

Somerset Youth and Community Service

What are the Odds?

Pregnancy Session



Aims: To illustrate the statistical chance of getting pregnant from one instance of sexual intercourse

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the session the participants will:

- understand the unpredictability of pregnancy when having unprotected sex

Group size: 6 – 10

Time: 30 mins – 1 hour

Venue: single room

Materials:

- Wastepaper bin
- Tennis ball or other lightweight ball

Time	What	With
10 mins	Ask the young people to sit around the outside of the room. Place the empty bin on a desk or on the floor in a central location in the room. Have each young person, one at a time, try to throw the ball into the wastepaper bin from where they are sitting. Keep track of how many students get the ball in.	Wastepaper bin, tennis ball or other lightweight ball
5 mins	Once everyone has attempted it, say the students the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No one can be absolutely sure they're going to get the ball into the bin beforehand, right? There is uncertainty involved. • <i>But</i> there was always a chance that someone would make the basket, even if all they do is keep trying. • And X of you did get the ball in. Now imagine if 360 million young people tried to make the throw. Is it likely that at least one person will get the ball in? <p>Tell the young people that the average male ejaculates 360 million sperm at one time and only one sperm has a chance to get through to unite with the female's egg to cause a pregnancy. Discuss.</p>	
15 mins – 40	Read out each myth (see below) and ask young people's views. Discuss each before giving the correct information. This can be done using a true / false continuum.	
5 mins	Let the young people know they can talk to you if they're worried about anything. Also give out the SWISH web address https://swishservices.co.uk/young-people/ - young people can get information, advice, contraception and testing via this site.	



What are the Odds?

Pregnancy Myths

1. Myth: You can't get pregnant the first time you have sex.

Fact: Whether it's the first time or fiftieth time you have had sex, your chances of becoming pregnant are the same. Even if a girl has never had her period, there is a possibility that she's about to start her first cycle. In that case, then she has already ovulated, which means that an egg is present, and when an egg and sperm are present, pregnancy can occur.

2. Myth: Girls can't get pregnant during their period.

Fact: Most girls ovulate in the middle of their cycle on about day 14 after their period starts, but some ovulate closer to or during their period. Also, it is important to remember that sperm can survive in the body for up to seven days. If you ovulate within a week of having unprotected sex, there is a possibility you can still become pregnant.

3. Myth: Douching or washing my vagina out after sex will prevent me from getting pregnant.

Fact: Douching will not prevent pregnancy, but it can increase the chances of a girl becoming pregnant. Douching is when a solution of water and some mild cleanser is used to wash out the vagina. The fluid is usually in a squeezable bottle with a long tube that can be inserted into the vagina. The fluid is then pushed up inside the vagina when the bottle is squeezed. If a girl douches right after sex, the force of the liquid can push the semen further into the girl's body, increasing the chance of pregnancy. Douching is in fact not recommended at all because it can cause infections by messing with the natural pH balance in the vagina. The vagina should ideally have a lower pH or be a bit acidic to protect itself from infection. The vagina produces small amounts of discharge to clean itself naturally.

4. Myth: If a guy "pulls out" before he ejaculates, you can't get pregnant.

Fact: Once a guy is aroused, he releases pre-ejaculatory fluid also known as "pre-cum." Pre-cum may contain sperm, and it only takes one sperm to fertilize an egg. It can also be harder for teens to control their ejaculation and pull out in time, which increases the risk of ejaculating in the vagina or getting it on the vaginal opening. "Pulling out" should not be the only form of birth control that you and your partner use, especially when there are other methods that are more effective at preventing pregnancy. Also, it is important to remember that pulling out does not protect you from sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

5. Myth: You can't get pregnant from pre-cum.

Fact: Pre-cum or pre-ejaculatory fluid is released when a guy gets an erection. Pre-ejaculatory fluid cleans out the inside of a guy's urethra. Pre-cum can pick up leftover sperm on its way out of the urethra if a guy ejaculated recently. Even if a guy hasn't ejaculated recently, it is still possible for the girl to get pregnant because some guys have sperm in their pre-cum.

What are the Odds?

Pregnancy Myths continued...

6. Myth: You can't get pregnant if you have sex standing up.

Fact: Yes, you can get pregnant this way. No matter what position you are in, whenever you are having vaginal sex, especially without any form of protection, you are at risk of getting pregnant. Gravity has no effect on a sperm's ability to travel through the vagina, into the uterus, where it can potentially reach an egg. The truth is that there is no sex position where you can't get pregnant.

7. Myth: Having sex in water— like a pool or hot tub— prevents you from getting pregnant.

Fact: Whether you are in a bed, underwater or in space, it is still possible to get pregnant if you are having unprotected sex. It would be best to use some form of protection when in a pool or hot tub, such as a condom. There is some concern that the chemicals in a pool or hot tub could weaken a condom, but it is better to use one anyway. A "female" or receptive condom would be a better option since it's less likely to slip out of the body, and it's made of polyurethane, which is very durable. You do have to watch out though because sex in a pool or hot tub can irritate the genitals, which increases the risk of STI.

8. Myth: You can't get pregnant if you do jumping jacks after sex.

Fact: No, semen will not flow down and out of your vagina because you're doing jumping jacks. If you want to prevent a pregnancy, you need to use a condom during sexual intercourse or be on some kind of hormonal birth control.

There are a lot of myths about pregnancy—and some are completely ridiculous. So, it is really important to differentiate between what's true and what's false. You don't want to assume you won't get pregnant when you're taking a risk and not practicing safer sex. And you don't want to panic when you haven't done anything that puts you at risk for pregnancy either. Knowing the facts makes it so much easier to figure out what you need to do to prevent a pregnancy—if you decide to have penile-vaginal sex.