

Teens and Breastfeeding

By

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Goals of this Session

Identify reasons teens get pregnant and the impact on breastfeeding

Define barriers to breastfeeding

Describe the role of family and friends in forming adolescent attitudes about breastfeeding.

Develop plan for creating future successes

Sexual Activity among Teens

The Percentage of High School Students Who: [*]	2013 Total	2015 Total	2017 Total	2019 Total	2021 Total	2023 Total	Trend (All Years Available)	2-Year Change (2021-2023)
Ever had sex	47	41	40	38	30	32		
Had four or more lifetime sexual partners	15	11	10	9	6	6		
Were currently sexually active	34	30	29	27	21	21		
Used a condom during last sexual intercourse [†]	59	57	54	54	52	52		
Used effective hormonal birth control [‡]	–	–	–	–	33	33	–	
Were ever tested for HIV	13	10	9	9	6	7		
Were tested for STDs during the past year [§]	–	–	–	9	5	6		

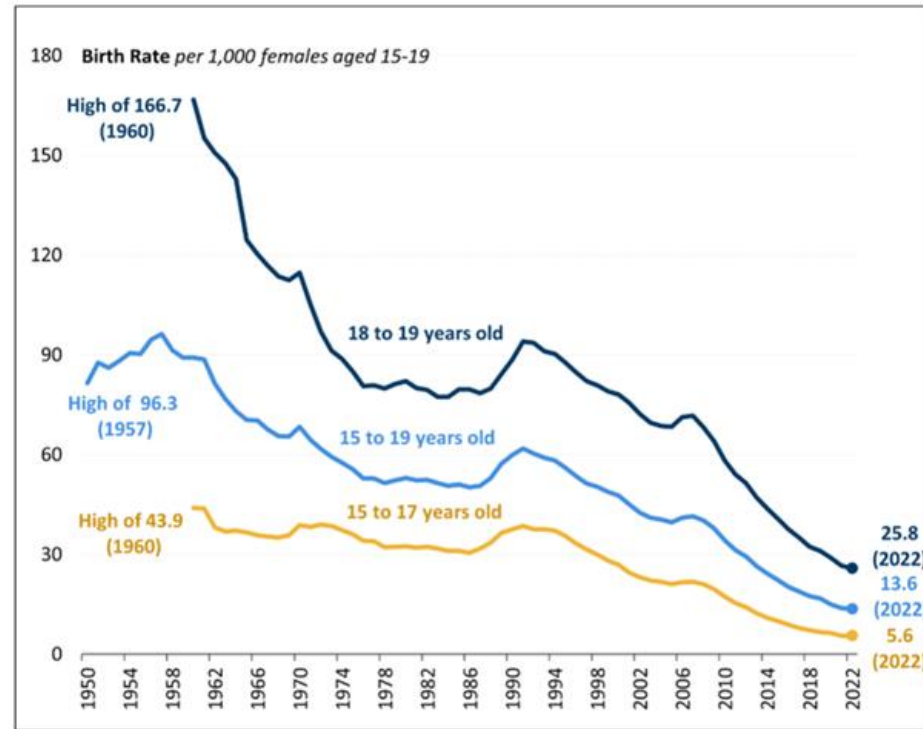
*For the complete wording of YRBS questions, refer to Appendix A.
[†]Among sexually active students.
[‡]Survey question changed in the 2021 national YRBS; therefore, only two years of data are available.
[§]Question introduced in 2019.

 In wrong direction
 No change
 In right direction

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data Summary & Trends Report: 2013–2023 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/yrb/dstr/index.html>

Isolation

Adolescent Birth Rates



Source: Mickler, K. M., & Tollestrup, J. (2024). *Teen Birth Trends: In Brief*. CRS Report R45184, Version 8. Updated August 28, 2024. Congressional Research Service. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R45184>

Normal Adolescent Development

- Individuation
- Peer oriented
- Self-absorbed
- Hormonal
- Brain

Pruning

Back-to-front brain development

**Limbic center
matures early**

**Impulse control
undeveloped; reward
circuitry in overdrive.**

Cognitive finishes last

**Pruning leads to
better reasoning
ability**

Who is she?

19 years old or younger (CDC 2003)

Adolescent Mother, Biological Model

Delayed childbearing for the first time in history

Reasons for Pregnancy

“It will never happen to me.”

“Everyone else has a baby.”

“I thought he’d marry me.”

“I want out of the house.”

“I didn’t mean to.”

“I used birth control.”

Teen Mothers: What do they feel?

- They are mothers first!
- They love their babies!
- They may be impatient
- They are afraid of inadequacies
- They may feel embarrassment
- They may be afraid of pain

When she finally arrived, everyone was shocked that I wanted to breastfeed.

There was no reason for me not to breastfeed, yet people doubted me and doubted my body. and surrounded myself with other like-minded mums online as my own friends weren't supportive of me.

Why is it that a mother breastfeeding her child is weird? Why is it that a bottle is now the norm in today's society? Why is it teenage mums are automatically assumed to bottle-feed

*I get dirty looks when I breastfeed in public, but does that bother me? Nope.
Does it stop me? Nope.*

Will She Breastfeed?

Teen Mothers

- 55% initiate breastfeeding
- <15% breastfeeding at 6 months
- <7 % at 1 year
(Wambach et al, 2005)

• Adult Mothers

- 70% initiate breastfeeding
- 36% breastfeeding at 6 month
- 17% breastfeeding at 1 year

For the most part, reasons they reported stopping breastfeeding paralleled those previously reported for adult mothers across the first several months of motherhood.

