

## *Young people deserve real information.*

By emphasizing **respect**, as well as protection methods like condoms and birth control, adults can discuss sex in a positive way with youth.

- ✓ **1 in 2** high school students have had sex
- ✓ 1 in 3 teens **do not** receive formal instruction about **contraceptive** use
- ✓ Teens who **do not use contraceptives** have an 85% chance of becoming **pregnant**

## *Youth receive mixed-messages.*

Teens learn about sex from parents, television, the internet, music, school, and their peers. Youth deserve to have an **accurate** understanding of sex.

- ✓ More than 80% of abstinence-only sexual education programs for youth contain **false or misleading** information about sexual health
- ✓ 44% of youth report using **the internet** as a primary source of sexual health information

## ***ASK** youth what information they need.*



## *Everyone deserves to feel safe.*

Sexuality is **complex and fluid**. Sexual behavior, feelings, and identity are not always the same.

- ✓ Youth of color who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ) experience higher rates of **homophobic violence** than their peers



For more information, check out <http://besafe.org/help/sexual-health>





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## Sexual Health Fact Sheet References

- ✓ **1 in 2** high school students have had sex<sup>1</sup>
- ✓ 1 in 3 teens **do not** receive formal instruction about **contraceptive** use<sup>2</sup>
- ✓ Teens who **do not use contraceptives** have an 85% chance of becoming **pregnant** within one year<sup>3</sup>
- ✓ Youth of color who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ) experience more **homophobic violence** than their peers<sup>4</sup>
- ✓ More than 80% of abstinence-only sexual education programs for youth contain **false or misleading** information about sexual health<sup>5</sup>
- ✓ 44% of youth report using **the internet** as a primary source of sexual health information<sup>6</sup>

- 1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Adolescent and School Health (2011). *Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System*. [http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/yrbs/pdf/us\\_overview\\_yrbs.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/yrbs/pdf/us_overview_yrbs.pdf)
- 2 Guttmacher Institute, Facts on American Teens Sexual and Reproductive Health (2012). Trussell J, Contraceptive failure in the United States, *Contraception*, 2011, 83(5):397-404., 2011 Martinez G, Abma J and Casey C, Educating teenagers about sex in the United States, *NCHS Data Brief*, 2010, No. 44. <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/FB-Teen-Sex-Education.html#11>
- 3 Advocates for Youth. (2007). *The Impact of Homophobia and Racism on GLBTQ Youth of Color*, <http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/425?task=view>
- 4 Special Investigations Division, U. S. House of Representatives, Committee on Government Reform (2004). *The Content of Federally Funded Abstinence-Only Education Programs*. Washington, DC:
- 5 Advocates for Youth. (2004). *Television and the Internet: An Important Source of Sexual Health Information for Youth*. Kaiser Family Foundation. *Generation RX.com: How Young People Use the Internet for Health Information: A Kaiser Family Foundation Survey*. Menlo Park, CA: The Foundation, 2001. [http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=438&Itemid=177](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=438&Itemid=177)

