



Teenage Pregnancy

Teenage pregnancy is defined as a pregnancy which occurs in a girl below the age of 19. Oftentimes, having a baby for teenagers may be challenging as they may be not physically, emotionally and socially matured enough to take care of the baby. Early sex and lack of correct information about reproductive health often puts girls at risk of teenage pregnancy. Taking care of a baby can be demanding and stressful and can deny completion of school so it is important for teenagers (both girls and boys) to be informed about how to prevent teenage pregnancy.

How Does Pregnancy Occur?

Pregnancy occurs when a boy and girl have unprotected sexual intercourse. The sperm cell produced by the boy unites with the egg produced by the girl to form a cell which grows inside the girl's womb as a baby for about nine months before delivery. A girl can get pregnant if she has sex just once or for the first time. There is also a risk of pregnancy if the sperm of the boy comes in contact with the girl's vagina through other forms of foreplay.

What Could Lead To Teenage Pregnancy?

- Poor access to correct information and reproductive health services.
- Early sexual activity.
- Early / forced marriage.
- Sexual abuse (rape/incest).
- Peer pressure.
- Sexual relationship for material gain (sugar daddy).

Signs and Symptoms of Pregnancy

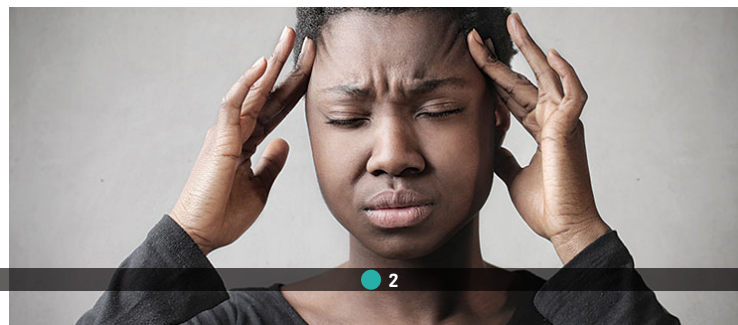
The following signs and symptoms are associated with pregnancy:

- Missed menstrual period.
- Breasts enlargement and tenderness.
- Nausea.
- Vomiting.
- Frequent urination.
- Fatigue and dizziness.

If you have any of these signs and symptoms, visit the nearest health facility for a pregnancy test.

Why is Teenage Pregnancy Risky?

A pregnant teenage girl faces a higher risk of complication in pregnancy than an older woman because her body is not fully grown. Girls who become pregnant early may find it difficult to deliver because their pelvis is too small for the baby to pass through it. When a delivery is delayed for too long and the girl is not taken to the health facility quickly, there can be serious complications which can cause the death of the girl and or her baby.



How Does Pregnancy Affect Teenage Girls?

The effects of teenage pregnancy can be physical, emotion and social:

Physical Effects of Teenage Pregnancy

- Anaemia (Shortage of Red Blood Cells).
- Hypertensive disease of pregnancy.
- Premature labour and delivery.
- Prolonged and obstructed labour.
- Miscarriage.
- Vesico-Vaginal Fistula (VVF)- A condition where the girl passes urine without control.
- Recto-Vaginal Fistula (RVF)- A condition where the girl passes faeces without control.
- Unsafe abortions.

Emotional Effects of Teenage Pregnancy

- Regret, shame and/or depression.
- Fear and embarrassment.
- Low self-esteem.
- Fear of the immediate and the future consequences.
- Disappointment and self-hatred.
- Being forced to marry someone you may not love.

Social Effects of Teenage Pregnancy

- Expulsion/Withdrawal from school.
- Financial dependence on parents or other family members to support herself and her baby.
- Rejection from the family, relatives and friends.
- Stigma and social isolation from friends/peers.



How Does Pregnancy Affect Teenage Boys?

The effects of teenage pregnancy are harder on girls than boys however the boys will share the blame and responsibility. Some of the effects on the boys are :

- Withdrawal from school.
- Disappointment / Rejection from Family, relatives and community.
- May be forced to marry the girl and support the child.
- Economic burden to provide welfare for mother and child.

How Can Teenage Pregnancy Be Prevented?

- Abstaining from sexual intercourse.
- Correct and consistent use of either male or female condoms and other contraceptives for those who are sexually active.

Tips to Avoid Teenage Pregnancy

Having a baby as a teenager can affect your life negatively so it is your duty (as a boy or girl) to avoid whatever can put you at risk. The following are tips on what you can do:

- Do not be in a hurry to have sex, wait until you are an adult and ready for the responsibilities. If you can't wait, practice safer sex by using male or female condom correctly and consistently.
- Keep friends who respect you and do not pressure you to have sex or engage in risky behaviour.

- Avoid getting too close or being alone with boys/ men in isolated places to prevent sexual abuse.
- Develop yourself through education, vocational skills and focus on achieving goals that will help you succeed in life.
- Speak to a trusted adult or seek counselling from a youth friendly service provider to discuss teenage pregnancy.

For more information, call **08027192781** or SMS to **38120 (free on MTN, GLO and Airtel)**.

You can also email: myq@myquestion.org or log on to www.dasubjectmatter.org or www.learningaboutliving.com for more information.

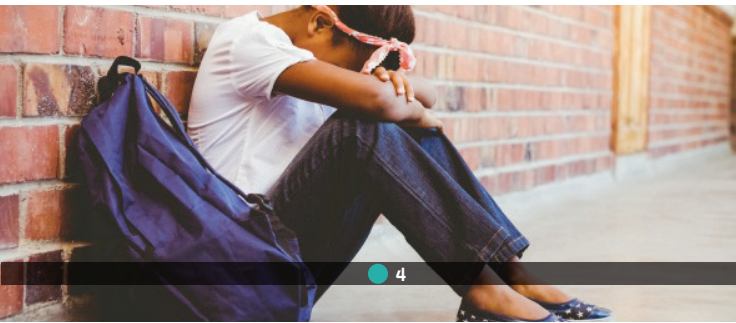
[You can also download the Diva Mobile App to get more information on menstrual health and prevention of teenage pregnancy](#)

To download the App, you need an android phone or tablet, go to Google Play store and search for DIVA by Education as a Vaccine then click to install. You can also scan the QR code by the side to get the app:



References

- Comprehensive Sexuality Education Manual By Action Health Incorporated.
- National Training Manual on Adolescent Health by Federal Ministry of Health and UNFPA (Revised 2011).
- You, Your Life, Your Dreams: Book for Adolescents by Family Care International and Straight Talk Foundation.



TEENAGE PREGNANCY

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW