

Reasons to Wait

1 To avoid pregnancy until marriage. Nearly 1 million teen pregnancies are reported annually. (Source: Centers for Disease Control)

3 To avoid death by fatal diseases, such as AIDS, which cause more than 16,000 deaths annually. (Centers for Disease Control)

2 To avoid sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). In the 1970s, only 2 STDs were common, and both were curable. Now 25 STDs have been identified, and several are incurable. Incurable STDs include genital herpes, human papilloma virus (HPV), and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). No drug can cure these diseases. Genital herpes, HPV, and syphilis can be transmitted by skin-to-skin contact, and condoms provide very little protection from them. (Centers for Disease Control, Dept. of Health and Human Services, New England Journal of Medicine, Journal of Infectious Diseases)

4 To avoid cervical cancer, pelvic inflammatory disease, and infertility. HPV is the cause of 90% of all cervical cancer. Gonorrhea and chlamydia cause pelvic inflammatory disease and infertility. (Centers for Disease Control, National Institutes of Health)

5 Abstinence is the only 100% reliable method of prevention. No birth control method—not even condoms—will guarantee safety from pregnancy or disease. Every method has a failure rate. In laboratory tests, condoms fail 3% of the time. In actual use, studies show that first-year condom users experience a 15% (1 in 7 uses) failure rate. (Centers for Disease Control, 1988 National Survey of Family Growth, Johns Hopkins Medical School)

6 You cannot tell who has a sexually transmitted disease. Nearly 1 in 5 adolescents and adults with sexual experience has an STD. Three million cases are reported among teens each year. It is estimated that 1 in 10 teenage girls has chlamydia—and she doesn't know it, because 75% of women have no symptoms. (Centers for Disease Control)

7 To increase your chance of a happy, lasting marriage. People who have sex before marriage and those who live with their partners before marriage have a greater chance of getting divorced. (Journal of Marriage and the Family)

8 Abstinence is becoming increasingly popular. More than 50% of high school students have never had sex. Even a recent men's magazine, one known for its disdain of abstinence, found that the number of college students who said they were virgins had doubled in recent years. Several surveys have shown that celibacy is increasing, even among those with previous sexual experience. (Centers for Disease Control)

9 To avoid the heartbreak, regret, and anger that sex outside of marriage brings. Many people regret it. They feel used and worthless, because they gave away something precious.

10 To maintain healthier dating relationships. Many couples have reported that having sex ruined their relationship. They stopped getting to know each other and focused on sex instead.

11 To make better decisions about a marriage partner. It is harder to break up with someone—even if he or she is not right for you—if you have had sex.

12 To grow in emotional maturity. Some people use sex as an escape from the disappointments and pain in life.

