

Quiz topic: Birds and the bees

Teens get plenty of information about sex from television, the Internet, peers and high-school health class.

But that doesn't help parents know what's going on in their own children's lives.

Parents can't expect teens to be open with them about everything that's going on, but they can increase their chances of keeping communication channels open if they are savvy about teen sex and are willing to forge ahead with a dialogue. Here's a quiz to get you started.

1. When it comes to information and attitudes about sexual topics, parents are the last people teenagers want to confide in or go to for advice.

True () False ()

2. If you have a latchkey kid who is sexually active, chances are he got that way by being unsupervised after school.

True () False ()

3. One trend is for high-school seniors to be like "everybody else" and try to dump the image of total innocence before they go off to college.

True () False ()

4. Intercourse itself isn't very popular with teens anymore, compared with activities such as oral sex, which they consider safer and less serious.

True () False ()

5. Teens who are worried about their sexual orientation being different from the norm should be encouraged to "come out" to their parents as early as possible, especially if they are having fantasies or dreams of sexual relations with the same sex.

True () False ()

6. Talking to teens about "going steady" is barking up the wrong tree today.

The emphasis is now on "hooking up," and parents should be more concerned with short-term, meaningless relationships.

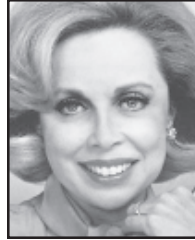
True () False ()

7. All this talk of sex can only encourage kids to start experimenting. "Just say no" is the best thing to communicate.

True () False ()

ANSWERS:

1. **False.** This is a common misconception. Many surveys have shown that adolescents are keenly interested in hearing from Mom and Dad on the subject of sexual expres-



Dr. Joyce Brothers

● Ask Dr. Brothers

sion.

But few would broach the subject. You have to do that yourself.

2. **False.** This is one of the myths devised to make working moms feel guilty.

Several studies have shown that boys and girls most often have sex for the first time right under their parents' noses, when they are all at home.

Parents would be prudent to check in frequently on their children — and their guests.

3. **True.** Divesting themselves of teenage virginity is a serious goal for many teens — both boys and girls — who have been deluded into thinking that they are the only ones left behind.

This is one time for you to drag out some boring statistics. According to many surveys, fewer than a quarter of teens leave high school having had intercourse.

4. **True.** Kids as young as middle school are replacing "going all the way" with oral sex, according to many reports.

The reason?

They believe it's safer. A survey by the Kaiser Foundation found that nearly a fifth of sexually active teens didn't know that STDs could be contracted through oral sex.

5. **False.** Although same-sex relationships are more acceptable today, young people who have fantasies or dreams do not automatically become homosexual. In fact, these secret desires are quite common and are not necessarily an indication of future sexual preferences.

Parental good intentions should not push children into early declarations of sexuality that may be difficult to retract.

6. **True.** Since the AIDS scare shifted to include heterosexuals, it has become more common for kids to indulge in meaningless hookups, in which oral sex (which they believe does not transmit STDs) often takes the place of intercourse between a boy and a girl going steady.

Therefore, it may be more difficult for kids today to establish a

trusting, truly intimate, committed relationship without some adult guidance.

7. **False.** Several recent studies have shown that abstinence-only education does not have a higher rate of success than "regular" education that allows for sexual expression in a responsible way (protection against pregnancy and STDs).

While teens who sign pledges to remain virginal until marriage mean well, the pledge is usually broken.

In any case, there is no evidence that being aware of sex issues leads to more pregnancies or disease.

If you answered five of the seven questions correctly, you are well-equipped to communicate with your teen about sexual issues.

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Conceptis Sudoku

by Dave Green

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| | 3 | 1 | | | | 8 | 9 | |
| 8 | | | 3 | | 1 | | | 5 |
| 4 | | | 5 | | 9 | | | 3 |
| 2 | | | 6 | | 7 | | | 9 |
| | 8 | 5 | 1 | | | 4 | 3 | 6 |
| | | | 8 | | | | | 2 |
| | | | 7 | | | | | 8 |
| 6 | | | 2 | | 8 | | | 4 |
| | 7 | 8 | | | | 5 | 2 | |

Difficulty Level ★★ ★

4/18

This is a logic-based number placement puzzle. The goal is to enter a number, 1-9, in each cell in which each row, column and 3x3 region must contain only one instance of each numeral. The solution to today's Sudoku puzzle is at the bottom of this page.

Today's Sudoku answer

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 7 |
| 8 | 9 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 5 |
| 4 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| 2 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 9 |
| 7 | 8 | 5 | 1 | 9 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 6 |
| 9 | 1 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 5 | 2 |
| 1 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 5 | 9 | 6 | 8 |
| 6 | 5 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 8 | 3 | 7 | 4 |
| 3 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 1 |

Difficulty Level ★★ ★

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