

# EDUCATORS' REPORT

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## Reaching the...

When Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin educators enter a classroom, they typically have a box in which students can place anonymous questions. Often, these questions are very different than the ones that students ask during the workshop. They tend to include questions that students are too embarrassed (or just don't have the right words) to ask in public, but really need answers to.

### Here are some examples:

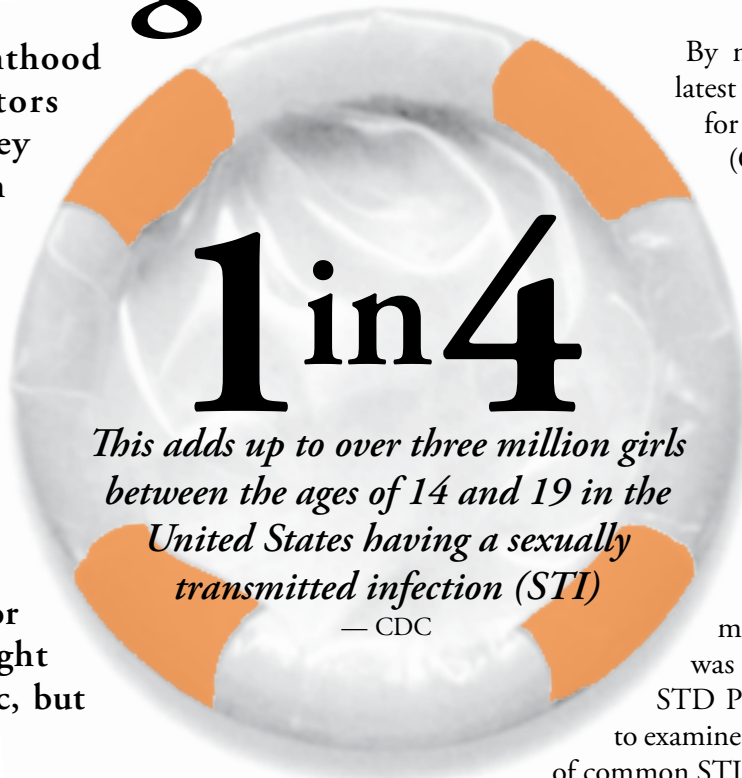
"What if both people in a relationship have an STD and they have unprotected sex... is there still a possibility for the baby not to have an STD?"

*High School Student, Madison*

"Is it true that if you stick your finger in your ear and get ear wax on it and you put it in the vagina of a girl you want to have sex with, she jumps if she has an STD?"

*8th grader, Milwaukee*

"Can you get AIDS without a condom if you wash your penis?" *7th grader, Milwaukee*



By now you've probably heard the latest statistics released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) stating that just over three million girls between the ages of 14 and 19 in the United States have a sexually transmitted infection (STI). That's one out of every four girls in our country. The African American community has been hit especially hard with this epidemic, where the ratio is closer to one in two girls. Among those young women infected with an STI, 15% had been diagnosed with more than one. The study, which was presented at the 2008 National STD Prevention Conference, is the first to examine the combined national prevalence of common STIs among adolescent women in the United States, and provides the clearest picture to date of the overall STI burden in adolescent women.<sup>1</sup>

Overall, approximately half of all the teens in the study reported ever having had sex. Among these girls, the STI prevalence was 40%. Even among girls reporting only one lifetime partner, one in five (20.4%) had at least one STI. Girls with three or more partners had a prevalence of over 50%. These diseases, which often have no symptoms, can lead to infertility or cancer if left untreated.

Even for those of us who routinely work with at risk youth, these numbers are shocking. Given the staggering amount of ignorance surrounding topics like sexuality, and the mythology used to answer questions adults aren't comfortable

discussing, maybe we shouldn't be. We also get questions like this in our same anonymous question box:

**“What if I am embarrassed to talk to my parents about sex and I want to know more about it?”**

*7th grade girl, Milwaukee*

The simple fact that adolescents are engaging in sexual activity should not mean that they are destined to get a disease or infection. Of the STIs reported in the CDC study, chlamydia and trichomoniasis are easily cured with simple antibiotics. Our young people deserve to know where and when to get screened, and to understand that a symptomless partner does not mean a disease-free partner. Transmission of herpes can be dramatically reduced if condoms are used during every act of sexual intercourse. The latest HPV vaccine on the market, Gardasil®, has the potential to greatly reduce the incidence of HPV if given to young women before they are exposed to the virus. What if our kids felt more comfortable talking with their parents and other trusted adults about difficult issues like sexuality? Could we turn the tide of this epidemic?

