



# Poo Yai Pert Jai Luke Lan (rak) Plawt Phai

Breaking the Ice in Parent-Child Sexual  
Communication Guidance for  
parents and adults about creative,  
healthy communication about sex  
with their teenage children



# **“Poo Yai Pert Jai Luke Lan (rak) Plawt Phai” Breaking the Ice in Parent-Child Sexual Communication**

Guidance for parents and adults about creative,  
healthy communication about sex with their teenage children

# **“Poo Yai Pert Jai Luke Lan (rak) Plawt Phai” Breaking the Ice in Parent-Child Sexual Communication**

Guidance for parents and adults about creative,  
healthy communication about sex with their teenage children

First Printing	October 2013
Number of copies	2,300
ISBN	978-616-7525-10-5
Place of Publication	PS Supply Limited
Format	Wattansin Suvarattananon
Pictures	Thanyanan Chappannarangi
Published by:	Chevron Thailand Exploration and Production, Ltd. Tower III, SCB Park Plaza 19 Ratchadapisek Road, Chatuchak, Bangkok 10900 Tel: 0-2545-5555 Internet: <a href="http://www.chevronthailand.com">http://www.chevronthailand.com</a>
Developed by:	PATH 294/1 Asia Building, 1st Floor Phayathai Road, Rajthevi, Bangkok 10400 Tel: 0-2611-3001-5 Fax: 0-2611-3006 Internet: <a href="http://www.teenpath.net">www.teenpath.net</a> <a href="http://www.lovecarestation.com">www.lovecarestation.com</a> With financial support from the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria (GFATM)
Developed from:	“Kuy pert jai rak plawt phai” “Talk Openly, Love Safely”

PATH permits the dissemination of this document. However, individuals or organizations that would like to obtain a copy of the material should first obtain permission from PATH and cite this document as the source according to applicable international copyright standards.

This document or content on comprehensive sexuality education can be downloaded from the Internet at [www.teenpath.net](http://www.teenpath.net). Those interested in sexual health or AIDS services for youth can explore content at [www.lovecarestation.com](http://www.lovecarestation.com). To provide recommendations or express an opinion about this document please contact PATH directly or by e-mail at [pathbangkok@path.org](mailto:pathbangkok@path.org)

# Introduction

A survey among adolescents asked them what they thought of their parents. Even though over 90% said that their mother was the most important person in their life, many (46.8%) admitted that they did not share intimate information about their love life and opposite sex relationships <sup>1</sup> with their mother. Thus, the majority of Thai adolescents are not very open with their parents or guardians, despite the fact that youths actually do want advice from these adults when they have relationship problems. Youths may be concerned about disappointing their parents, fear being scolded, resent being compared to youths in other families, or resent being compared to their parents when they were younger.

Studies in other countries have found that parents have considerable influence on their adolescent child's decision to have sex. A study published in 2008 found that half of high school student respondents said that their parents were the most influential figures in their decision to have sex, whereas college students said that their peers were the most influential.<sup>2</sup> Another study cited in that report found that most parents of sexually active youths were not aware of the sexual

---

<sup>1</sup> Survey of 1,111 adolescents conducted by the Bangkok University Research Center Poll on Mother's Day, 2005 on the topic of "How do today's adolescents feel about their mother?"

<sup>2</sup> Heritage Foundation, October 2008

behavior of their child.<sup>3</sup> A qualitative research study conducted by the University of Illinois-Chicago in 2007 looked at the linkage between parent-child communication and adolescent sexual risk; the study found that the method of parent-child communication about contraception and HIV could result in the adolescent child's decision to delay having sex. Communicating about this topic in the family also has the same effect. However, merely having frequent conversations about sex between parents and children may not produce constructive results if the conversation is not interactive and open to debate. **Adolescents who feel pressured to conform to their parents' rules about sex are more likely to become sexually active when compared to adolescents who are allowed to express their disagreement during conversations with their parents.** Families in which there is open parent-child communication have lower rates of adolescent sexuality than families with less direct interaction.<sup>4</sup> When faced with a sexual problem, the majority of Thai youth tend to select "friends" more often than their parents as the first source of consultation (62% versus 28%, respectively).<sup>5</sup> The unwillingness of Thai youth to discuss the issues of sex, relationships, or love with their parents is resulting in a generation of young adults with inaccurate and incomplete information about sex, contributing to increased sexual health risk.

---

<sup>3</sup> Survey of 700 adolescents in Philadelphia, USA in which 58% of youth said they were in a sexual relationship whereas only one-third of mothers thought their child was sexually active.

