



LIFEGUARD YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®



GUARD YOUR HEART

GUARD YOUR MIND

GUARD YOUR BODY

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SPECIAL RELEASE

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Making Sense of the CDC Findings

The media has been abuzz with discussions about the CDC information released regarding 1 in 4 girls, ages 14 to 19, having an STI. Before we engage in discussion however, it is important to understand the background behind this research. It comes not so much from a CDC report as it does from a presentation, given at the 2008 National STD Prevention Conference, based upon an extrapolation of data from a 2003-2004 survey. So, this information is not as *new* as is commonly thought.



This fact does not in any way diminish the impact and severity of these statistics. If anything, it is a call for immediate action and awareness. The following is intended to give you an overview of the survey and its findings as well as offer some ideas for moving forward and keeping our youth healthy.

Study Overview:

The authors analyzed data on 838 females, ages 14 – 19, from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. The teens were tested for 4 STIs: Human Papillomavirus (HPV), Herpes Simplex Virus type 2, Chlamydia and Trichomoniasis.

Study Findings:

- The overall prevalence of the above STIs was found to be 26% or 1 in 4. In reality this percentage is likely even higher, as it does not account for other common STIs like gonorrhea and HIV/AIDS.
- Within the sexually active population, the prevalence of STIs increased to 40%.
- Among the teenage girls who had an STI, 15% had more than one.
- When analyzed by race, African Americans have the highest prevalence, with an overall prevalence of 48% (compared to 20% among Whites and Hispanics).
- Girls who reported having 3 or more partners had a prevalence of over 50%.
- **Among girls reporting only one partner, 20.4% or 1 in 5 had at least one STI.**

So...What Now?

Awareness! Teens cannot make the best decision for their health and future until they are aware of all of the facts. Our main goal is to equip youth with all of the facts so that they make educated decisions. The only 100% effective way to avoid all STIs is abstinence. But abstinence education doesn't stop there; teens have a right to know all of their options, even if some are healthier than others. *Abstinence programs provide information on all forms of contraception*; the difference is that we don't assume they will need it.

What about "Safe Sex"

Truly, there is no such thing as safe sex outside of a monogamous marriage. Telling our youth that such a thing exists not only does them a disservice, but places their emotional and physical well-being at risk. Condoms cannot offer guaranteed protection against ANY STD! They can reduce the risk, but not eliminate it. Here is how condom effectiveness breaks down for the diseases reported upon:



- They offer 50% protection against Chlamydia and Trichomoniasis
- They offer absolutely NO protection against Herpes and HPV when the infection is located outside of the area covered by the condom

Safe Sex? You be the judge.

One finding highlighted in the presentation speaks volumes in support of abstinence education, but, not surprisingly it has not received much press. Among girls who had only 1 sexual partner 20.6% had an STI. Outside of marriage sex is not safe, not just a few times, not twice, **not even once**. Love won't make it safe and neither will a condom. It is still possible to contract an STI, and a condom can't protect your heart.

Encourage our youth to guard their **HEARTS, MINDS** and **BODIES**.

Oral Abstract D4a – Prevalence of Sexually Transmitted Infections and Bacterial Vaginosis among Female Adolescents in the United States: Data from the National Health and Nutritional Examination Survey, 2003-2004. Hatcher, R.A., et al. Contraceptives Technology. New York: Ardent Media, Inc. 2004. National Institutes of Health, Workshop Summary: Scientific Evidence of Condom Effectiveness for STD Prevention, 2001.

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