It's not realistic to hope that any one intervention can change the behaviors of our young people—whether we want them to abstain from sex until they are married, or to take care to protect themselves if they do choose to have sexual intercourse. That's why Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin offers a variety of programs to a variety of audiences. We offer workshops for parents and caregivers that help them learn how to communicate more effectively with their adolescents, giving them the background information and support they need to provide medically accurate, sound information within the values of their family. We provide resources for churches through the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC) so that issues surrounding sexuality can be

discussed openly and comfortably by church leaders and congregations. Our teen peer education program trains teens to become health promoters in their own communities, providing accurate information to peers who might not feel comfortable confiding in anyone else. We work in schools and community settings to teach young people that they have it in their power to have healthy, safe relationships and to take charge of their own bodies.

As the CDC study so eloquently points out, more work clearly needs to be done—in our homes, in our schools, in our churches and in our communities. Spearheaded by the American Social Health Association, April has been designated National STD awareness month, a time for all of us to tackle this issue head-on. In the long run, hopefully all of the youth in the communities we serve will be able to make comments like this one, left anonymously after a program.

**“I learned not to have sex until you're ready. Always have safe sex. Don't let people get in the way of setting your goals.”**

*6th grader, Milwaukee*

**For more information about sexually transmitted infections:**

**US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** [www.cdcnpin.org/scripts/std/index.asp](http://www.cdcnpin.org/scripts/std/index.asp)

**The American Social Health Association** [www.ashastd.org](http://www.ashastd.org)

**TeenWire** [www.teenwire.com](http://www.teenwire.com)

<sup>1</sup> Researchers looked at the four most common sexually transmitted diseases, human papillomavirus (HPV), chlamydia, herpes simplex virus, and trichomoniasis. Of these four, HPV (18%), and chlamydia (4%) were the most prevalent. Data were based on an analysis of the 2003-2004 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey.

## CONDOMS: TRY A LITTLE C&C

What is C&C? It's the name of a new workshop developed by our community education department to underscore that in order for condoms to work for disease prevention and birth control, they need to be used **CORRECTLY** and **CONSISTENTLY** each and every time a couple has sexual intercourse.

Condoms are one of the oldest forms of birth control. In 3000 BC, ancient Egyptian drawings portrayed men wearing condoms. Cave paintings in France dating from 100 AD show couples using condoms. Shakespeare mentioned them throughout his plays. Casanova used them. In 1844, Charles Goodyear patented the process for vulcanizing rubber, and the first actual “rubbers” went into mass production. By the mid-1930s, the 15 largest condom manufacturers in the United States were producing 1.5 million condoms a day.

Today, condoms are inexpensive, readily available, and easy to use. They are also the only contraceptive method on the market today that also prevents disease. So the mystery really is why, after 6000 years, do people still fail to use condoms correctly and consistently every time they have intercourse? Mythology about this device has been around probably as long as condoms themselves. How many times have you heard the following statements? “Condoms don't really work. They always break.” “They don't fit—they're too small.” “Condoms ruin the mood.” “They don't protect you from HIV.” Or perhaps even, “I'd be embarrassed to buy them.” Many reasons play into why couples may choose not to use protection when having intercourse.

# Condoms need to be used **CORRECTLY & CONSISTENTLY** each and every time a couple has sexual intercourse

## **BUT CONSIDER THE FACTS:**

**Condoms are 98% effective in preventing pregnancy when used consistently and correctly.**<sup>1</sup>

**Using a latex condom to prevent transmission of HIV is more than 10,000 times safer than not using a condom.**<sup>2</sup>

**Always using a condom during sex can reduce a woman's risk of acquiring HPV, the virus that causes cervical cancer, by up to 70%.**<sup>3</sup>

**Consistent use of condoms can also help people clear HPV infection and/or reduce their risk of re-infection.**<sup>4</sup>

Of course, no method is foolproof at preventing disease and unplanned pregnancy. However, proper use during every act of intercourse goes a long way in increasing the effectiveness of condoms. It is for this reason that our education department developed the C&C workshop. Created to dispel myths and generate familiarity with condom use, this session will increase participants' confidence and ability to use condoms and encourage positive attitudes towards condom use as a way to protect one's own health.

