

tips for parents

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP YOUR TEEN DAUGHTERS

- 1. Talk to your daughters about love, sex, and how to tell the difference.** Talk openly about heartbreak and how to avoid it—and how to recover—because by the time they graduate, 60% of high school girls say they've had their hearts broken. Talk about relationships, and what good and bad ones look like. Talk about protecting their feelings and protecting their bodies. And yes, talk about sex. You don't need to be a biology expert. You just need to know that what you say and how you say it matters when they are freshmen and still matters senior year and beyond.
- 2. Don't let the conversation stop when your daughters leave high school.** Girls who are about to graduate say that they want to hear from their parents on issues of love and relationships just as much after high school as they did while still in high school. And 40% of 12th grade girls say they still want their parents' help in getting birth control after high school. Keep talking. Even if they act like they don't want to hear from you, even if you feel like you've said it all before. You don't matter less just because your teens are growing up.
- 3. Talk openly about contraception.** Even if you don't have all the answers, it's important for your daughters to know how you feel about too-early pregnancy and parenthood, and how to prevent it. Girls who have spoken to their parents about these issues are more likely to have healthier, more confident attitudes about sex and relationships. What you say has a real impact: two-thirds of 12th grade girls who use contraception say they do so because they don't want to disappoint their parents by getting pregnant. Among those who have not yet had sex, one in five say they are waiting specifically because they don't want their parents to find out that they are having sex.
- 4. Encourage your daughter to use contraception if she is having sex.** Many girls forgo protection because they don't want their parents to find out. As challenging as it may be to come to terms with your daughter having sex and using birth control, it will be much more difficult to find out she's pregnant.
- 5. Show some love for waiting.** The 12th grade girls who answered our survey were loud and clear that sex can wait. Many of those who have had already had sex admit that rushing into it is something they regret. If your daughter isn't sure whether she's ready for sex or even how to tell, help her feel confident enough to wait. 43% of girls who have had sex say they wish they'd waited longer. Tell your daughter she can always say no—even if she's said yes before.
- 6. Help your daughters feel confident.** You can't do this for them, but you can help them pursue opportunities that build self-esteem. Nearly half of all 12th grade girls wish they'd been more confident in their romantic lives in high school. Two out of three say they look forward to feeling more confident in the years immediately after they graduate.