SEX?
CHOICES FOR TEENS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Be safe</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to communicate</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth control</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant?</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping the baby</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abortion</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medi-Cal minor consent services</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers you can use</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotlines</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why is it important to be clear about what you want?

Have fun in your relationships, BUT BE SAFE!

To avoid confusion and misunderstanding:

- Think about how far you want to go sexually before you spend time with your partner. Knowing your own boundaries will make it easier for you and your partner to communicate.
- If you don’t tell your partner where your boundaries are, your partner might be confused as to how far you are willing to go sexually. Being clear about what you want will help avoid a situation where your partner feels misled.
- People may feel hurt or confused if their partner pressures them to have sex or to engage in sexual activity when they don’t want to do so.

To avoid bad outcomes:

- Having sex when you don’t want to do so.
- Getting pregnant.
- Contracting sexually transmitted infections (like HIV, gonorrhea, chlamydia, etc.).
How can you communicate what you want?

Be clear!

♦ Figure out what you want.
♦ Be honest. If you don’t know someone well enough to talk about sex with him/her, you don’t know the person well enough to have sex.
♦ Talk about how you feel before you get involved sexually and keep communicating!
♦ Set your boundaries.

Don’t say one thing and do another!

♦ Mean what you say and stick by it – your honesty will be respected.
♦ Flirting when you don’t mean it can be confusing.

No means NO!

♦ A partner who doesn’t respect your decision, doesn’t respect you.
♦ Call them on it.

Remember, you’re in charge....

♦ Some teens choose not to have sex for religious, emotional, or legal reasons.
♦ If you choose to have sex, you should know that sexual intercourse between two minors or between an adult and a minor is “statutory rape” and it is against the law.
♦ To learn more about how the law might affect you, read Public Counsel’s brochure about statutory rape. You may find this brochure on line at www.publiccounsel.org/publications?id=0051
The only guaranteed way to prevent having a baby is to NOT have sex. If you choose to become sexually active and you are at least 12, you can get birth control without your parents knowing that you asked for it at:

- School Health Clinics
- Family Planning and Public Health Clinics
- County Hospitals

Many clinics offer these services for free or at low cost. You also may qualify for the “Medi-Cal Minor Consent” program. See page 11. Using confidential family planning services can help you:

- Prevent unwanted pregnancy
- Help avoid contracting HIV (the virus that causes AIDS) and other sexually transmitted infections (STI’s) like genital herpes, syphilis, and gonorrhea

At drug stores, teens are allowed to buy the following types of birth control:

- Condoms
- Sponges
- Spermicide cream or jelly

You can go to Planned Parenthood, family planning clinics, or public health clinics for birth control, and they will not tell your parents. These places can give you birth control that requires a prescription, such as:

- Birth control pills (“the pill”)
- Depo-Provera (“the shot” that lasts 3 months)
- Diaphragms (rubber cup that gets placed inside the vagina)

Figure out what’s right for you and get information on different birth methods at www.bedsider.org.

Emergency contraception

In California, a person can buy Emergency Contraception (EC) (also known as the “morning after” pill) at a pharmacy without a prescription and without having to go to a doctor first. EC can be taken up to 72 hours (3 days) after sexual intercourse. It is used for an emergency. For example, the condom broke, you didn’t use birth control, or you were forced to have sex. A new form of EC can be taken up to 120 hours (5 days) after sexual intercourse, but it requires a prescription.
If you are pregnant, you can choose to keep the baby, place the baby for adoption or with an adult guardian, or have an abortion.

You also may legally, confidentially, and safely surrender your baby within three (3) days of birth to any hospital emergency room or fire station in California under the **Safely Surrendered Baby Law**. As long as the baby has not been abused or neglected, you will not be arrested or prosecuted. The baby will get health care and will be placed in a foster home or a pre-adoptive home. For more information, call 1 (877) 222-9723.

Here are some things to think about before you make a decision:

- Your rights and responsibilities toward your baby are the same as an adult parent’s.
- Your ability to meet the baby’s needs, especially if the baby has special medical needs.
- Your school and career goals.
- Your relationship with the baby’s father.
- Getting child support.