The C&C teaches proper use of condoms. We know that couples who are the most inexperienced at using condoms demonstrate the highest rates of condom failure.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, most reports of condom failure are the result of inconsistent or incorrect use, not breakage.<sup>6</sup> The C&C workshop provides participants with the information and skills that they need to use condoms effectively. Participants will have the opportunity to measure condoms to find out whether or not size really does matter, examine with different types of lubrication to find out what makes condoms break—and what makes them work better, learn about how to select and choose condoms and discuss all the steps that that go into effective condom use.

There are also condom negotiation role-plays to practice how to bring up the topic with a resistant sexual partner. By giving people the chance to talk about condoms and condom use openly and honestly in a comfortable setting, it is our hope that they will be more comfortable talking about and using condoms in an intimate setting.

Each year in the U.S. there are approximately 19 million new cases of sexually transmitted infections (STI), about half of which occur among youth ages 15-24. Untreated STIs can cause a host of medical complications, including infertility. STIs often have no noticeable symptoms and can be contracted from partners who have no idea they have an infection. Thus, using condoms the C&C way—**CORRECTLY** and **CONSISTENTLY**—every time a couple has intercourse is crucial to good reproductive health.

## **FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

Fact Sheet: *The Truth About Condoms* (SIECUS): <http://www.siecus.org/pubs/fact/fact0011.html>

*Condom Negotiation Skills* (American Social Health Association): [http://www.ashastd.org/condom\\_negotiation.cfm](http://www.ashastd.org/condom_negotiation.cfm)

## **TO SCHEDULE A C&C WORKSHOP:**

Michelle Angelroth, Community Educator, Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin, Inc.: 414-289-3786 or [michelle.angelroth@ppwi.org](mailto:michelle.angelroth@ppwi.org)

Molly Lancelot, School-based Programs Coordinator, Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin, Inc.: 414-289-8274, or [molly.lancelot@ppwi.org](mailto:molly.lancelot@ppwi.org)

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<sup>1</sup>J. Trussel, et al., "Contraceptive Failure in the United States: An Update." *Studies in Family Planning*, January/February 1990; 21(1):52.

<sup>2</sup>R. F. Carey, et al., "Effectiveness of Latex Condoms As a Barrier to Human Immunodeficiency Virus-sized Particles under the Conditions of Simulated Use." *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*, July/August 1992; 19(4):230.

<sup>3</sup>Rachel L. Winer, et. al. *Condom Use and the Risk of Genital Human Papillomavirus Infection in Young Women.* *New England Journal of Medicine*, 2006;354(25): 2645-54.

<sup>4</sup>Holmes KK et al. *Effectiveness of condoms in preventing sexually transmitted infections.* <http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/82/6/454.pdf>. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 2004; 82:454-461+ and Hogewoning CJA et al. *Condom use promotes regression of cervical intraepithelial neoplasia and clearance of human papillomavirus: a randomized clinical trial.* *International Journal of Cancer* 2003; 107:811-816.

<sup>5</sup>Lindberg LD, Sonenstein FL, Ku L, Levine G. *Young men's experience with condom breakage.* *Family Planning Perspectives* 1997; 29:128-131, 140.

<sup>6</sup>Macaluso, M et al.. *Mechanical failure of the latex condom in a cohort of women at high STD risk.* *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*. 1999 Sep;26(8):459-62.

**AUDIENCE:** High school students

**PURPOSE:** In an age of sexually transmitted infections (STI) and teen pregnancy, it is crucial that sexually active teens be able to use condoms correctly and consistently. Condoms are not only highly effective at preventing pregnancy, but also significantly reduce the risk of contracting an STI or HIV. This activity can be used within the broader context of a STI/HIV prevention workshop to stress how to use condoms correctly to maximize effectiveness and minimize breakage.

**TIME:** 10-15 minutes

**MATERIALS:** Prepare one set of action cards on 8.5" x 11" paper beforehand.

### Action Cards (in the correct order)

1. Talk to partner about condoms.
2. Decide to use a condom.
3. Check expiration date on package.
4. Sexual arousal and erection.
5. Carefully remove the condom from the package.
6. Place condom on tip of penis
7. Squeeze air out of the tip of condom.
8. Unroll condom over shaft of penis.
9. Sexual intercourse/ ejaculation.
10. Hold on to base of condom and withdraw.
11. Remove the condom.
12. Tie condom in knot and dispose.