<sup>4</sup> Study of 30 teenagers with high risk for HIV at an outpatient mental health clinic

<sup>5</sup> 2004 ABAC poll on "Experience and attitudes of adolescents toward sexual behavior" among 1,627 youths, aged 15-25 years, living in Bangkok

However, there is a disconnect between the sexual beliefs of adults, which tend to change slowly over generations, and the rapid societal and environmental changes faced by today's adolescents. The pace of global communications and technology is accelerating these changes in ways never experienced before by the older generation. This results in a communication gap between parents and adolescents, resulting in conflict and sexual health risks.

Children would like to learn about matters related to sex from their parents the most. Thus, parents have an important role to play in helping their children learn appropriately from an early age up through adolescence and young adulthood. **Even though adolescents will still need their private space and independence, they also need advice and close care from elders.** Parents need to examine their own beliefs in this area, as well as methods of exercising authority over their adolescent children so that they can find the right balance to encourage their child to consult them when a problem arises.

Accordingly, the Teenpath Project, with support from The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), developed a curriculum to improve communications that parents and guardians have with children under their care, in order to strengthen the role of the family in promoting adolescent sexual health in parallel with the promotion of school-based sex education. The focus is on providing parents who have adolescent children with knowledge, understanding and good attitudes toward sex, and ensuring that they have the skills to communicate effectively about sex in the family.

In 2005, the “Talk Openly, Love Safely” Project was implemented through a national public relations campaign to promote constructive sex communications between adults and youths, in order to prevent AIDS. This handbook is a product of that project, and 100,000 copies were printed and distributed throughout the country.

PATH  
May 2011

# Table of contents

This handbook will be useful for you if you have faced or might face the following situations	10
This handbook can help find solutions for parents/adults who are experiencing the following	12
This handbook will not be of much use to parents or adults with the following attitudes	14
Why should there be discussions about sex in the family?	16
Youth get information about sex from everywhere-except their parents	19
Parents who feel their child is too young to be learning about sex	20
In the case where parents do not feel the need to have discussions with their child because they believe that their child is under control	21
When parents are reluctant to discuss sex with children out of concern that it would tempt them to experiment	22

Opinions of youths and adults about love and lust	24
Youth learn about sex from seeing how adults behave	26
Before teaching children how to be safe, parents need to know themselves first	28
10 attributes of the ideal parent in the eyes of the child	38
Tips on effectively communicating with adolescents	50
Sample parent-child conversations about sex	52
What to do in the following situations	63
Something parents should know before talking with their daughter	82
Something parents should know before talking with their son	85
Organizations and Agencies Providing Family Crisis Hot-line Service	94

“The parents who brought their adolescent child in for counseling often observed that their child was lovable and well-behaved at ages 6, 7, or -8. But they said that their child seemed to transform into a different person when they entered junior high school, becoming stubborn and rebellious, spending more time on the phone and the Internet, spending more time with their peers, and talking less and less with their parents. In some ways, this is typical behavior of teenagers. Why don’t Thai parents understand this?”

Because Thai culture dictates that children must obey their parents. But I can say, as a parent and psychiatrist, that adolescence is a time when parents need to try harder to listen to their child and to understand what their child is thinking.”

Dr. Sukamon Wipaweeponkul  
Psychiatrist



## This handbook will be useful for you if you have faced or might face the following situations:

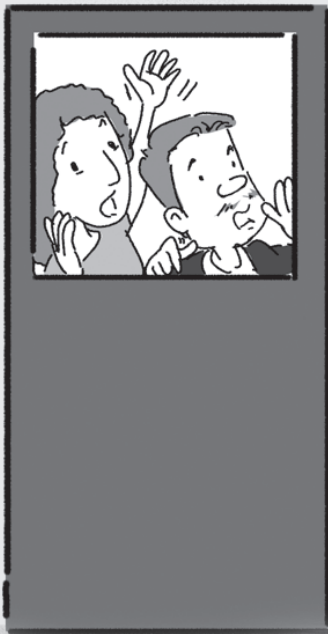
- You almost fainted when you returned home and found your son watching a pornographic movie. When you asked him where he got it, he refused to tell you, broke the CD in half, and threw it in the trash.
- When you asked your son “Why did you return home so late last night? You went out with your buddies, right?” He was silent, refused to answer and avoided eye contact. When you asked him what was the matter he said “nothing.”



