



**GUARD YOUR HEART. GUARD YOUR MIND. GUARD YOUR BODY.**

## **TEEN PREGNANCY RATES CONTINUE TO FALL**

Teen pregnancy is at the heart and soul of LifeGuard Youth Development and The Women's Clinic of Kansas City. With over 800,000 teens becoming pregnant in the United States each year, this is a significant issue. The United States has one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the developed world with twice that of England, Wales, and Canada, and eight times as high as the Netherlands and Japan. [http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb\\_sexEd2006.html](http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb_sexEd2006.html).

The good news is that over the last twenty years the rate of teen girls becoming pregnant has dropped 34% in this country! From the record high level in 1990 of right at 117 per 1,000 young ladies age 15-19, the rate has dropped to roughly 59 teen pregnancies per 1,000 girls age 15-19. Recent studies show that about 30% of those pregnancies will terminate before birth through miscarriage or abortion leaving about 41.5 live births per 1,000 young ladies 15-19 years old, each year, in the United States.

Starting in 1991 there has been a very steady decrease of teen pregnancies in this country, dropping by about 4% each year through 2005. There was a small rise from 2005-2007, but recently the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy released a study that indicated that in 2008, the rate began to drop again. (No data is currently available for 2009.)

[http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/press/PDF/BirthRate\\_Statement\\_4.10.pdf](http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/press/PDF/BirthRate_Statement_4.10.pdf)

The big question that has been bouncing around lately is simple. "What is causing the trend in decreased teen pregnancy rates?" There are many different possibilities, but one stands out like a shining beacon. According to the Guttmacher study listed above, the percentage of teens engaging in sexual intercourse has dropped from 1995-2002 by 10%! This study shows that about 6 of 10 girls who reach the age of 18 have had sex, and a little over 5 of 10 guys at age 18 have had sex. This is fascinating considering the common misconception that "Everybody's doing it". Actually, almost half of the teens in the study were **NOT** engaging in sexual intercourse.

The one variable in this equation is the education systems that our young people are going through. Since 1996, the Federal Government has spent millions of dollars on abstinence based education programs. Through these programs, our young people are being taught the real honest truth about pregnancy, STDs, and the failure rates of birth control, as well as the importance of focusing on their goals and dreams without the concern for the emotional, physical, and financial hardships they may face as sexually active members of society.

According to Guttmacher, "Approximately 14% of the decline in teen pregnancy between 1995 and 2002 was due to teens' delaying sex or having sex less often". Face it, **abstinence education has made an impact in the lives of the youth of the United States**. Education plays a key role in the development of a young person's personal belief system. Education that teaches facts about risk and consequence does work.

We have mentioned this before, but it bears repeating. Abstinence Education works and this fact has even been confirmed by the American College of Pediatrics who strongly endorses abstinence-until-marriage sex education and recommends adoption by all school systems in lieu of 'comprehensive sex education' You trust your pediatrician to give your children the proper and most effective care for their health and well-being. That care includes Abstinence based sex education, not "Safe Sex".