### PROCEDURE:

1. Form a group of 12 participants. Give each an action card. Instruct the group to arrange themselves in a line, facing the class, according to the best sequence for using a male condom correctly.

### DISCUSSION:

**Are there any actions that belong in more than one place? Which ones?**

**Are there action steps that only men or women should do? Why?**

**Which actions are the hardest to talk about?**

**Which actions would be the most difficult to actually do? Why?**

**How do you feel about condoms and using them?**

# USING PEER INFLUENCE TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

*By Michelle Angelroth, Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin Community-based Educator*

When in Rome, do as the Romans, right? Most of us tend to conform to those around us when we're in a new situation: a new job, a new city, a new relationship. It's sometimes an important and useful skill, and teens are no exception. Think back to your teenage days. Do you remember making a decision based on how you thought your friends might feel about it? Maybe you decided to join a sports team, smoke a cigarette or buy a certain style of clothing to impress someone or to fit in and feel "normal." This kind of peer influence has been going on for generations. Rather than work against peer influence and its sometimes negative impact on youth, the Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin (PPWI) Teen Peer Education program makes the most of it, by providing positive, informative support to community teens.

PPWI's Teen Peer Education program provides an opportunity for young people to learn about sexual and reproductive health, and to share that knowledge with their peers in a variety of ways. Our Teen Peer Educators learn about reproductive anatomy, healthy relationships, setting sexual boundaries, partner negotiation, sexually transmitted infections, correct condom usage, birth control options and healthy decision-making. They also learn and practice presentation and event planning skills. In turn, they have opportunities to teach workshops to their peers, plan and host teen events, write newsletter articles, travel to local and national conferences, write and perform skits about sexual health and even record public service announcements.

While PPWI's Teen Peer Educators are learning and practicing a wide variety of skills that will help them during their school years and beyond, they also are earning valuable points toward incentives. For every hour that a Teen Peer Educator volunteers with the program, s/he earns points towards an educational scholarship to be provided when they complete their senior year of high school. This award can be used for tuition at a college, university, technical school or other institution of higher learning. There are

also opportunities for them to earn gift cards, snacks and other immediate rewards. However, one of the most significant benefits for our teens is the camaraderie that develops among the group. When asked what she enjoys most about the program, Fabrea' Norwood, a sophomore at Wauwatosa East High School, said, "I enjoy being with the teens that I work with and how we help each other out. They're becoming like a family to me."

The program serves the teens who participate, and in turn the teens serve their community. Teen Peer Educators become role models, leaders and resource for their friends and classmates. Not only do they debunk common myths about sexual and reproductive health and open the lines of communication among friends and family, but they also become a natural influence on what their peers view as acceptable and "cool." The more an audience feels they have in common with a presenter, the more likely they are to listen and respect what is said.

So how can the young people you know become involved with the Teen Peer Education program? Our next training program will begin in July 2008. (More information will be posted on our website: [www.ppwi.org/teens](http://www.ppwi.org/teens), as it becomes available.) New teens will meet our current teen peer educators, ask questions, learn about sexuality and practice facilitating the fun activities we use to reach youth. It's a great way for young people to decide if they want to apply to be in the next generation of Teen Peer Educators.

**For more information about the Teen Peer Educator program contact Michelle Angelroth, Community Educator, Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin, Inc. at 414-289-3786 or email [michelle.angelroth@ppwi.org](mailto:michelle.angelroth@ppwi.org) or log on at [www.ppwi.org/teens](http://www.ppwi.org/teens)**



PARENTS, CAREGIVERS, YOUTH DEVELOPMENT LEADERS, JOIN THE:

# Community Education Advisory Committee

The Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin Community Education Advisory Committee is a volunteer group of parents, caregivers and youth development leaders who believe in educating teens about all aspects of their sexual and reproductive health and will meet quarterly at changing locations.

The committee will review current PPWI educational curricula, bring ideas and resources to the table, facilitate workshops as volunteer educators (if interested), and discuss how to effect positive change regarding culturally relevant, responsible sexuality education in our communities.

**To join the committee, please contact Aimee Gironimi, PPWI Vice President of Education, at 414-289-3783 or e-mail: [aimee.gironimi@ppwi.org](mailto:aimee.gironimi@ppwi.org)**



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