

the **FACTS** on **TEEN PARENTING**



Teenage pregnancy can be a big crisis for a young girl and her family. If the young father is aware of the pregnancy, he and his family usually become involved in this life-changing event as well. Feelings of guilt, anger, and often denial are not uncommon.

Teenagers are not ready for parenthood. The demands of parenting will overtake a teenager's life and many will no longer be able to participate in the school and social activities that are common during the teenage years. Most teenage parents do not get married, and very few teenage mothers get any type of child support from the teenage father. The consequences of teenage pregnancy are serious and life-lasting.

TEENAGE PARENTS ARE FACED WITH MANY OBSTACLES.

- They are not able to support a child.
- They are often faced with dropping out of school.
- They are not prepared emotionally to care for a child.
- The responsibilities of raising a child can be overwhelming for teenagers.
- Family members may pressure the girl to either keep the baby or give the baby up for adoption.



the **STATISTICS** on **TEEN PREGNANCY** and **PARENTING**

Teenage pregnancy is associated with higher rates of illness and death for both the mother and infant. A female's pregnancy lasts approximately 9 months and is divided into three trimesters. During each trimester, it is important that the mother receives adequate nutrition and appropriate medical care and tests. Lack of prenatal care is often the reason teenage mothers and their babies develop complications during and after their pregnancy. Infants born to teenagers are more likely to be born at a low birth weight or prematurely.



- One in three teen mothers drop out of high school and many are expected to never finish a college education.
- Many teen mothers experience depression.
- Almost 80% of teen mothers end up on welfare.
- Daughters born to teen mothers are also likely to become teen mothers.
- Children of teen parents are more likely to be abused and/or neglected.
- Income for a teen mother is half that of women that have children in their 20's.
- Teen parents who get married are more likely to divorce.

The statistics prove that teen parents and children are at risk for problems in their future. It is important to consider these statistics and not become one of them. Preventing a teen pregnancy is easy to do by abstaining from sexual activity. Abstinence is 100% effective in preventing pregnancy. You will learn more about abstinence in the next article.

Discussion Questions

Does it surprise you that teenage mothers rarely marry the teenage father?

How do you think a teenager's social life is affected by a pregnancy?

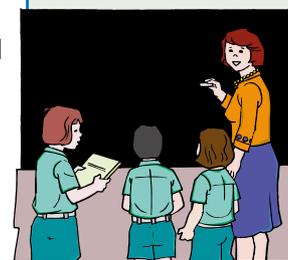
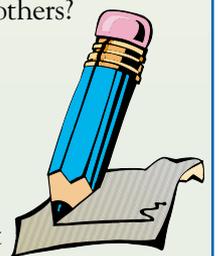
Activities

1. You learned from the article that teenagers who are faced with a pregnancy often have feelings of guilt, anger, and denial. In your own words, give the definition of "guilt", "anger", and "denial" and explain why these feelings might be common among teenagers that face a pregnancy.

2. In groups, discuss and list the costs associated with having and raising a child. Describe the steps a teenager might have to take in order to support a baby. Share this information with other groups.

3. In your own words, describe and list what you know about depression. Why do you think depression is common among teenage mothers? List your thoughts and comments.

4. Many teen parents drop out of school. In writing, describe the consequences of dropping out of school. What are the employment options for dropouts?



5. With your teacher leading this activity, create a two-column chart with the headings - **Teenager (non-parent)** and **Teenager (parent)**. Under each heading, list

the characteristics of a typical day each one is likely to experience.



Home Connection

With your parents, discuss how becoming a teen parent would affect your family. List the effects and complications. Write this information in your health journal.