Support is available for young parents! See www.teenparent.net for information on the resources out there to help young parents.
As a parent, you have the right to keep and raise your child. If you are under 18, you can choose to:

- Marry, but your parents must consent to the marriage and a judge must also approve it.
- Live with your boyfriend or girlfriend and/or their family, but your parents must agree or do nothing to stop you.
- Live on your own with the baby, but your parents must agree or do nothing to stop you.

If you need cash aid, who you live with may make a difference in determining whether you qualify for aid. For more information read Public Counsel’s booklet, *A Guide For Teens to Welfare and Health Care Programs*. You may find this booklet on line at [http://www.publiccounsel.org/publications?id=0041](http://www.publiccounsel.org/publications?id=0041).
If you decide to place your child for adoption, this means that you go through a legal process where you permanently give up all your rights to be a parent to your child. Agreeing to place your baby for adoption is called **RELINQUISHMENT**.

At any time, regardless of your child’s age, you can get counseling at an adoption agency, if parenting becomes too overwhelming and begins to feel like maybe you made the wrong choice. The final choice is up to you.

**Consent**

Teens do not need permission from their own parents to place their baby for adoption. A child can be placed for adoption through:

- A private adoption agency.
- A public agency like the county Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).
- A private agreement with the adoptive parents.
- Placing the child with an adoptive family and signing an “AD 22” form. In this type of adoption, nothing is final until the birth mother and birth father later sign a “consent to adoption” form.

Usually both of the baby’s parents must consent (or say “yes”) to adoption even if they are not married. There are some exceptions to this rule:

- If the parent who has not agreed to the adoption has not paid for the care, support, and education of the child for at least one year.
- If the parent who has not agreed to the adoption has not talked to or contacted the child for at least one year.
- If the birth parents were never married AND the parent who has not agreed to the adoption either does not want custody or cannot prove that having custody would be in the child’s best interests.
Guardianship is a legal process where a court appoints an adult to act as your child’s caretaker. It can last until your child is 18. Guardianship does not have to be permanent, but it can be hard to undo later if the guardian or the judge does not agree.

If you have questions about guardianship, call Public Counsel’s Children’s Rights Project at 213/385-2977 ext. 500. You may also visit Public Counsel’s Pro Per Guardianship clinic located at:

Pro Per Guardianship Clinic  
Los Angeles Superior Court  
Stanley Mosk Courthouse  
111 N. Hill Street, Room 230  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**Monday through Wednesday**
9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.  
and 1:30 p.m.—3:30 p.m.

Please arrive in person before 9:00 a.m. to sign-in. Be prepared to wait—possibly all day. And, if you can, try not to bring your baby.

Pro Per means you don't have an attorney and are acting as your own attorney in court.
ABORTION

If you are a pregnant teen in California:

- You can get an abortion without anyone else’s consent.
- The fact that you are pregnant and getting an abortion is confidential.
- No one can force you to get an abortion.
- A doctor performing the abortion may not tell your parents or your boyfriend without your written consent.
- An abortion must be obtained within the first 20 weeks of pregnancy in most cases, but later abortions may be possible in certain situations. You can ask a doctor or clinic staff for more information about later abortions.
- A licensed medical doctor in an office, clinic, or hospital must perform the abortion.
- Medi-Cal Minor Consent Services covers the cost of an abortion.
If you are between 12 and 21, you may qualify for the Medi-Cal Minor Consent Services (MCS) Program that pays for birth control, pregnancy care, abortion, and other kinds of health care without involving your parents.

To apply for Medi-Cal minor consent services:

- You must complete the regular Medi-Cal application and a shorter MCS application. You are not required to give information about your parents’ income, and Medi-Cal information will not be sent to your parents’ home unless you request this.

Additional things to keep in mind about Medi-Cal Minor Consent Services:

- You need to renew your MCS/Medi-Cal application monthly to remain eligible for services.
- Many clinics have a worker on-site who will help you fill out the applications, or you can go to your local welfare office.
- You do not need a “green card” to receive Medi-Cal Minor Consent services. You also do not need immigration papers or a social security number to get these services. And enrolling in Medi-Cal Minor Consent or other health care benefits will not hurt your chances of getting your “green card” or becoming a U.S. citizen.