- You don't feel comfortable when you see your daughter having numerous male friends, spending money more frivolously, and going out at night more often. She doesn't seem to listen to you, and refuses to stay home when you ask her not to go out. You are worried she will get pregnant, and you don't know how to manage this situation.
- You don't understand why it is becoming more difficult to talk with your child as they enter adolescence, even though they were obedient before. Even saying just a few words to your child can result in raised voices and he/she seems to argue with everything you say. Your child often seems irritated with you.
- On most days, your child watches television or listen to the radio alone in their room. He/she doesn't help with housework and always says "later" when you ask him/her to do a chore. Their style of dressing and manners makes you cross and irritable.
- Your child is never at home during holidays and you don't know where he/she is. Some days your child does not even return home all night. You try to ignore it, and hope that he/she doesn't cause trouble.
- You begin to notice that your daughter is beginning to behave impolitely and frequently raises her voice. She dresses like a young boy and often invites other girls to spend the night at home.

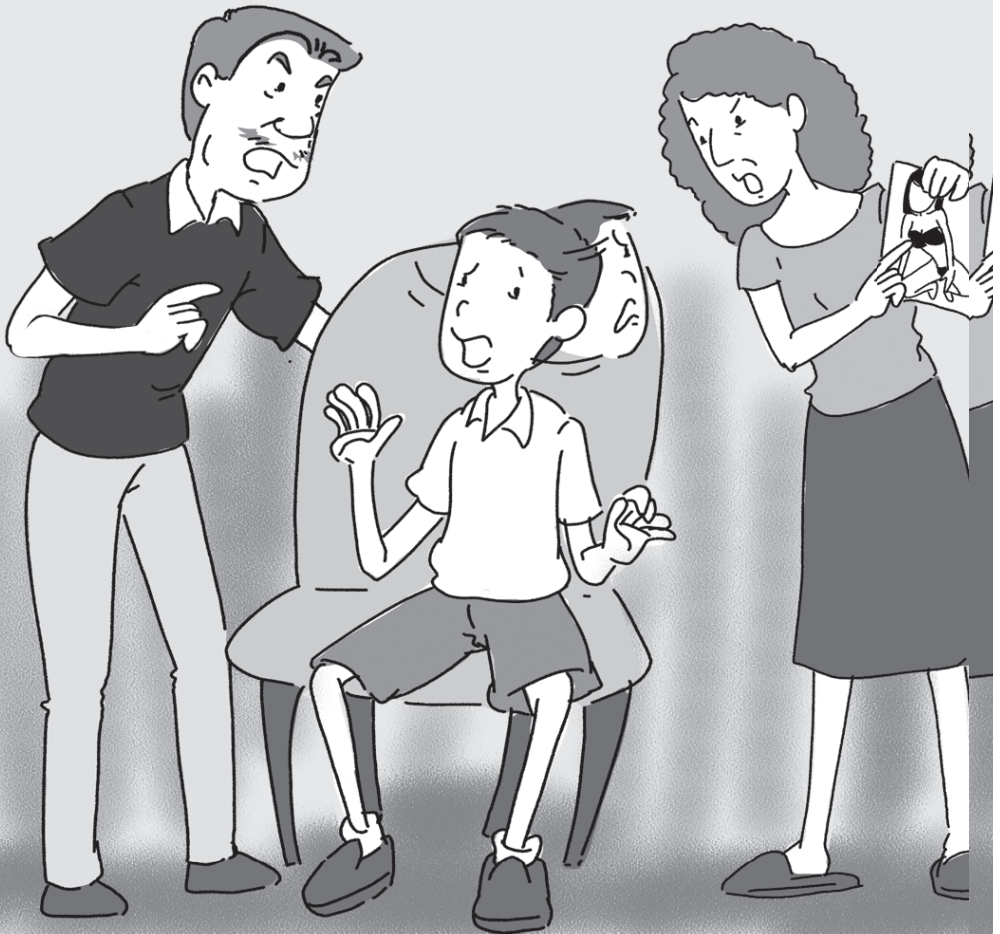
This handbook can help find solutions for parents/adults who are experiencing the following:

 EXIT



- You feel uncomfortable and want to understand why your child or youths in your family are changing so much and in ways that are different from when you were their age.
- You see that there is a problem and want to talk with your child but you don't know how to initiate a dialogue.
- You want to know more about the psycho-physical changes of adolescents to improve communication with the youths in your household.
- You want to talk with your child about what life was like when you were a teenager to help them reflect on the differences today.
- You are not sure that your knowledge about sex is accurate enough to teach the youths in your family, or whether it is even appropriate to discuss the topic with them.
- You want to know how other parents/adults who struggle with these challenges find solutions so that there is harmony in the household.

