

Why It Matters



Teen Pregnancy and Violence

Teen pregnancy is linked with various types of violence, including intimate partner violence and sexual abuse, and often leads to other risky behavior. It is also the case that teens who are pregnant are at increased risk of experiencing domestic violence.

- Girls in high school who reported experiencing dating violence were four to six times more likely to have ever been pregnant than peers who had not experienced dating violence.¹
- Teens in high school—both boys and girls—who had experienced physical dating violence in the past year were almost three times more likely than teens who had not experienced physical dating violence to be sexually active.²
- When compared to teens who had never experienced abuse, teens who reported a history of sexual abuse were more likely to have ever been pregnant, and were more likely to never or rarely use birth control or condoms.³
- One in five teen girls who have ever been in a relationship say that their boyfriend threatened harm or self-harm when they tried to end the relationship.^{4,5}
- Approximately 50 percent to 60 percent of adolescents who become pregnant have a history of childhood sexual or physical abuse.⁶
- Adverse childhood experiences such as physical abuse, verbal abuse, and witnessing intimate partner violence are linked with having sex at an early age. For example, women who experienced frequent verbal or physical abuse during childhood were almost three times more likely than those who rarely experienced verbal or physical abuse during childhood to have had sex before

the age of 15. Women who report that their mother was often hit during their childhood were two and a half times more likely than those who report that their mother was rarely or never hit during childhood to have had sex before age 15.⁷

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- One report determined that although sexually active respondents who had experienced abuse were not more likely than other sexually active teens to have been pregnant, they were twice as likely as their peers who did not experience abuse to report *not* using birth control the last time they had sex, and they were almost one and a half times more likely to report having had more than one sexual partner.⁸
- Several studies have also found that teens are at increased risk of physical abuse during pregnancy as compared to older women.^{1,9}
- In a survey of young mothers on welfare, two-thirds of those who reported intimate partner violence also reported birth control sabotage (i.e. their partner would not let them use birth control) compared to one-third of those who did not report intimate partner violence. This was particularly true among girls with a boyfriend aged 26 and older.¹⁰

SOURCES

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