

MYTHS and FACTS

Mythbusters 101

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answer
sex ed, honestly

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Agenda

Myths and Trends: Teens

Trends among YSPs

Implications for TPPPs

Action Steps

Resources

- Teens still think WHAT?
- How are professionals perpetuating myths/ misinformation?
- What does this mean for TPPPs nationwide?
- What role do we all play in making a difference?
- Where can we get more help/support?

Categories of Common Myths and Trends Among Teens

How Pregnancy Happens

Virginity

Sexual Orientation

STDs and HIV

Myths and Trends: Teens

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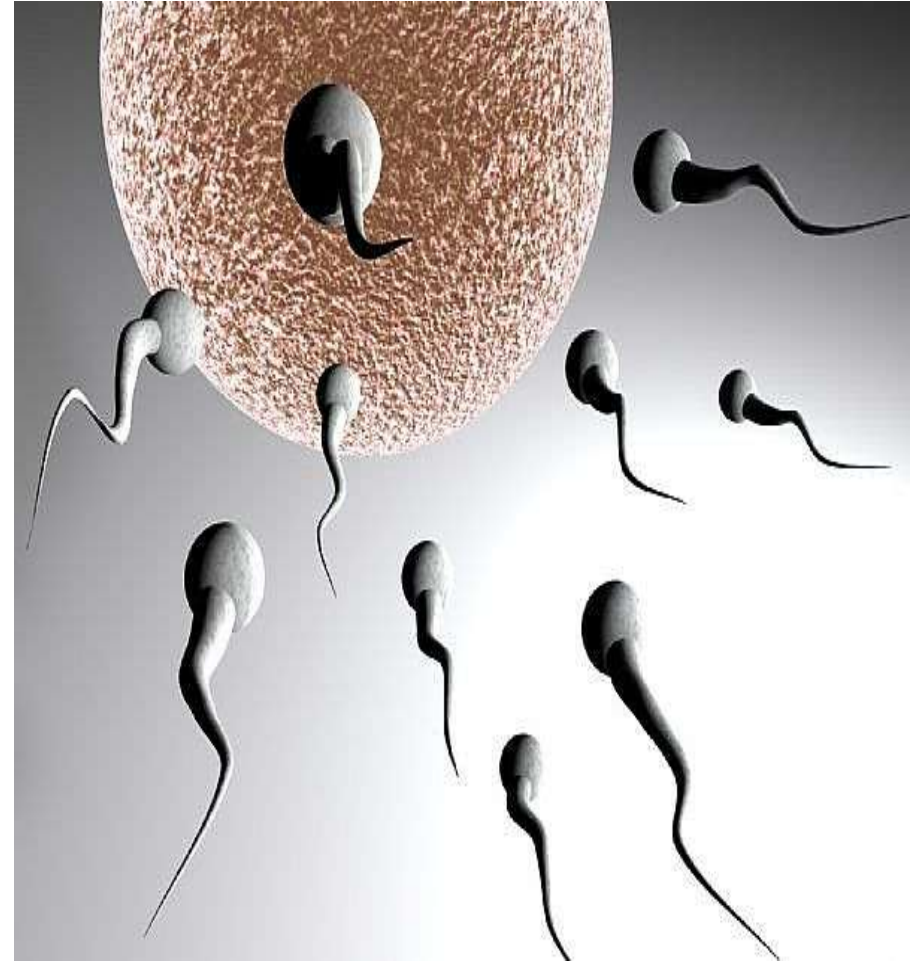
Implications for TPPPs