This handbook will not be of much use to parents or adults with the following attitudes:



- You feel that when there are disagreements between parents and children or adults and youths in the household that a forceful approach, such as scolding, cursing and disciplining the child is needed.
- You will look for any short-term solution available to make the problem disappear as soon as possible.
- You don't think it is appropriate to discuss sex in the family setting because it will be a temptation for the child to experiment. You believe that your child/youth will know what to do when it's time.
- You believe that teaching a youth to be responsible is the sole duty of either the mother or father (not both).
- You think that this is the responsibility of the school; you don't need to address the issue.



# Why should there be discussions about sex in the family?

## Findings from research into parent-child relationships

- The first person an adolescent will consult when they have a question about sex is a close friend (51%), followed by a parent (14%), or their lover (10%). Up to 60% of youth expect their parents to provide knowledge and understanding about sex and would actually prefer to seek advice from them. **But as youths enter adolescence they tend to seek advice from peers and lovers more, and are less likely to consult parents and teachers.**<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> ABAC Poll on knowledge and understanding about sex among children and adolescents in Thailand: A case study of youths aged 9 – 18 years in Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Khon Kaen, Chon Buri, and Songkhla conducted from January 27 to February 3, 2010

- Adolescents who are close to their parents will be less interested in sex than youth who are not as close to their parents. **When parents have close relationships with their daughter, the female adolescent is less likely to engage in risky heterosexual activity.** This risk reduction is even more pronounced if there is good understanding between the father and daughter. The more a father shows interest and attempts to understand his daughter, the less likely she is to engage in inappropriate sexual behavior.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> A survey from the University of Illinois on parent-child relationships



### Results of surveys and interviews with adolescents:<sup>8</sup>

- 96.8% affirm that their mother is the most important person in their life, followed by their father, elder relatives, teachers and peers.
- 46.8% admit that they sometimes keep secrets from their mother, especially on topics of related to love and heterosexual friendships.

### When asked how they would like to see their mother change, surveyed youths responded as follows:

- 25.9% said they would like their mother to complain less.
- 18.4% said they would like their mother to trust them more.
- 16.7% said they would like their mother to be more understanding.

---

<sup>8</sup> A survey of 1,111 adolescents conducted by the Bangkok University Research Center Poll on Mother's Day 2005 on the topic of "How do today's adolescents feel about their mother?"



# Youth get information about sex from everywhere – except their parents

A survey asked nearly 5,000 high school students from around Bangkok where they learned about sex:

- Sexual anatomy and sexually transmitted infections (STI) were learned from school textbooks and lectures
- Sexual deviation was learned from newspapers, television and peers
- Sex positions were learned from pornographic movies shared among peers
- Sexual feelings and desires were learned from fellow students



It is noteworthy that **almost all the surveyed youths learned very little about sex from their parents. Less than ten youths learned from their parents and some said that their parents did not teach them anything about sex.**

# Parents who feel their child is too young to be learning about sex

Surveys indicate that:

- In England, one out of six female youths begin to have symptoms of puberty at age eight, compared to only 1 in 100 from the previous generation. Additionally, one out of 14 male youths experience signs of puberty at age eight compared to only 1 out of 150 from the previous generation.<sup>9</sup>
- Male and female Thai youths are entering puberty at an earlier age: A survey of 3,290 girls found that the average age of their menarche was 12 years, with the youngest at age nine. A survey of 2,708 boys found that average age of their first wet dream was 13 years, with the youngest at age eight.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> "Study of sexual knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and behavior of Thai adolescents."  
Center for Research and Development of Sex Education, Institute of Medical Sciences,  
Chulalongkorn University 2006

<sup>10</sup> "Study of sexual knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and behavior of Thai adolescents."  
Center for Research and Development of Sex Education, Institute of Medical Sciences,  
Chulalongkorn University 2006

In the case where parents do not feel the need to have discussions with their child because they believe that their child is under control,

Research has found the following:

- Over 60% of youth have viewed nude images/clips on the Internet (“The Internet and its impact on youths,” 2006)
- The three most common sexual activities at the beginning of the school term include using the Internet to view nude images (53.8%), watching pornographic films (41.5%), and having sex with a lover (29.1%) (ABAC Poll, April 2005)
- 20% of both male and female adolescents have had blind dates and have had sex with an Internet chat partner (Department of Mental Health, October 22, 2009)