We found that teen mothers can initiate breastfeeding at high rates.

Highlight areas in which teen mothers' knowledge and skills can be supported to promote breastfeeding duration, including pain management and better recognizing infant cues.

Our findings expand limited previous research investigating reasons that teen mothers who initiate breastfeeding stop before 6 months.

Cota-Robles et al, 2017, MCN

...acutely aware of the stigma attached to young motherhood.

Although some did not initially want to breastfeed, they developed a desire to do so as their pregnancy progressed...rarely feel able to breastfeed in public or in front of male family members. This creates conflict and distress for young mothers, who, as new adults, need to be judged positively, and accepted by and integrated into their families and communities. Young mothers identified a paucity of support for breastfeeding within their social networks, and found maintaining exclusive breastfeeding difficult.

Hunter, et al

*More likely to initiate
and sustain
breastfeeding when
nurses were friendly
respectful and
understanding of
individual
needs. Heightened
feelings of insecurity
and shame.*

~2007 Charles, DiCenso
and Peterson

Adolescent Breastfeeding

Teens tend to:

Breastfeed less often and for shorter periods of time

Begin giving formula and solids earlier

Have difficult time understanding the milk supply must be maintained day in and day out

Adolescent breastfeeding rates have been declining since 2005

Instinctive

*“Among those who weaned, a combination of primary
and secondary obstacles
or problems, such as
perceptions of insufficient milk supply,
nipple/breast pain, time demands of school or
work, problems with pumping, and feeling
overwhelmed and frustrated led to weaning.
Many who weaned did not seek out available
help and ultimately many reported regret about
weaning earlier than intended.”*

Barriers

Wambach and Cohen, 2009

Expectations versus Reality

Attitudes, perceived
social influences and her
sense of control

Family and friends

The father

Role models and peers

Establishing Breastfeeding

- Separating Expectations from Reality
- Milk Production and Supply
- Maternal Health and Diet
- Unexpected Outcomes

A Good Milk Supply

Breast development

Adolescence

Pregnancy

Teach concept of
supply and demand

Good management should result in
good milk supply

Appropriate follow-up

Charlotte Reed, et al

Teen Outreach Pregnancy Services (TOPS),
Arizona

November 17, 2016

—Well trained helpers and support

Influence of Family and Friends

Include the family

Educate her support group

Appropriate written
materials

Teach and model
assertiveness skills,
positive communication

Quality of Milk

Total protein is higher

Iron intake slightly lower

Vitamin A lower especially in teens living below the poverty level

IgA and IgM higher

Fatty acid composition more related to socioeconomic status than age

Mature enough for pregnancy, mature enough for lactation. (Riordan, 2005)

Nutrition for the Teen Mother

Caloric needs

Age influences dietary need

Younger teens need more calories

2000-2400 Kcal/day for growth + 500 Kcal/day for breastfeeding

Teens with few fat stores add 300 Kcal/day

Nutritional needs

Calcium

Zinc

Iron

Vitamin A

Vitamin C

4-5 servings milk products (calcium)

3 servings meat, beans and nuts (zinc and iron)

3 servings vegetables, 2 servings fruit (vitamin A & C)

6 servings bread (whole grain) (Zinc)

The Good News

Bone density

Decreased breast cancer
risk

More energy for
mothering

Baby often causes
positive life turn

Special Considerations

Body Art

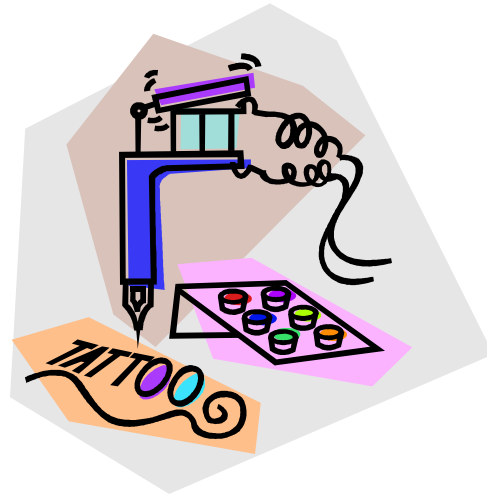
Tatoos

Piercings

Hair Dye

Tanning

Surgeries



STI/STD

Extra Challenges

- Simplicity
- Diet/supply
- Special
Circumstances

Managing Fears

- Body Image
- Modesty
- Pain
- Choices

Education Options

- Home Study
- Part Time/Full Time
- Minor Parent Program
- Adult School
- CA High School Proficiency Exam
- Graduate Education Diploma

Sequencing

Postpone Education;
Emphasize mothering
when baby is small

Narrow focus to do
one thing well

Examine goals and
motivation

Newborn and beyond

- Adjusting to changing needs
- Coping with pressure to wean
- Understanding baby's emerging autonomy
- Integrating into healthy life
- Screen for depression

Discipline

- New Parenting Skills
- Breastfeeding and patience

Changing Demands

- **School**
- **Work**
- **Child Care**
- **Living Arrangements**
- **Support**
- **Custody**
- **Finances**
- **Social**

Long-term needs

*Follow-up by HCP
increased duration
for teens*

(Wambach, 2011)

Support Systems

Peer Leader	Mixed Group (LLL)	Mentor/Family
Community Programs	Networking	Religious Programs

Empowering for Life

- Communication Skills
- Assertiveness
- Building self-esteem
- Finding her adult voice
- Becoming her child's advocate
- Dignity in the face of disrespect