



MESSAGES FOR PARENTS 13-16 Years

Normal Sexual Development

- May be preoccupied with sexuality (e.g., interest in sexual media).
- May be preoccupied with body image.
- May start to engage in sexual activities as a way to physically express sexual and romantic feelings and to give or receive pleasure.
- May become sexually active.

Healthy Sexual Development

- Talk to your child about how to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections through the use of condoms and birth control.
- Encourage your child to see a healthcare provider to learn about the choices available for prevention of sexually transmitted infections and unexpected pregnancies.
- Provide an environment that promotes self-esteem and positive body image.
- Reinforce safer sex practices and the avoidance of risky sexual behaviours.
- Provide opportunities for discussions regarding healthy choices in relationships and sex (including abstinence).

Promotion of Sexual Health and Prevention of Sexual Abuse

- Watch for early signs of premature sexual activities as well as overt sexualized behaviours.
- Encourage a healthy lifestyle and positive relationships.
- Discourage drugs and alcohol use because they can affect choices related to sexual behaviours.

Resources

The best time to start communicating healthy sexual information with your child is in the early stages of development. It is important that you become comfortable talking about sex with him or her. Your child may come to you with questions about sex, sexuality, and sex-related matters. Remember, you do not need to know all the answers, but you do want to be a reliable educator for your child.

To become more comfortable with discussions on sexual development, we encourage you to visit your local library or bookstores for books and DVDs. Remember to choose materials carefully; some may be more explicit than you thought. Think about the level of detail that would be good for your child's stage of development and his or her personal preference.

Below is a list of recommended websites:

1. Teaching Sexual Health for Parents
<http://teachingsexualhealth.ca/parents>
2. Sexual Development and Behavior in Children:
Information for Parents and Caregivers
https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/sexual_development_and_behavior_in_children.pdf
3. It's Easier Than You Think:
Tips for Talking With Your Kids About Sexual Health
<https://skprevention.ca/sexual-health/parents-as-educators>