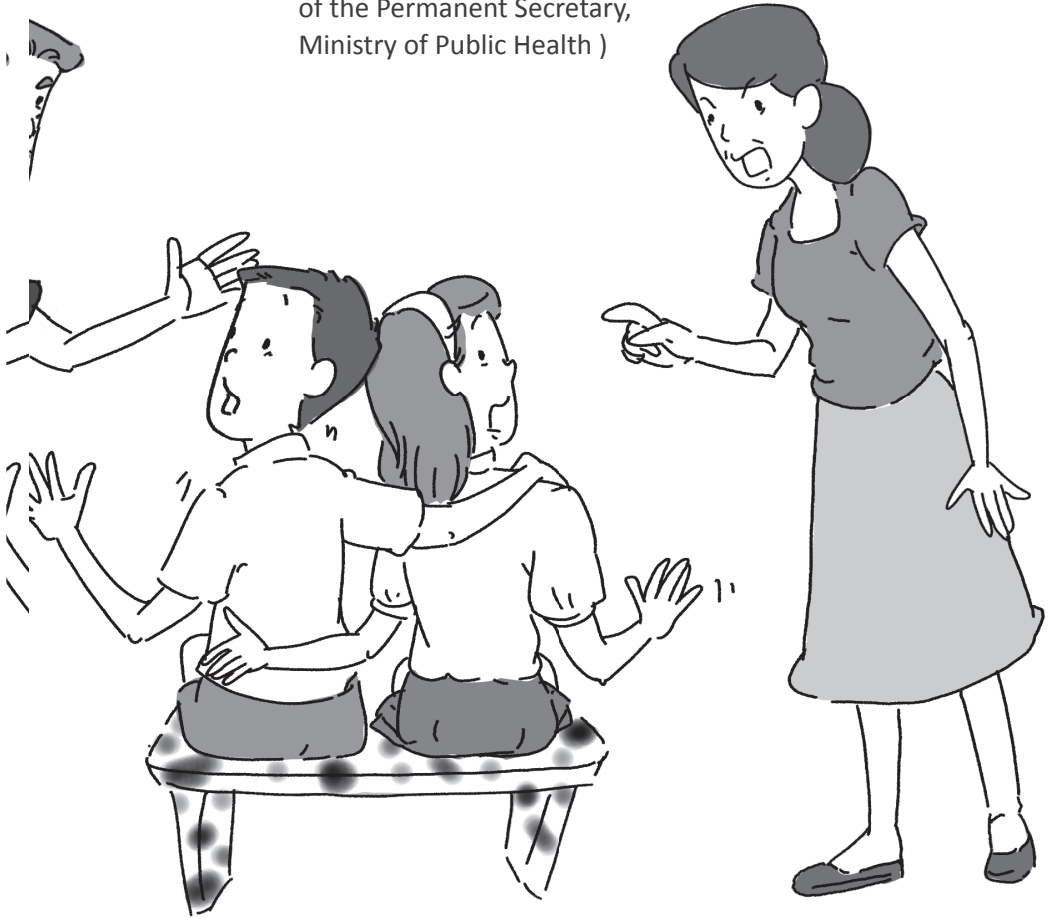
## When parents are reluctant to discuss sex with children out of concern that it would tempt them to experiment,

Surveys have found the following:

- The most influential media for adolescents is mobile phones (69%), the Internet (38%) and television (31%) (Department of Mental Health, October 22, 2009)
- Thai adolescents learn about sex from the Internet more than any other channel (Durex Poll)
- 10% of sexually active students said that the most important motivator for having sex was watching a film with sexual content, or pornographic media on websites and videos (ABAC Poll, February, 2009)
- 74.2% of adolescent females had had sex with a lover or close friend (Epidemiology Division, Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Public Health )



- 71.2% of male adolescents had had sex with a lover or close friend, and 19.1% had had sex with a sex worker (Epidemiology Division, Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Public Health )



“Poo Yai Pert Jai Luke Lan (rak) Plawt Phai” / 23



You don't know my friends at all, yet you scold me about them.

Why are you friends with people like this... they are hooligans and will lead you astray.



## Opinions of youths and adults



Everyone dresses like this, and I'm only going to a friend's house; I'm not going out clubbing.

How can you leave the house dressed like that; haven't you seen the news? There are rapes everyday.





