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National Survey of Family Growth—Teenagers in the United States: Sexual Activity, Contraceptive Use, and Childbearing, 2006-2008 Key Findings

The CDC's National Center for Health Statistics has released the second report of findings from the [2006-8 National Survey of Family Growth \(NSFG\)](#). The findings are based on interviews with a national sample of women and men ages 15-44. This report is specifically focused on **teenagers age 15-19** and includes interview with 2,767 teens (1,381 girls and 1,386 boys).

Big Picture

- Declines in teen sex and improvements in contraceptive use among sexually active teens remained essentially unchanged between 2002 and 2006-08.

Key Findings

- About four in ten never-married teens have ever had sex: 42% of girls and 43% of boys. This is *not* statistically different than the proportion of teens who had ever had sex in 2002 (46% of girls and 46% of boys), the last time the NSFG collected these data.
 - Younger teens (age 15-17) are less likely to have ever had sex than older teens (age 18-19): 28% of younger teen girls versus 60% of older teen girls; 29% of younger teen boys versus 65% of older teen boys
 - The proportion of teen girls who ever had sex does not vary much by race/ethnicity: 43% of Latina teen girls; 40% of non-Hispanic white teen girls and 46% of non-Hispanic black teen girls
 - Non-Hispanic black teen boys (61%) were significantly more likely than Latino teen boys (45%), non-Hispanic white boys (38%), and teen guys overall to report having ever had sex.
- About three in ten teens (31% of girls and 20% of boys) are sexually active (have had sex in the past 3 months)
 - Older teens are much more likely to be sexually active
 - There are no significant differences in sexual activity by race/ethnicity

- Nearly eight in ten teen girls (79%) and nine in ten teen boys (87%) used a method of contraception the first time they had sex.
 - Most used a condom (68% of girls and 82% of boys)
 - The use of any method at first sex was similar to the use of any method at first sex in 2002.
 - There was a statistically significant increase in condom use at first sex among teen boys between 2002 (71%) and 2006-2008 (82%). Dual use of contraception at first sex also increased significantly among boys (from 11% to 19%).
- More than eight in ten teen girls (84%) and more than nine in ten teen boys (93%) who have had sex in the past 3 months, used a method of contraception the last time they had sex
 - 21% of girls reported using both a hormonal method and a condom and 35% of boys reported using both a hormonal method and a condom
 - The use of a method at last sex is similar to the use of a method at last sex in 2002.
- 52% of teen girls who had sex in the past 4 weeks report using a condom 100% of the time in the past 4 weeks compared to 71% of teen boys
 - Non-Hispanic black teen girls and boys are slightly more likely to report using a condom 100% of the time in the past 4 weeks compared to teens from other racial/ethnic groups, but the difference is not statistically significant
- The most prevalent reason teens give for not having had sex is that it is against their religion or morals (42% of girls and 35% of boys); for girls the next most prevalent reason is “not wanting to get pregnant” (18%) and for boys it is that they haven’t found the right person yet (27%).
- Teen girls who first have sex with a male partner three or more years older are far more likely to describe sex as unwanted (13%) than those who have had sex with a partner who was younger or the same age (4%).
- The children of teen mothers remain far more likely to become teen parents themselves (22%) than those whose mother delayed childbearing until after age 20 (9%).

Attitudes:

- 22% of sexually experienced teen girls and 24% of sexually experienced teen boys would be either a little pleased or very pleased if they or their partner got pregnant now (compared to 18% and 24% respectively in 2002)
 - Overall, 14% of girls and 17% of boys would be either a little pleased or very pleased if they or a partner got pregnant now (compared to 13% and 15% respectively in 2002)

- 71% of teen girls and 64% of teen boys agree that it is okay for an unmarried female to have a child (compared to 65% and 50% respectively in 2002)
- 66% of teen girls and 68% of teen boys disagree that a young couple should not live together unless they are married (compared to 63% and 67% respectively in 2002).