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### **Teens and Sex**

#### **Sexual Abstinence Theory Proved Wrong**

While the federal government spends roughly \$176 million annually on abstinence-until-marriage education, a scientific study, mandated by Congress, has found that students involved in a sexual abstinence programs were as likely to have sex within a few years as those who did not.

The study, conducted by Mathematica Policy Research Inc. also found that the students who participated in the abstinence classes give an account of having similar numbers of sexual partners as those who did not attend the classes. The age the participating students had their initial sexual experience was relatively equal to their control group – 14.9 years old.

Commenting on the results, a senior researcher at Mathematica who oversaw the study noted that first, there was lack of any proof that the programs augmented the rate of sexual abstinence and second, there was no proof that the programs improved the rate of unprotected sex.

#### **Study Finds Most Teens' Mental Health Unaffected By Nonmarital Sex**

In a study entitled, "Adolescent First Sex and Subsequent Mental Health," published in the May issue of the *American Journal of Sociology*, Ann Meier, University of Minnesota assistant professor of sociology, tracked 8,563 seventh- through 12th-graders over an 18-month period, measuring for depression and low self-esteem. Meier studied the mental health of teens that had no sex to teens who were virgins at the beginning of the study, but later lost their virginity in the 18-month period.

While the majority of teens studied did not feel any depression as the result of first-time sex, some of those younger than 14, whose encounters were not emotionally strong and dissolved after sex, were susceptible to depression. Meier did emphasize while half the teen population is having sex, it was important to still be vigilant to the vulnerable minority, as their numbers still are sizeable.

#### **Study: More Than 9 Out of 10 Americans Had Premarital Sex**

In a study interviewing over 38,00 people (about 33,000 of them women) in 1982, 1988, 1995 and 2002 for the federal National Survey of Family Growth, has found that 9 out 10 Americans engaged in premarital sex. And the high rates even apply to women that were born in the 1940s, shattering the illusion that women were more virtuous in the past.

What's more, the data shows that even for those who had sexual abstinence until 20 years old, 80% participated in premarital sex. The study's author, Lawrence Finer, commented that since almost everyone will engage in premarital sex, it makes more sense to spend money on educating young people with the skills and education needed to be sexually active.

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**Source: When It Comes to Abstinence Teens, Adults Aren't Speaking the Same Language**  
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