

# sextalk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

**factoid**

**31% of UA students who are single or dating have never had sex.** (2003 Health & Wellness Survey, n=1792)

**Q.** I am a virgin and I get angry and sad when sex is talked about as if it does not come with a price. I have countless friends who are having sex, but are not really happy about it nor want to have it. I also know many who regret sexual intimacy they had with partners who ended up caring very little about them. I want others to know that it's possible to be a virgin and feel completely satisfied and happy; and that it's possible to be deeply loved by a partner who respects you enough not to have sex with you. Thanks!

**A.** Thank you for your letter. It gives us an opportunity to address an equally important issue in sexual health and fulfillment – abstinence.

While popular media continues to glamorize sex making it seem like everyone is hooking up, abstinence is actually on the rise. A national study conducted in 2001 revealed that 54.4% of American teens are choosing to remain abstinent, up from 45.9% in 1991 (*Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance*, CDC). Perhaps even more significant, a recent survey revealed that 63% of teens that have been sexually active said they wish they had waited longer to have sex (*With One Voice 2002*, n=1001).

Choosing abstinence, does not mean an individual is nonsexual or a “prude”. It simply means the person is choosing not to have a sexual partner at this time in life. And, there are a lot of good reasons for making this choice:

- **Unwilling to risk an unplanned pregnancy or contract an STD** – Anytime you have sex, no matter how protected it is, there's a chance of disease and pregnancy.
- **Not ready for the level of intimacy and responsibility that a sexual relationship entails** – Broken hearts can occur in any relationship, but when sex is involved the emotional wounds are almost always deeper and harder to heal.
- **Sex just doesn't feel like the “right” decision right now** – Whether this is based on religious reasons, family reasons, or just a gut instinct, it's a feeling that deserves to be honored.

People who end up regretting sex, usually had sex for the wrong reasons – someone else wanted them to, they thought it would cement or forge a relationship, they wanted to “fit in”, or they just wanted to “get it over with”. The bottom line is – sex that makes you feel bad about yourself is just not worth having.

Have a question? Send it to [sextalk@email.arizona.edu](mailto:sextalk@email.arizona.edu)

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