## about love and lust

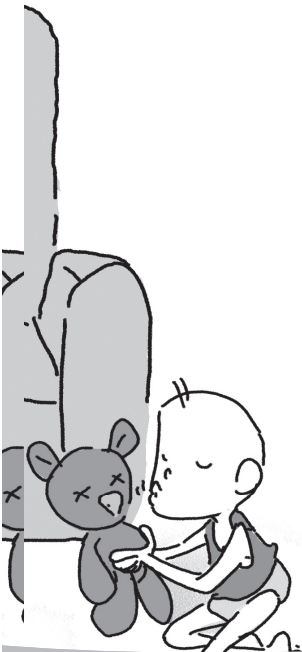


## Youth learn about sex from seeing how adults behave

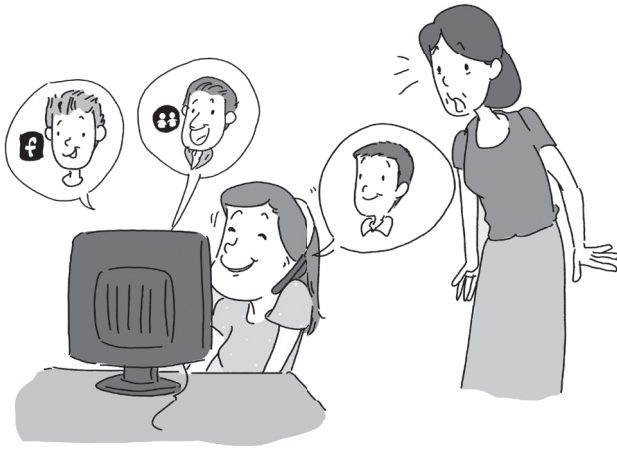
When a child is young, he/she is impressionable. What the parents say and do becomes a model for the child to imitate. Thus, if the topic of sex comes up and the parents say **“that’s obscene, dirty talk”** the child comes to believe that sex is a taboo subject. By nature, when the child reaches adolescence he/she wants to try new experiences and the sex drive is becoming stronger. Thus, it is difficult and counter-productive to try to prohibit the adolescent during this phase.



It is easier to begin the discussion of sex when the child is younger. This can be done initially by showing tenderness and affection, using cooing and comforting sounds and displaying an expression that reassures the child that they are safe while being fed. This will help the child develop a warm personality and make it easier to discuss sex when the child nears adolescence. If you are thinking that you do not have time for this, or that you are really striving just to earn enough money to support the child, then you should consider the following: **“If you neglect the child and they get into trouble, then you will have to waste even more time getting them out of trouble when they become adolescents.”**



“Poo Yai Pert Jai Luke Lan (rak) Plawt Phai” / 27



## Before teaching children how to be safe, parents need to know themselves first

The topic of sex is infused with traditional beliefs and attitudes. If you ask household members, neighbors or the vendor down the road what age they think it is appropriate to have a girlfriend or boyfriend, and how the relationship should occur, you will get a range of opinions based on different sets of standards. Thus, when discussing sex, it is hard to say what is right or wrong, good or bad.

Before discussing sex with the youth in the household, the parents need to first ask themselves what their own beliefs and attitudes are, how firmly they accept these beliefs, and whether these beliefs and attitudes are still appropriate for the younger generation, and in what way.

# Looking at sex in a new way by first accepting that sex is natural

Many parents can probably remember seeing when their toddler first touched their own genitals, and feeling uneasy about that. Some parents even go so far as scolding or hitting a child who touches his or her genitals out of the belief that it is inappropriate or distasteful behavior.

Psychiatrists affirm that all children in the early stages of development are curious and need to explore their body, and may feel a sense of pleasure when touching their own genitals. When a parent scolds or stops a child from touching themselves it leads the child to believe that sex and genitals are dirty.

**Parents who want to understand and be able to talk with their child frankly need to change their own attitudes about sex first so that they can see it as something natural. This provides a foundation for providing accurate information to their child or youth in the household.**

If you want your child to be safe, free from unplanned pregnancy during the school years, and free from STIs it is essential to help your child learn and understand about correct methods of prevention. Children need proper guidelines on how to conduct themselves so that they develop trust in their parents, especially in the area of sex, which is a difficult topic for adults to discuss.



“Poo Yai Pert Jai Luke Lan (rak) Plawt Phai” / 29



## Teaching your child about sex helps build trust and the confidence to speak out

When the topic of sex comes up, many people jump to the conclusion that it is a discussion about sexual intercourse. But discussing sex involves talking about beliefs, thoughts, and behaviors of females, males, gays, transgender, and relationships with others. The topic also covers changes in beliefs and behaviors through the various stages of growth, development and accumulated life experiences. Discussions of sex also need to consider beliefs, and social and cultural context and they influence sexual attitudes and behavior.

