

Abstinence Education Works

New research supports abstinence-only education as the best, effective choice for teens. For this newly released study, reported in the Archives of Pediatric & Adolescence Medicine, students considered high risk for early sexual involvement were placed in four groups.

- Group 1 received abstinence-only intervention.
- Group 2 received safer-sex only intervention.
- Group 3 received comprehensive interventions, including instruction on contraception and encouragement to delay sexual activity.
- Group 4 was a control group receiving only general health instruction.

Two years later, 52% of those in the safer sex group reported sexual activity while only 33.5% of those in the abstinence only group reported sexual activity. 47% in the control group and 42% in the comprehensive program became sexually active during the two years. The researchers concluded, "Theory-based abstinence-only interventions may have an important role in preventing adolescent sexual involvement."^{*}

In another study by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, 60% of sexually active teens said they wished they had not had sex.^{**} Locally, teens tell us they appreciate Care Net's message of encouraging healthy life choices and abstinence until marriage. One teenage girl told us this: *"My boyfriend and I made the decision to stop having sex. We heard your presentation at our school, and we both decided we were worth the wait."*

When clients come to Care Net seeking testing for Sexually Transmitted Infections, they also appreciate hearing the message that they have the freedom to save sex, beginning today, for the person who commits to love and cherish them for the rest of their lives. A young woman from a local high school so valued what she heard and received at Care Net that she wanted to spread the word. *"The nurse told me everything I needed to know. I would strongly recommend Care Net and I did to two of my friends...I liked everything...It made me feel like I'm home."*

We are pleased to see the latest research demonstrates that abstinence education is the best effective choice for youth. But regardless of the latest reported trends, Care Net is dedicated to promoting healthy relationships and encouraging teens to save sex for life long committed relationships – marriage.

^{*} Jemmott, JB, Jemmott, Fong, GT (2010). **Efficacy of a Theory-Based Abstinence-Only Intervention Over 24 months.** *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med.* 2010; 164(2):152-159. Retrieved February 25, 2010 from <http://archpedi.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/abstract/164/2/152>

^{**} *Chavex. L. (2010, February 5) Abstinence education works after all. Townhall.com.* Retrieved February 25, 2010 from http://townhall.com/columnists/LindaChavez/2010/02/05/abstinence_education_works_after_all