

May is Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Month!

Every 28 minutes, a North Carolina teen becomes pregnant.....

About Teen Pregnancy

- One in three teenage girls becomes pregnant at least once before the age of 20.
- More than 400,000 children are born to teen mothers in the United States each year.

More than 19,000 North Carolinians between the ages of 10 and 19 get pregnant each year – giving us the 14th highest teen pregnancy rate in the nation. And while our rates have improved over the past two decades, we cannot deny the profound effect that teen pregnancy has on communities, future generations and the teens themselves.

The answer to, “Why do teens get pregnant?” can seem so simple – after all, we all know how babies are made. But both significant research and common sense tell us that the answer to that question is much more complicated. Education, socio-economic status, future opportunities, how a teen relates to parents or peers, and self-esteem only scratch the surface of the more than 200 risk factors for teen pregnancy.

Consequences of Teen Pregnancy

Research closely links teen parenthood to many negative consequences for mothers, fathers, and their children. For example, compared to those who delay childbearing, teen mothers are more likely to drop out of school, remain unmarried, and live in poverty; their children are more likely to be born at low birth weight, grow up poor, live in single-parent households, experience abuse and neglect, and enter the child welfare system. Daughters of teen mothers are more likely to become teen parents themselves and sons of teen mothers are more likely to be incarcerated (*By the Numbers: The Public Costs of Teen Childbearing*. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy: Washington, DC.)

The Cost of Teenage Pregnancy

Teen pregnancy and child-bearing have significant economic and social costs. Teen childbearing (teens 19 and younger) in North Carolina has cost taxpayers (federal, state, and local) at least \$312 million yearly. The average annual cost associated with a child born to a mother 17 and younger is \$3,868 and on a national level, childbearing costs taxpayers at least \$9.1 billion a year.

Teen pregnancy in Forsyth County

In 2009, **808** teens became pregnant in Forsyth County (14 pregnancies among 10-14 year olds and 794 pregnancies among 15-19 year olds)....an increase from the previous year. These statistics put Forsyth County's rank at **25** out of our 100 NC counties for the highest teen pregnancy rates. In 2008, we ranked #32 with 799 teens becoming pregnant in Forsyth County (18 pregnancies among 10-14 year olds and 781 pregnancies among 15-19 year olds).

**“An ounce of prevention
is worth a pound of cure”**

How can we prevent teen pregnancies in Forsyth County?

Preventing teen pregnancy requires a community approach. Schools, community groups, parents, doctors, educators, legislators, and teens themselves must all be involved to give teens a chance for a healthy future.

- Get and keep teens engaged in healthy, extra-curricular activities during the hours of 3pm-6pm.
- Speak to our youth honestly and openly about sex and its consequences. Be an “askable” adult and if not comfortable talking to our youth about sex, provide them with necessary resources to answer their questions.
- Learn more about the Healthy Youth Act/Bill 88 and support the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School's Comprehensive Sexuality Education program beginning this upcoming school year (2010-2011).
- Get involved with the Forsyth Adolescent Health Coalition (FAHC) and other local organizations that address adolescent pregnancy prevention, housing, and access to services for our teens.
- Be an advocate, serve as a leader and/or role model and support/develop a teen mentoring group (like Teen Talk, the Teen Initiative Project, Teens With a Purpose, Boys to Men, Sister to Sister, etc) within your community organization, church, or club.

National Day to Prevent Teenage Pregnancy

The 9th annual National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy will take place on May 5, 2010. The purpose of the National Day is to focus the attention of teens on the importance of avoiding teen pregnancy and other serious consequences of sex. During the month of May, teens nationwide are asked to take a short online quiz available at www.stayteen.org. Let's encourage our Forsyth County teens to take this quiz and use the quiz as a conversation starter about sex, love, and values.

For more information:

If you have additional questions or suggestions concerning how we can take action to prevent teenage pregnancy here in Forsyth County, about FAHC Prevention efforts, or for resources on teenage pregnancy prevention and starting teen mentoring programs please contact Rolanda Patrick Coleman at (336) 703.3269 or colemarp@forsyth.cc. We look forward to hearing from you!

www.teenpregnancy.org
www.thenationalcampaign.org
www.appcnc.org
www.advocatesforyouth.org
www.stayteen.org
www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/AdolescentReproHealth/