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Category One

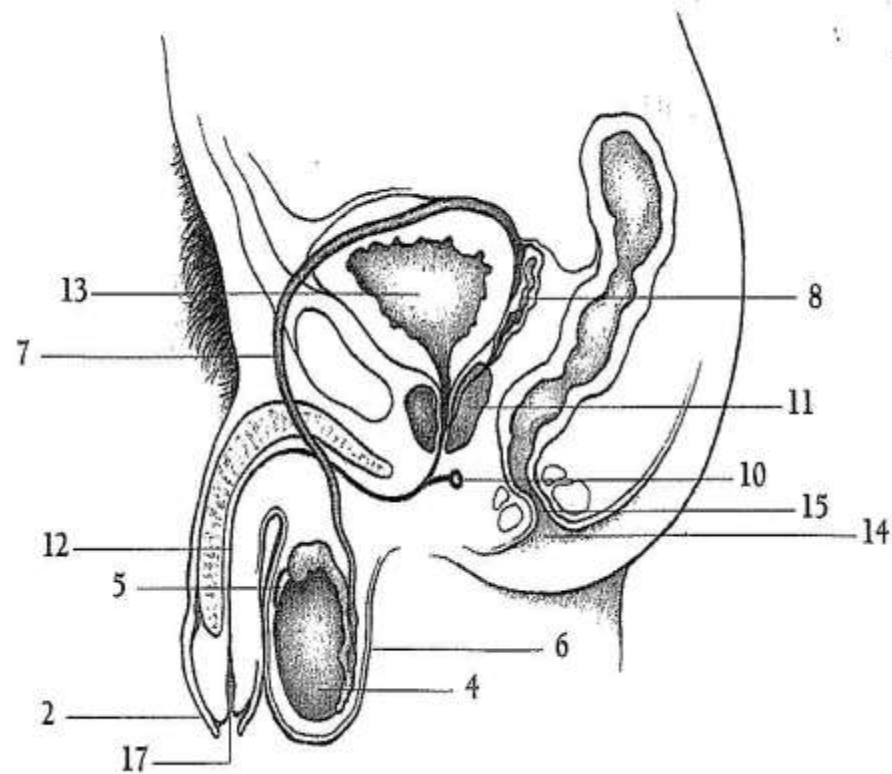
**How Pregnancy
Happens**



**Can a girl get pregnant from
pre-cum?**

NO

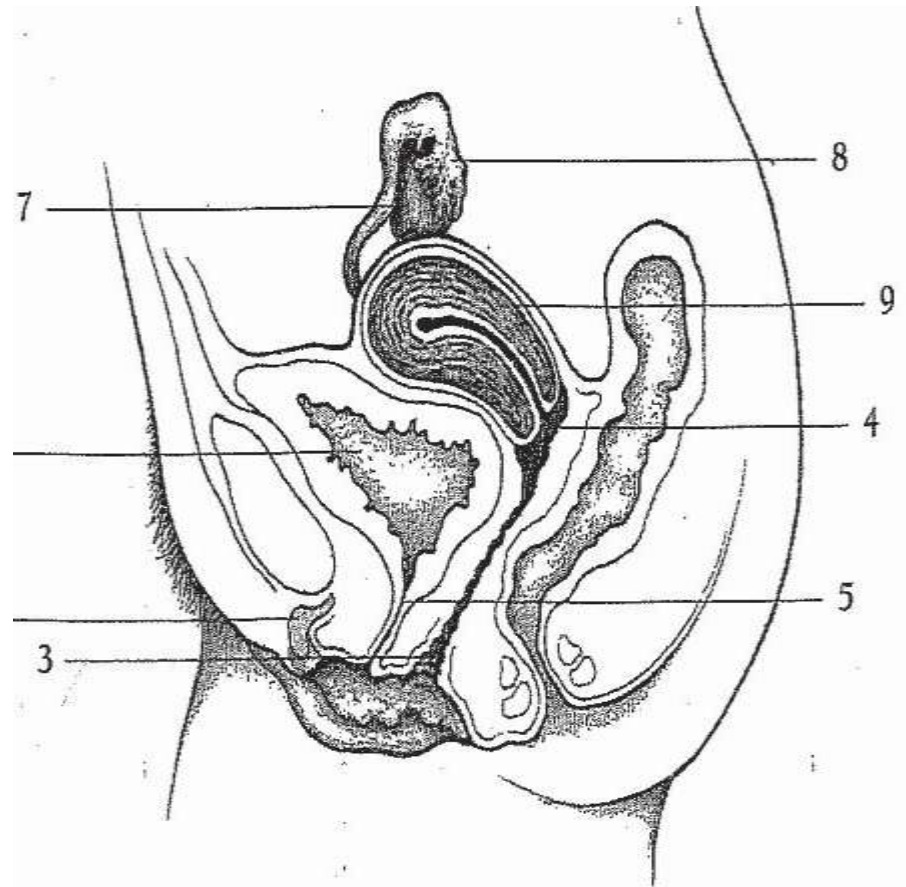
- Pre-cum made in Cowper's Gland (#10)
- Sperm made in testicles (#4)