**Learning about sex from a young age builds a foundation for healthy values, viewpoints, choices, and sex life decisions for each individual.**

The nature of the human body drives adolescents to be more interested and curious about sex than at any other period in their life. Even though this curiosity is natural, society and the environment are constantly changing, and are very different from the time when parents were adolescents. For example, the emergence of the Internet, cell phones, and new fashions and trends have increased the exposure of youths to sexual information.

It is extremely valuable if parents have an open, two-way discussion about sex with their child, because it will ensure that the child does not face problems on their own. **The earlier the discussion of sex can be initiated, the better protected one's child will be. But the method of communication must be one that promotes a sense of mutual trust.** Parents need to convince their children that they can fully express their thoughts and opinions and that they – the parents – will listen to their children without interrupting them or criticizing their opinions.





Having the confidence to answer a child's questions as opposed to dodging the issue or staying quiet

**How would you answer the following questions?**

“What is an orgasm?”

“Mom, why do you have large breasts while Dad does not?”

“Can girls masturbate – how?”

“Why is my pubic hair stiff and not soft – are others like this?”

Many parents feel that these types of questions are not appropriate for a child to ask, or they worry that if they start explaining things then the child will want to experiment. Therefore most parents will try to avoid answering these questions, such as in the following examples:

“You are asking about this because you want to try it right?”

“Don’t be so curious,  
it is annoying.”

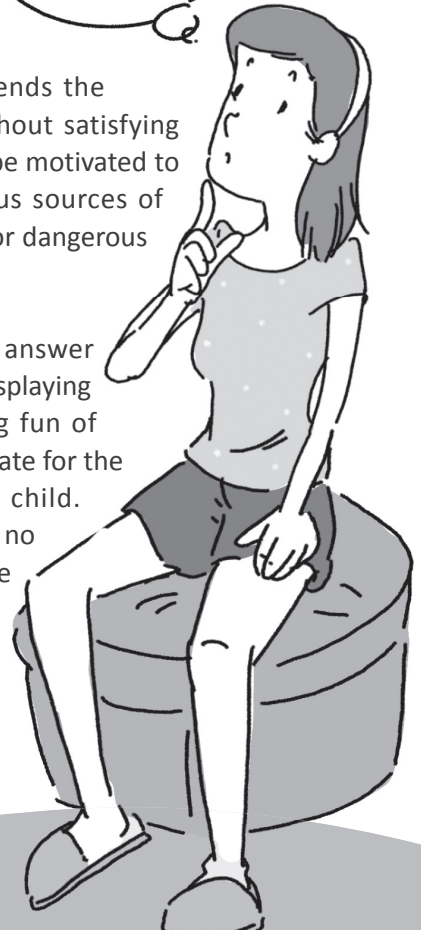
“It’s not a topic for children.”

“When you get older you will understand; don’t be in a rush to know.”

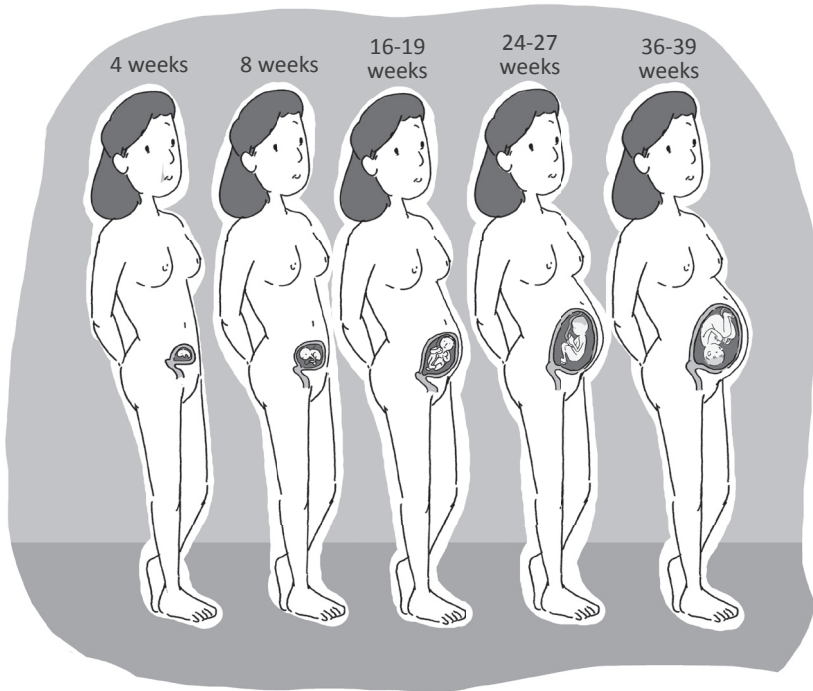


Answering a child in these ways sends the message that these topics are bad without satisfying their curiosity. As a result, the child will be motivated to learn by himself or herself from various sources of information, which might be inaccurate or dangerous and increase the risk for the child.

