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## THINK ABOUT IT

Does Sex Change Everything?

- ***The Emotional STD:*** Did you know that sex can hurt the heart?
- ***The Older Partner:*** Is it no big deal?
- ***10 Rewards of Waiting:*** Check it out.

### The “Emotional” STD

- Sex is about much more than the body. It is the emotional or psychological dimension of sex that makes it distinctively human. Our entire person – mind, body, and feelings – is involved. That’s why sexual intimacy has potentially powerful emotional consequences.
- Teenage sexual activity routinely leads to emotional distress. One reason is because young love generally ends within weeks or months.

**80% of teen sexual relationships end within 6 months.**

- For girls, loss of virginity can lead to loss of self respect. Boys feel bad about having sex with someone they don’t really know or like.

Epidemic: How Teen Sex Is Killing Our Kids, Dr. Meg Meeker

- Teens who are sexually active are more likely to be depressed and attempt suicide.
- Once a teen relationship includes sex, that relationship changes. Suddenly the focus is on having sex, instead of having fun.
- When the physical part of the relationship races ahead of everything else, it can almost become the focus of the relationship and they are then not developing all of the really important skills like trust and communication. *Why Do They Act That Way?, David Walsh.*
- 80% of girls wish they had waited to have sex.
- 60% of males wish they had waited to have sex.

**A sure thing:**

**Abstaining for sexual activity is the only 100 percent effective way to ensure not getting pregnant, not getting an STD and not facing the stress of “emotional” STDs.**

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### The Older Partner

- Among middle school and high school students, one in five girls (18%) and four percent of boys reported having a sexual relationship with a partner who was three or more years older than them.
- Female teens who have sex with an older partner are more likely to acquire an STD and to have a non-marital birth in young adulthood than females with a similar-age partner.
- 10% of female teens have had sex at a young age (before age 16) and with an older sexual partner, while less than 2 percent of male teens have.

The *combination* of having sex at a young age and with an older partner is linked to an especially high risk of an STD for girls.

- Female teens who have sex before age 16 with a partner at least three years older are twice as likely as other females to test positive for an STD in young adulthood.

Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health, March 2008

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### Ten Rewards of Waiting

1. Waiting will make your relationships better because you'll spend more time getting to know each other.
2. Waiting will increase your self-respect.
3. Waiting will gain you respect for having the courage of your convictions.
4. Waiting will teach you to respect other people—you won't tempt or pressure them.
5. Waiting takes the pressure off you.
6. Waiting means a clear conscience (no guilt) and peace of mind (no conflicts, no regrets).
7. Waiting will help you find the right mate—someone who values you for the person you are.
8. Waiting means a better sexual relationship in marriage—free of comparisons and based on trust. By waiting, you're being faithful to your spouse even before you meet him or her.
9. By practicing the virtues involved in waiting—such as faithfulness, good judgment, self-control, modesty, and genuine respect for self and others—you're developing the kind of character that will make you a good marriage partner.
10. By becoming a person of character yourself, you'll be able to attract a person of character—the kind of person you'd like to marry and to have as the father or mother of your children.

THE NEGLECTED HEART: The Emotional Dangers of Premature Sexual Involvement,  
Thomas Lickona, Ph.D.

**Many teens who have already been sexually involved make the mistake of thinking that it is too late to change. The truth is that all of us, no matter what our age, have the freedom at any point in our lives to make different choices.**

*We can't change the past, but we can choose the future.*

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