Can a girl get pregnant from anal sex?

NO

- Anus and rectum separate
- Not connected to reproductive system





Does drinking Red Bull, Mountain Dew, or other high caffeine drinks lower sperm count?



NO

- **Anabolic steroids**
- **Certain meds**
- **Smoking/ recreational drugs**
- **Physical trauma**
- **Excessive heat**
- **Hormonal imbalance**
- **Intensive/over-exercising**
- **Age**

**Is “pulling out” an effective form of
birth control?**

Well, here's the thing...

For pregnancy prevention ONLY:
stats all over the place

As safer sex:

NO PROTECTION

Contraceptive Technology:

- **Perfect use:** approx. 96%
effective
- **Typical use:** approx. 73%
effective

If a guy ejaculates, gets some semen on his hand, and an hour later touches his female partner's vulva, can she get pregnant?

NO

If a guy ejaculates on his female partner and the semen lands on her thigh, stomach, arm, foot – can she get pregnant?

NO

If a male–female couple are having dry sex, and he ejaculates, can she get pregnant?

NO

(but be careful re: clothing placement)

Trends

- **Much more concerned re: pregnancy than STDs (HIV– depends on location)**
- **Paranoia among girls: Taking multiple pregnancy tests even if menstruated**
- **Very limited accurate info re: how pregnancy happens (boys and girls)**

From Sexetc.org

My ex-boyfriend fingered me right after he had touched or rubbed his penis so he had fresh precum on his fingers. This was on November 27th. I took a pregnancy test on December 9th which was negative. I had a period or period like bleeding from December 13th till the 16th. I took another test on December 31st, it was negative as well. I had another period or period like bleeding from January 9th through the 12th. I took more tests on: January 16th, January 24th, January 27th, January 31st, and February 4th. I had another period from February 5th through the 9th. I took more tests on February 8th, 14th, 17th, 20th, 22nd, and 27th. at least 4 of the tests i have taken were Clearblue digital. All the tests resulted with negative answers. But i experience lower back aches sometimes and li have gained 2 pounds. I am very worried, i come from a very religious family and would be kicked out of my house if i was pregnant. Please help!!! -- 17, female

