

MY BODY MY CHOICE

PROMOTING GOOD SEXUAL
HEALTH WITHIN SCOUTING

This leaflet aims to give you the basics about sexual health and relationships; and help you make the decisions that are right for you.

Let's start with an important fact - at times it can feel like everyone is at it, but you might be surprised to know that about 70 per cent of young people wait until they are 16 or over before they have sex. Deciding to have sex for the first time is a big decision, so it's definitely worth waiting until you feel sure you are ready.

CONTRACEPTION

If you do decide to have sex you need to have thought about contraception first. There are lots of methods of contraception, including pills, patches, implants and injections, but only not having sex and condoms protect against both pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Jonnies, Jimmies, rubbers, love gloves – whatever you call them – condoms are very important. They come in all different shapes, sizes and flavours – and they are FREE. Get them from specialist young people's services, contraception and sexual health clinics, Brook Centres and from lots of youth services, GPs, schools and colleges.

DRINKING ALCOHOL

Many people drink alcohol if they are thinking about or have decided to have sex as it can make you less shy. But drink too much and it can seriously cloud your judgment so you put yourself in unsafe situations and in some cases forget what you did when you were drunk.

Mixing sex and alcohol increases your chances of unplanned pregnancy and getting an STI, because if you have sex when you are drunk, you are less likely to use a condom.

MYTH BUSTING

There are lots of myths about pregnancy and sexual health, and it's important to clear them up. Here are some facts, whatever you have heard otherwise:

- It is possible for a girl to get pregnant the first time she has sex
- It is possible to catch an infection the first time you have sex
- Not all young women bleed the first time they have sex
- Masturbation is not harmful; it can just be a normal part of growing up

WHERE TO GET HELP

There are loads of organisations that can help you make positive choices about your sexual health and relationships. You can find a list of them at www.scouts.org.uk/shis

Brook is the young people's sexual health charity that provides information on relationships, sexual health, sex and sexuality.

They can answer your questions; Ask Brook is available free and in confidence on 0808 802 1234, by text on 07717 989 023 or via Ask Brook on Brook's website – www.brook.org.uk

For further information, talk to your Explorer Scout Leader or a trusted adult, or you can contact Ask Brook on the number above.