

SCRIPT #8 - Protection and Contraception FOR PARENTS OF TEENS

CULTURE REFRAMED

In this script, you are finding out how much your teen knows about sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and you are beginning the conversation with some basic information. You are making a distinction between preventing STIs and preventing pregnancy and emphasizing the importance of preparing your teen to ask their partner to be tested for STIs. You may need to adjust this script based on the gender and sexual orientation of your child.

parent *I recently heard that the number of teens with sexually transmitted infections is increasing. I'm surprised because I thought that kids were more informed about STIs. Does that surprise you?*

I don't know.

teen

parent *This should never be a problem if people have the right information. Do you know the different ways that people can get STIs?*

By having sex.

teen

parent *Yes. I worry that some people may think that you can only get STIs from vaginal-penile intercourse, but that's not true. You can get STIs from many different kinds of sexual activity, including oral and anal sex.*

You don't have to talk about every kind of sex.

teen

parent *I understand, but you have to know that condoms, when used correctly, are the only protection that people have from STIs. Otherwise, you are always at risk if you are engaging in sexual activities. And they really do need to be used correctly. Never count on your partner to know how to use protection. Regardless of whether it's a heterosexual or same-sex relationship, it is important that people know how to use a condom or dental dam before they are in a situation where they need to use one.*

What's a dental dam?

teen

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Great question. It's a thin piece of latex that can be used when giving a woman oral sex. It's stretched out over the vulva so that someone is less likely to come into contact with body fluids, protecting them against STIs. A condom can be carefully cut and stretched to be used in the same way.

Oh, wow. Okay.



The other common misunderstanding is that it's no big deal to get an STI because you can just take medicine and be done with it. Do you think that's how most teens feel?

It's not something that I talk about a lot.



There are two different kinds of STIs: bacterial and viral. Bacterial STIs, like gonorrhea and chlamydia, can be cured with drugs if you don't wait too long to go to the doctor. But you also need to know that viral STIs, like herpes and HIV, cannot be cured; they can only be managed through ongoing medication.

You're kind of freaking me out.



I'm sorry. But STIs are serious, and I want you to know the facts. I'm not trying to scare you. If you have the right information, it's not so scary. If someone was thinking about being intimate with someone, how would they know if the person had an STI?

I don't know. I guess you would ask.



Yes, asking would be necessary, but the tricky part is that some people may not even know that they have an STI. Sometimes you can have an STI for years before you have any symptoms. So unless they've been tested, they can't know for sure.

What if they've never had sex?



That would significantly reduce the odds. And you should know that some STIs can be transferred through an exchange of needles, for example, with some drug users, and even from mother to child at birth.

So you can never know?



You can get tested, and you can ask your partner to get tested. When you go for your yearly physical, the doctor will ask you if you are sexually active. That may seem embarrassing, but they want to know if you should be tested for STIs and if they should give you information about protection.

So are we done? This is a lot of information.





parent

Almost. If you forget what I've said, you can always ask me again in the future, but there are just three more things. Are you okay if I share them with you?

Yep.

teen



parent

When teens are learning about sex from porn, they don't get a clear message that condoms are essential to use because they aren't used very much in porn.

Okay.

teen



parent

This sort of "learning" from porn can set up false expectations, so I want you to be prepared if someone ever pressures you not to use a condom. Someone may say that it is not as pleasurable. Or that if you trusted them or loved them, you would not need a condom. Even though "in the moment" it might seem very romantic, the consequences are not romantic at all. And remember that respect needs to go both ways, and they need to respect your decision and your right to be safe.

Got it.

teen



parent

Also, if you/your partner is on birth control, that is never a reason to not use a condom. The purpose of birth control is to prevent pregnancy. Birth control, such as an IUD or the pill, will not prevent STIs. It is also essential to know that many forms of birth control are much more successful in preventing pregnancy than condoms. If you are hoping to avoid both pregnancy and STIs, it is best to use both a condom and another form of birth control.

Are we done?

teen



parent

One last thing. Please know that I will always support you in getting birth control and condoms. You can always come to me.

Okay. Thanks.

teen

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