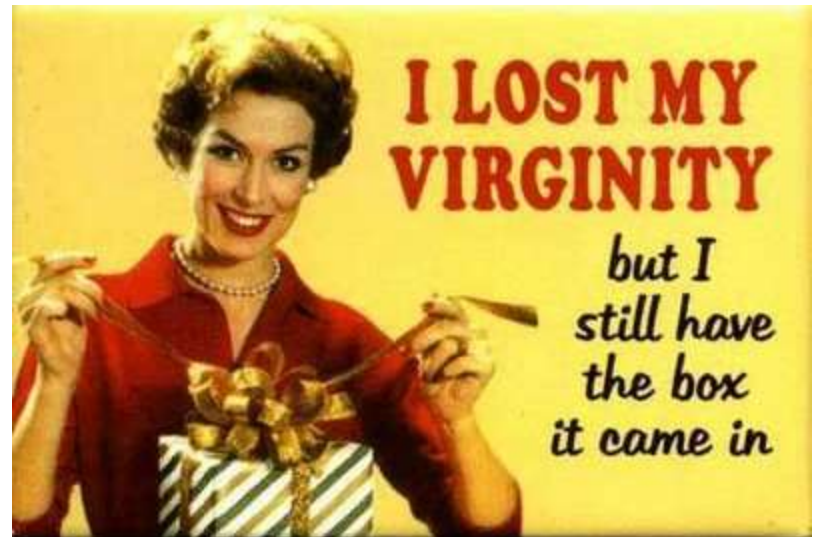
Trends

- **Girls go on hormonal birth control but have no clue how it works.**
- **Anovulation/amenorrhea: they think they're pregnant.**
- **Fatalism/coping: “Oh well, we can just do it this one time, I'm sure it'll be fine.”**

Category 2



Virginity



Here's A Story...

Marcia: “Doug, your hand is on my shoulder.”

Doug: “Yes it is, Marcia.”



Marcia: “Well, that’s third base and I don’t go that far.”

- **No more “bases” – or very different**
- **Want to be “sexually active” but still want to be “good” (girls)**

Am I still a virgin if...?

- I got fingered?
- We had oral sex?
- We had oral sex, but I didn't swallow?
- We had anal sex?
- We had vaginal sex, but it was only inside me for like a minute?
- We had vaginal sex, but it didn't feel good?

Trends

- **Moralistic judgment on girls**
- **Gender/masculinity pressure on boys**
- **Self-esteem: higher for girls the longer they wait; higher for boys the shorter they wait (research)**

- **Safer sex issue: “We’re both virgins so we don’t need to get tested, right?”**
- **But virgin = no penile–vaginal sex; have had oral sex with others**

Category 3



Sexual Orientation



Myths/Trends

- People can choose whether to be lesbian or gay
- Guys can't be bisexual
- Lesbians can't get pregnant
(study: higher risk for lesbians/
bisexual girls)
- Having trouble coming out to parents as gay, lesbian or bisexual
- Even with internet, often feel alone/isolated
- Confusion between gender/ gender identity and sexual orientation

Biggest myth?

“It’s really no big deal. Teens are fine with it, it’s the adults that are uncomfortable.”

NOT TRUE

Homophobia/bullying alive and well...

- **Homophobia more pronounced toward boys**
- **Girls tolerated/valued for sexual attraction, unless don't fit in gender role stereotype**

"I can see two women together but two men together is gross."

Category 4

The Pox

The Clap



Chlamydia



Herpes

STDs/HIV



Myths and Misconceptions

- **STDs are spontaneously created by two people**
- **You can't get an STD from oral sex**
- **You can tell who has an STD just by looking at them.**
- **HIV can be spread through saliva or sweat**
- **HIV: Still primarily gay males (unless community experience)**
- **Lesbians can't get STDs**

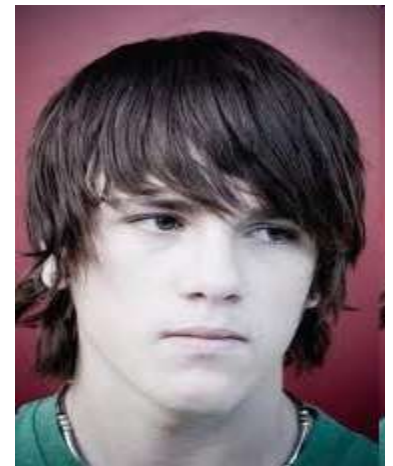
Trends

- **Not as much concern about STDs: Curable, just need a shot**
- **More concerned re: pregnancy than STDs**

**A few consistent concerns
we hear from boys...**



- My penis is too small
- My penis doesn't look normal
- If I masturbate x number of times a day will my penis shrink?
- Am I a pervert for masturbating?
- Is something wrong with me because
- I think of sex/masturbate all the time?



Now turn to a partner...

