



Christian Voices for Life

Weekly Pro-Life

Education

Prayer

Action

Why are Teens at Higher Risk for Harm from STIs?



Education: More than half of the nearly 20 million new sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are among young people age 15 – 24. (1) This is in spite of the fact teens are having less sex than in previous years (not necessarily for good reasons). (2) An article from Natural Womanhood (1) explains that there are two major reasons why teens are more at risk than adults. First, teens are more likely to engage in risky behavior. The area of the brain involved in good decision-making is not fully developed until age 25. The earlier someone begins to be sexually active, the more likely they are to have 2 or more sexual partners in the past year, and the more likely

they are to have had an STI in the past year. Secondly, the cervix of teen girls is also immature and more prone to infection than older women. In addition, the use of hormonal contraceptives blocks the natural ebb and flow of reproductive hormones which contributes to the maturation of the cervix, so that teens using such contraceptives can have an extended period of increased vulnerability to STIs.

So, what are the long-term repercussions of getting an STI? Some viral infections such as Herpes and HPV (human papilloma virus) can be life-long infections. Certain strains of HPV can lead to cervical cancer. Some STIs can be treated with antibiotics, but some, like gonorrhea, are becoming increasingly resistant to antibiotics. STIs can also lead to Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID), which is a serious infection diagnosed in over a million women a year, and is most common between the ages of 15 and 25. While PID can be treated, the resulting scar tissue can cause lasting effects, such as infertility, ectopic pregnancy, and chronic pain.

1. <https://naturalwomanhood.org/teen-sexually-transmitted-infection/>
2. [The connection between decreased teen sex and mental health](#)



Prayer: Dear Jesus, please help all women to be informed about the serious health risks of sexually transmitted infections. Help parents to teach their children to understand the value of God's plan for sexual expression within marriage, and to resist the world's message that sexual activity is normal among any consenting adults. Please help doctors to be informed themselves not only about STIs and the increased susceptibility of teens, but also the risks of contraceptives. Help doctors to be willing to encourage teens to make a healthy decision to delay sexual activity, and that they are capable of making that decision.



Action: Spread the word on the dangers of STIs to young women you know who may be sexually active. Let your friends know about [Natural Womanhood's Mothers of \(Pre\)Teens course](#) where Mom and daughter can learn together about female fertility and healthy ways to manage periods. One fee allows access to the online materials for a year. Find out about what your local schools are using to teach about sexuality. One organization that teaches

abstinence at several levels is called 180 degrees. See <https://180degreestx.com/reasons-for-abstinence-education> for more information or to invite a speaker to speak to your church or school group.