

Abstinence: Deciding to wait

What is abstinence?

Abstinence is your right to decide about sex. Not everyone is doing it and only you can decide how far you want to go. If anyone tries to pressure you into a choice that does not feel right, walk away. Few people regret having sex too late—more regret having sex before they are ready.

Abstinence means different things to different people. For some abstinence may mean:

- No sexual activity including vaginal, oral or anal intercourse
- No sexual touching at all
- No skin-to-skin contact
- Everything but vaginal intercourse
- Some sexual touching

Advantages

- No risk of unplanned pregnancy
- Less risk for sexually transmitted infections including HIV
- More time to build your relationship together
- Express affection and sexuality in other ways (e.g., hand holding, kissing, hugging)
- Follow your values and beliefs
- Talk to your partner and be clear about your sexual limits and boundaries.
- Party safe - it's harder to stick with your decision when you have been drinking alcohol or using drugs.
- When you are in a hot-and-heavy situation, do something else to change the mood.
- Hang out with friends who support your decision.

It's your choice

If you decide abstinence is the right choice for you:

- Know what your sexual limits and boundaries are.

Remember a decision to wait may be for any length of time and at any time in your life. You've got the power.



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