

Do's and Don'ts

Parents, Teens, and *The Talk*

Remember....

- You're the adult—be confident and serious in what you're telling your teen. If you're unsure or don't take it seriously, they won't.
 - If you're not talking to them about sex, chances are someone else is.
 - Every teen is different, what works for some might not work for others. These tips are guidelines, because you know your teen and family dynamic best.
 - It's not one *talk*, it's an 18-year conversation.
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Do....

- Do use the real names of body parts (no ding-a-lings, private squares, or special places.)
 - Do pick up on cues that your teen is thinking about relationships, sex, and contraception. For example, if your teen talks about friends who have gone on the pill, or a rumor someone had sex, that's an opening that they're comfortable and interested in talking to you.
 - Do take cues from what is going on in the media.
 - Do feel free to give them a book about sexual health and puberty that they can read privately.
 - Do allow your teen to express their thoughts without feeling judged.
 - Do have the conversation in a private, but escapable place. Think bedroom, not car.
 - Do expect that your child may not respond, but will listen.
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Don't....

- Don't have the conversation in front of others.
 - Don't start the conversation with loaded questions and assumptions like "Are you having sex?", or "Well, I know you're not having sex, but..."
 - Don't start the conversation with a quiz. i.e: "Do you know what...condoms...are?"
 - Don't feel like you have to get everything you want to say out in one sitting.
 - Don't be afraid to use controversial media topics, like campus rape or scandals. Teens say this is a great jumping off point to serious, adult conversations about their own values and opinions.
 - Don't lead the conversation by telling your teen what to think, or assume they hold the same opinions as you.
 - Don't use props, dolls, or drawings.
 - Don't give them advanced warning the conversation will be happening.
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For more tips, resources and helpful information for parents visit: <http://thenationalcampaign.org/featured-topics/parents>