

sex talk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

wildfact

Condom use among UA students who are sexually active is at an all-time high. 67% of students who have sexual intercourse usually or always use a condom. (2010 Health & Wellness Survey, N=2,931)

Q Does abstinence-only sex education have a negative effect on sexual health and awareness?

A. Abstinence-only curricula have been ineffective, based on what we know from published studies. Despite \$1.5 billion in funding since 1998, these programs have failed to reduce sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), decrease teen pregnancy, or significantly delay sexual initiation among young people.¹ Perhaps even more troubling, a review of thirteen abstinence-only programs found that eleven of them contained false, misleading, or distorted information, according to findings from a 2004 Congressional Report.

Most Americans – parents, students, and health experts alike – support some form of comprehensive sex education that is medically accurate and age-appropriate. These programs include information on contraception, STDs, relationships, and decision-making; as well as emphasizing that abstinence is the only 100% effective option to prevent pregnancy and STDs.

In contrast to abstinence-only programs, comprehensive sex ed programs have been shown to be effective by preventing STDs and unintended pregnancy without increasing

sexual initiation, the frequency of sex, or the number of sexual partners among those who participate in them. In fact, many comprehensive programs have been shown to delay or decrease sex, thereby reducing risk.

Although the U.S. has one of the highest teen pregnancy rates among developed countries, a significant drop in the teen birth rate occurred from 1991-2004, much of it attributed to the improved use of contraception.² These results support the fact that providing accurate and complete information allows individuals to make more informed decisions... not unlike the goal of this column.

Have a question on sex or relationships? Email us at sextalk@email.arizona.edu or check out over 10 years of SexTalk Q&As online here:



¹ Hauser D. Five Years of Five Years of Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Education: Assessing the Impact.

² Santelli J *et al.* Explaining recent declines in adolescent pregnancy in the United States: the contribution of abstinence and improved contraceptive use.

