

## TEEN PREGNANCY PREVENTION



Richfield  
Teen  
Pregnancy  
Prevention  
2003

### WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Early sex and pregnancy have significant risks for teens. Early sex places teenagers at increased risk for sexually transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS, pregnancy, and pregnancy complications.

Girls under age 15 who become pregnant are at an increased risk for anemia, hypertension, and low birth weight.

Teens who become parents face long-term hardships. They are less likely to get and stay married, complete high school or go on to college, and more likely to live in poverty than non-parenting peers. Children of teen parents often inherit the risks of their parents.<sup>1</sup>

Studies conducted over the past 20 years on what protects teens from early initiation of sexual intercourse report two constants may make a difference in the lives of teenagers:

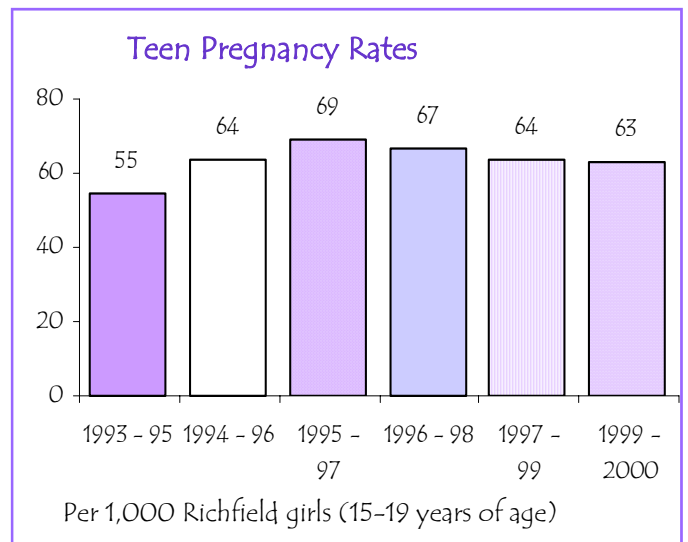
- connectedness (parental warmth, support, and closeness to a teen)
- parents' attitudes and values about teen sex.<sup>1</sup>

### Pregnancy rates decline yet higher than Hennepin County<sup>2</sup>

During the 1990s, the teen pregnancy rate increased slightly, although the rate has been declining in recent years.

- In 1999-2000, there were 63 pregnancies per 1,000 girls, age 15-19, in Richfield.
- Richfield's teen pregnancy rate was slightly higher than Hennepin County's rate of 58 pregnancies per 1,000 girls in 2000.
- In 2000, there were 63 teen pregnancies in Richfield.

*Teen pregnancy is defined as a total of births, fetal deaths, and abortions to girls who are under the age of 20.*



### Increase in 9<sup>th</sup> grade girls who have had sexual intercourse<sup>3</sup>

There has been a slight increase in 9<sup>th</sup> grade girls who have had sexual intercourse.

- In 1998, 18% reported they have had sexual intercourse; in 2001, 25% reported they have had sex.
- In 2001, 53% of senior boys and 45% of senior girls reported they have had sex.

- In 2001, of the sexually active 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders, 8% reported they rarely or never used birth control.
- In 2001, 6% of senior girls reported having been pregnant at one least once.

## What can you do?

Get to know the youth in your neighborhood and community.

Volunteer to work with youth: coach a sport team, be a mentor, or help at school.

Support recreation, after school, and community-service programs that reach at-risk youth.

Support comprehensive sexuality education at schools and access to free or low cost teen medical services.

### If you are a parent:

Talk with your children early and often about sex and love.

Establish rules, curfews, and standards of accepted behavior.

Know your children's friends and their families.

Discourage early, frequent, and steady dating or dating someone much older.

Let your kids know that you value education and help them succeed in school.

Help your teenagers develop options for the future that are more attractive than early pregnancy and parenthood.

*For more information on teen pregnancy prevention, contact Eileen O'Connell, 952/563-4964, eoconnell@ci.bloomington.mn.us or Rose Jost, 952/563-8910, rjost@ci.bloomington.mn.us*

## RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR TEEN PREGNANCY (partial list)<sup>4</sup>

### PROTECTIVE FACTORS (positive influence/decreased risk)

#### Teen

- has a good self-concept; participates in sports or other positive extracurricular activities
- does not engage in early sexual activity or if active, uses contraception
- has higher education plans and career goals
- feels positively connected to school

Parent(s) care about and value on-going communications with teen; monitors teen's behavior

Schools offer comprehensive sexuality education; there are coordinated state & local programs and policies for reducing teen pregnancy

### RISK FACTORS (increased risk)

#### Teen

- believes that pregnancy is a sign of manhood or womanhood
- has other risk factors: alcohol and substance use, emotional problems
- has experienced physical or sexual abuse
- failing at school or drop-out
- dates at an early age; early age of intercourse
- has sexually active peers; older sister who became a teen parent

Communities with higher levels of unemployment, crime, and residential mobility

### Main reasons teens give for not having sexual intercourse<sup>3</sup>

- Fear of pregnancy (9<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> graders)
- Fear of sexually transmitted infections (9<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> graders)
- Not right for a person my age (9<sup>th</sup> graders)

## What has Tri-City Partners done?

TCP supports various teen pregnancy risk reduction initiatives and youth involvement opportunities including:

- **Teen Pregnancy Prevention Youth Council:** a group of middle and high school youth who promote sexual abstinence and good decision-making through classroom presentations and community involvement.
- **Teen Improv:** high school students who perform short scenes on teen issues (e.g. dating, alcohol use) for meetings, workshops or community forums. An interactive audience discussion follows, guided by an adult facilitator.

**Bloomington Public Health** conducts school health education classes, provides public health nursing services to pregnant teens and teen parents, and provides low cost family planning and sexually transmitted infections clinical services at the Public Health Center.

#### Resources:

- 1 - R. Blum, C. McNelly, R. Sieving: *Monograph: Mothers' Influence on Teen Sex: Connections That Promote Postponing Sexual Intercourse*, Center for Adolescent Health and Development, University of Minnesota, 2002
- 2 - Minnesota Department of Health, *Center for Health Statistics*, St. Paul, MN
- 3 - 1998, 2001 Minnesota Student Survey, Richfield
- 4 - *A Work in Progress, V.2*, National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Research Center, Center for Adolescent Health and Development, University of Minnesota, MN, 2003

## OUR MISSION:



The mission of Tri-City Partners for Healthy Youth and Communities is to promote health, reduce risks, and build assets in our youth and communities. Tri-City Partners work with organizations, groups, and concerned citizens on projects to reduce high-risk behaviors and enhance healthy youth development. Information cards are available for the areas of youth and tobacco, alcohol and other drugs, teen pregnancy prevention, and physical activity and nutrition for the cities of Bloomington, Edina, and Richfield. Funding for these activities has been provided by the Minnesota Department of Health and the Minnesota Tobacco Endowment.