If you have trouble getting care through Medi-Cal Minor Consent Services, you can call Maternal and Child Health Access (MCHA) in Los Angeles at (213) 749-4261 or Health Consumer Center (HCC) at 1(800) 896-3203.
NUMBERS YOU CAN USE!
(Referrals & Resources)

Adoption Services
Adoption Unit, Department of Children & Family Services .... (888) 811-1121
St. Anne’s Maternity Home ................................................................. (213) 381-2931
Vista Del Mar ......................................................................................... (310) 836-1223
Westside Children’s Center ................................................................. (310) 390-0551

Pregnancy Choices
Children’s Hospital Division of Adolescent Medicine .......... (323) 361-2153
Planned Parenthood ........................................................................... (800) 230-7526
(213) 284-3200

Health Benefits
LA County Dept. of Public Health, Child Health, Prevention Programs....
.............................................................................................................. (800) 993-2437
Reproductive Health Services ......................................................... (800) 9421054
Immunizations – LA County Department of Public Health call center ..... .............................................................................................................. (800) 427-8700
Medi-Cal – Department of Public Social Services, Health & Nutrition ..... .............................................................................................................. (800) 427-8700
WIC ....................................................................................................... (888) WIC-BABY
(888) 942-2229
Comprehensive Perinatal Service Program............................... (213) 639-6419

Helpful Resources for Sexual Assault Victims
RAINN 24 hour hotline .......................................................................... (800) 656-4673
(800) 656-HOPE
The East Los Angeles Women Center .............................................. (800) 585-6231
(24-hour hotline)
Or (323) 526-5819
(Office)
Peace Over Violence Crisis Line ......................................................... (213) 626-3393
Rape Treatment Center
Santa Monica– UCLA Medical Center ......................................................(310)319-4000

Adolescent Family Life Programs
(Parenting Support Group, Counseling)

AltaMed
East Los Angeles .................................................................................... (323) 722-8300

Project NATEEN
Hollywood .................................................................................................. (323) 361-5982

Foothill Family Services
Foothill Family Services (Intake) ............................................................. (866)304-4337

El Nido
South Central, Los Angeles (Manchester) .............................................. (323) 971-7360
Pacoima ...................................................................................................... (818) 896-7776
Mission Hills .............................................................................................. (818) 830-3646
HOTLINES

24– Hour California Youth Crisis Line ................................. (800) 843-5200
Child Abuse Hotline ........................................................................ (800) 540-4000
Domestic Violence Hotline ............................................................. (800) 978-3600
GED Contact Center ........................................................................ (877) 392-6433
211 L.A. County ................................................................................ 211
Planned Parenthood ......................................................................... (800) 230-7526
Teen Line ........................................................................................... (800) 852-8336
Early Childhood Parenting Center .............................................. (310) 281-9770
First 5 L.A. ......................................................................................... (213) 482-5902
Public Counsel is the nation’s largest pro bono law firm. Public Counsel coordinates the contributions of thousands of volunteer lawyers each year. Public Counsel serves those in need — such as children and the elderly, literacy projects and low income housing providers, refugees and the homeless — by providing legal representation and matching financially eligible clients with volunteer attorneys.

While this publication is designed to provide accurate and current information about the law, readers should contact an attorney or other expert for advice in particular cases, and should also consult the relevant statutes and court decisions when relying on cited materials.

The contents of this brochure may be reprinted. Any adaptation or translation of the contents of this brochure must be authorized by Public Counsel.

You may find this booklet and other Public Counsel booklets at www.publiccounsel.org/practice_areas/childrens_rights. Click on the “Publications” tab.

© 2016 Public Counsel. All Rights Reserved.
Do you have any questions on:

- How to be safe and communicate?
- Birth Control
- What are your options if you are pregnant?
- What are Medi-Cal minor consent services?

This booklet will answer those questions you might have about sex and choices for teens.

We are here to help.

HAVE QUESTIONS FOR AN ATTORNEY?
213-385-2977 X500
OR VISIT: WWW.PUBLICCOUNSEL.ORG

Public Counsel
610 SOUTH ARDMORE AVENUE
LOS ANGELES, CA 90005
PUBLICCOUNSEL.ORG