

*Remember, you're the
one in control of your
sexuality and your
life. Make decisions
you will feel good
about tomorrow,
and in a month...
and in a year.*

Not Ready for Sex

Talking with Your Partner



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Title No. R733

Not Ready for Sex?

You're in love. You enjoy spending time with your partner. You want to be close and show you care. But you're **not** ready to have sex. **How do you stick to your decision?**

Talking Is Essential

It may seem easier not to say anything and hope you can avoid the issue. But sooner or later in a romantic relationship the topic of sex is bound to come up.

You increase your chances of having the outcome you want—keeping the relationship but not having sex—if you're prepared and can talk to your partner openly and honestly.

*Talking can
remind you of
the advantages
of waiting.*

Benefits of Talking

Talking can:

- **Bring you closer.** You establish trust and intimacy by talking together about your feelings for each other. Sharing your decision to wait to have sex and hearing how your partner feels helps you really get to know each other.
- **Help you learn about your partner.** Communication is an important part of any relationship, particularly a romantic one. If you can talk about your decision not to have sex and have your decision respected, it says a lot about your partner.

And you may find out that your partner was trying to think of ways to bring up the subject of waiting with you!

- **Remind you about the risks of sex.** Birth control and STD/HIV protection are things you have to think about if you decide to have sex. Talking can remind you of the advantages of waiting.
- **Reinforce your decision.** Being clear about your reasons for waiting and sharing these with a partner helps you stick to your decision.
- **Make you a team.** It will be much easier to stick to your decision if your partner understands your feelings and agrees to respect your choice and support you.

Together you can find ways to be close and express your affection without having sex.

Know Why You're Waiting

Before you talk with your partner, be clear on your reasons for not having sex at this time in your life.

Waiting gives you:

- Time to get to know yourself and your partner without the pressures sex can add to a relationship.
- Freedom from worries about unplanned pregnancy or STD.
- No regrets later about not waiting for the right person or right time.
- Stronger relationships based on friendship and trust, without the confusion sex can add.
- Experience in other areas of your life before you have a sexual relationship.
- Respect from others and for yourself for sticking with the decision that's right for you.



Getting Ready to Talk

Sex can be hard to talk about. But not talking can make things more difficult later on.

Before you talk:

- **Plan what you want to say.** Make a list of your reasons for waiting. Think about what you need from your partner to support your decision.
- **Prepare to listen.** Be ready to hear your partner's point of view, while being firm about your decision.
- **Share your decision with friends or family members.** This can give you practice talking and being clear about your reasons.

How to Begin

- **Choose a good time.** Talk before you get into an intimate situation. Find a time when both of you can give your full attention to the subject.
- **Choose a good place.** Find a comfortable place where you can talk without distractions or interruptions.
- **Be honest.** Say something like, "It's not easy for me to say this, but I want to talk about waiting to have sex." Or "I need to talk with you about something I've been thinking about lately."
- **Say what you value about your partner.** This lets him or her know you're saying no to sex, not to the relationship.

What to Talk About

Here are some things to cover when you talk. Add anything else that's important to you.

- **Share your reasons for waiting.** Talk about your feelings and values around sex. If you believe sex belongs only in marriage, make sure your partner understands that.
- **Ask your partner to support your decision.** Offer ways he or she can help.
- **Acknowledge that you have sexual feelings.** It's OK to have sexual feelings and not have sex. You can talk about this and think of other ways to direct your feelings.
- **Plan ways to spend time together and grow closer that don't involve sex.**
- **List situations that might make it hard to stick to your decision.** Agree together on ways to avoid these situations.
- **Look at pressures to have sex from friends, the media, advertising, etc.** Talk about how to resist these pressures and make up your own minds.
- **Discuss the health advantages of waiting.** Share your concerns about pregnancy and STD, including HIV.
- **Remind each other that alcohol and other drugs affect judgment.** Agree to avoid using these substances if you think it will make it hard to stick to your decision.

Talking Tips

- **It's normal to feel embarrassed** when talking about sex. Don't let it keep you from bringing up the subject.
- **Be honest about what you feel and need.**
- **Trust your feelings.** If you don't feel like you're ready to have sex, you're not.
- **Listen to your partner.** Respect his or her feelings and ideas. But expect your partner to do the same for you and to honor your decision.
- **Focus on the things that are special about your partner and the relationship.**
- **Don't send mixed messages.** Be clear and consistent about your limits and be sure your partner understands them.
- **Plan on talking again.** You'll need to have several conversations as your relationship grows.
- **Keep a sense of humor.** Laughing together can help.