



OVERVIEW

BIG IDEA

Abstinence is the only 100% effective way to prevent pregnancy.

OBJECTIVE

4.5 Compare and contrast the benefits of and barriers to practicing abstinence.

AGENDA

1. Data analysis & Discussion
2. Abstinence Reading
3. CDC Data Analysis
4. Assessment

HOMEWORK

Identify three strategies or “refusal skills” one could use to resist the pressure to have sex.

LESSON 4.5

Abstinence

SUMMARY:

This lesson introduces students to the benefits and challenges with practicing abstinence. The lesson is rooted in data, in order to approach this topic from a neutral standpoint. Students will begin by analyzing a brief data set on intended vs. unintended pregnancies. Then they will discuss some thought questions and complete a very short, simple reading explaining abstinence. Finally, students will assess two graphs showing some surprising trends about sexual activity among teenagers.

STANDARDS:

NHES 1.12.7: Compare and contrast the benefits of and barriers to practicing a variety of healthy behaviors.



MODULE 4: SEXUAL HEALTH LESSON 4.5

Abstinence

Obj. 4.5: Compare and contrast the benefits of and barriers to practicing abstinence.

Review the data on teen pregnancy and birth rates and answer the questions that follow.

Table 1

U.S. teenage pregnancy and birth rates are high compared to other developed countries.

International Data	U.S.	France	Germany	Netherlands	Canada	UK
Pregnancy rate (2002–5)	72.2	25.7	18.8	11.8	29.2	41.3 ^Δ
Birth rate (2006)	41.9	7.8	10.1	3.8	13.3	26.7

Rates are listed as numbers per 1000 girls 15–19 years old, ^15–18 years old [1]–[4].

Source: [PloS One. 2011; 6\(10\): e24658](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3194801/table/pone-0024658-t001/). Published online 2011 October 14. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0024658

1. Which country has the highest pregnancy rate? _____
2. Which country has the highest birth rate? _____
3. Which country has the lowest pregnancy rate? _____
4. Which country has the lowest birth rate? _____
5. List 3 or more factors you believe might be leading to much higher pregnancy and birth rates in the U.S. than these other countries?

DISCUSS Considering the high teen pregnancy and birth rates in the U.S., what do you think should be done to reduce the crisis of teen pregnancy in our country?

DO NOW:
 Answers:
 1. US; 2. US; 3. Netherlands; 4. Netherlands;
 5. Possible answers include: less use of contraception, higher rates of sex, less abortion, worse sexual health education, less parental supervision, more permissive culture, etc. (Note: these are all hypothesized, not based in fact)

DISCUSS: One way would be to reduce the number of teens engaging in sex (or reducing unsafe sex). This could be a segue into the next part of the lesson.



ABSTINENCE:

What Is It?

Abstinence is not having sex. A person who decides to practice abstinence has decided not to have sex.

How Does It Work?

If two people don't have sex, then sperm can't fertilize an egg and there's no possibility of a pregnancy. Some forms of birth control depend on barriers that prevent the sperm from reaching the egg (such as condoms or diaphragms). Others interfere with the menstrual cycle (as birth control pills do). With abstinence, no barriers or pills are necessary because the person is not having sex.

You don't have to be a virgin to practice abstinence. Sometimes people who have been having sex decide not to continue having sex. Even if a person has been having sex, he or she can still choose abstinence to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in the future.

How Well Does It Work?

Abstinence is 100% effective in preventing pregnancy. Although many birth control methods can have high rates of success if used properly, they can fail occasionally. Practicing abstinence ensures that a girl won't become pregnant because there's no opportunity for sperm to fertilize an egg.

Source: http://kidshealth.org/teen/sexual_health/contraception/abstinence.html



1. What are some of the barriers to choosing abstinence? In other words, why is practicing abstinence difficult for some teens?
2. What are the benefits or advantages for a teenager who chooses abstinence?
3. What skills might help a person remain abstinent? (Examples: assertiveness, risk-aversion behaviors, planning for the future)
4. What percentage of teens (females and males, age 15-17) do you think have ever had sexual intercourse?

NEW INFO: Ask students what methods of contraception offer 100% guarantee to prevent pregnancy.

Ask students, how might someone who is abstinent develop an STI? (Some STIs can be passed from person to person through oral sex, genital to genital contact, etc.)

DISCUSS:

Barriers: Peer pressure, partner pressure, media portrayals of sex, lack of education/awareness of risks, lack of refusal skills, etc.

Benefits: 100% avoidance of pregnancy, reduction of risk for STIs (depending on other sexual activities and use of contraception), avoidance of possible emotional pain (many others can be listed, but some are a matter of opinion: ex: "saving yourself for future life partner")

Percentage of teens who have had sex: this data is available in a graph on the following page of the student workbook



The following data comes from a report by the CDC called, "Teenagers in the United States: Sexual Activity, Contraceptive Use, and Childbearing, 2002." Analyze the data and answer the reflection prompt below.

Source: http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_23/sr23_024.pdf

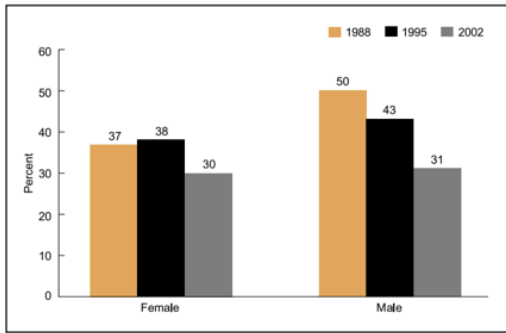


Figure 1. Percent of never married females and males 15-17 years of age who have ever had sexual intercourse: United States, 1988-2002

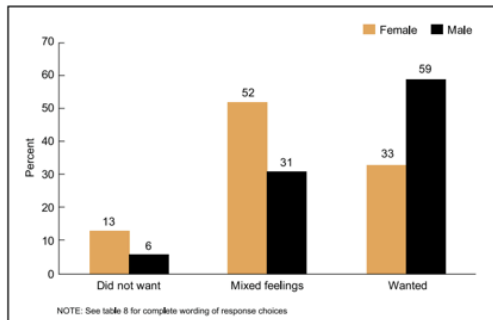


Figure 5. Percent of males and females 18-24 years of age at interview who had their first intercourse before age 20, by how much they wanted their first intercourse to happen when it did: United States, 2002

You are worried that you are the only one not having sex. You are dating someone, but you are not sure you are ready to have sexual intercourse. xYou are talking to a friend about choosing abstinence vs. using contraceptives with sex. Which decision do these data results support and why?

THINK: Ask students: What trends do you notice over time? Why do you think rates are different for males and females? Do these numbers surprise you or confirm your expectations?

THINK: Ask students: What trends do you notice over time? Why do you think rates are different for males and females? Do these numbers surprise you or confirm your expectations?



List 3 benefits and 3 barriers to practicing abstinence.

BENEFITS	BARRIERS



Some people would like to remain abstinent but struggle with refusal skills. Refusal skills are a set of skills that may help you avoid high-risk behaviors, especially ones increased by peer pressure or partner pressure. What are three strategies that someone could use to resist the pressure to have sex?

HOMEWORK:

Any logical barriers or benefits are acceptable. Some possibilities include:

Barriers: Peer pressure, partner pressure, media portrayals of sex, lack of education/awareness of risks, lack of refusal skills, etc.

Benefits: 100% avoidance of pregnancy, reduction of risk for STIs (depending on other sexual activities and use of contraception), avoidance of possible emotional pain (many others can be listed, but some are a matter of opinion: ex: “saving yourself for future life partner” would appeal to some teens, but not others)