- **What are some of the other common myths you hear from the young people with whom you work?**
- **Where do these myths come from?**

**Let's talk about some of the issues and
trends that face youth-serving
professionals...**

Trends Among Youth-Serving Professionals

Logistically:

- Professional development \$ cut
- Often not invested in topic area/required to attend
- Those who are invested often isolated, esp. in school settings
- Topic area often off the radar unless in crisis, then unrealistic expectations

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Trends Among Youth-Serving Professionals

Logistically: Administrative support for school-based sexuality education varies widely:

- **Some: “Don't Ask, Don't Tell” when it comes to sex ed. Teachers can do what they want as long as they don't make waves.**
- **Others: Progressive; allow just about anything.**
- **Still others: squash everything (e.g., TX school cancelling all after-school activities just so a GSA can't start).**

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Professionally:

- Teach around sexuality (e.g., health curriculum)
- Ignore/skew facts/rationalizing teaching misinformation (e.g. anal sex and pregnancy: “I’m going to teach them that anyway”)
- Misinformed, esp. around HIV transmission (sweat/saliva)

Trends Among Youth-Serving Professionals

Professionally:

- **Resistant to using technology: "What happened to good old text books, why do I need to let them use the internet?"**
- **Too much time to do ppt; don't see the value in using social networking/Twitter**
- **Many schools: limited internet/tech access or sex ed sites blocked. Others: Smartboards, tech savvy, etc.**

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Personally:

- Varying levels of comfort/ background
- **HUGE boundary issues viz. disclosure, religious beliefs, personal values**
- **Strong belief in gender-role stereotypes**

Trends Among Youth-Serving Professionals

Answer Overview

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Personally: Significant amount of homophobia (esp. urban areas)

- “I don’t know how to deal with a student who has this problem.”
- LGBTQ youth were all molested and “made” LGBTQ
- **Only an LGBTQ adult can help an LGBTQ young person**

Trends Among Youth-Serving Professionals

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Personally:

- Teaching about sexuality is sterile: fear of controversy, sex-negative (“Do we really have to say that it feels good?”)

What are the implications for TPPPs nationwide?

- Myths VERY powerful: Perception = reality for youth. Data re: condom use vs. *belief* in data re: condom use.
- Need to do a lot of work on busting myths – remember youth are being actively taught misinformation (media, culture, peers, etc.)
- Is about far more than pregnancy prevention—all sexuality topics relate to this work

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What are the implications for TPPPs nationwide?

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- Need to do some more reviews/basic content with youth (AND ysps!)
- **Need to keep our staff current on content (e.g., sperm in pre-cum)**
- **Can't make assumptions that other YSPs are progressive/on board with what we're doing**

Action Steps: Now What?

Individual Writing: 5 minutes

- What are at least 2 things I will do differently relating to this information?
- **What are at least 2 things I will urge my staff to do differently** relating to this information?

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For Teens: More Mythbusters



- Top Ten Sex Myths:

<http://www.sexetc.org/story/2225>

- Popular Sex Myths

<http://www.sexetc.org/story/sex/1909>

- Sex Myths: Get Your Facts Straight!

<http://www.sexetc.org/story/sex/2003>

Research citations

- Hatcher, R. et al., (2008) **Contraceptive Technology**. New York: Ardent Media.
- Killick SR, Leary C, Trussell J, Guthrie KA. Sperm content of pre-ejaculatory fluid. *Hum Fertil*, in press.
- Pudney J. et al., (1992) Pre-ejaculatory fluid as potential vector for sexual transmission of HIV-1. *Lancet*; 340:1470.
- Zukerman Z, et al., (2003) Does preejaculatory penile secretion originating from Cowper's gland contain sperm? *J Assist Reprod Genet*; 20:157-159

Research citations

- Sawyc, E., Poon, S., Homma, Y, and Skay, C. (2008). Stigma management? The links between enacted stigma and teen pregnancy trends among gay, lesbian, and bisexual students in British Columbia. *Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality*, 17(3), p. 123–139

For More Facts...



- Answer
- SIECUS
- Advocates for Youth
- Healthy Teen Network
- National Campaign
- Scarleteen
- Go Ask Alice
- CDC
- Guttmacher
- American Social Health Association
- GLSEN