Parents need to learn, accept and answer their child’s questions frankly without displaying negative judgment, distaste, or making fun of the child. The answer should be appropriate for the age and stage of development of the child. When the child is quite young, a yes or no answer may suffice. As they age, more detailed responses are needed, while using easy-to-understand language.



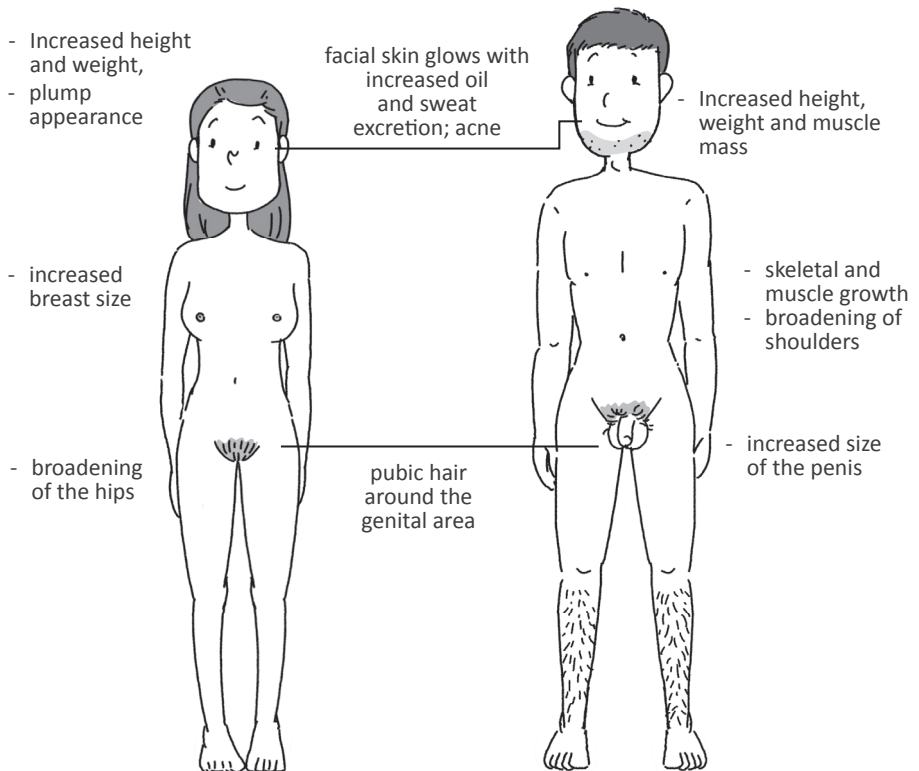
## Use props to help simplify the discussion with your child



An illustration can be an easy method to explain to a child where they came from.

## Girls

## Boys



Pictures with labels help show how the body changes from childhood through puberty and adolescence. This can help parents who are uncomfortable talking about genitals communicate more easily with their child.

## Try to be the one to initiate the discussion with your child by “taking advantage of the situation.”

**For example,** you could take a topic from a newspaper article, advertisement, television dramas, celebrity interview, or popular song and raise the question in a natural way, such as:

“What did you think about that TV drama episode tonight, especially the part when the man and woman were in bed together?”

“There have been frequent news reports about youths who loiter in bathrooms at department stores. Is it true? Do your friends talk about this?”

“Oh this backache is killing me. It must be close to my menstrual period. Do you know what I mean by menstrual period?”

“I can see you are turning into a young man now because the girls like to call you on the phone. Don’t you want to tell me about it?”



Only 20% of parents praise their child. 80% speak harshly, threaten or scold their child. This is abusive and it will stay with the child for a long time.

## If you feel uncomfortable or awkward during the discussion, how can you deal with it?



When asking your child what he/she thinks about a news article, and your child does not want to engage in a conversation about that topic, you might make a short observation such as **“Actually, it’s a natural thing to want to express love for another person – even adults do it.”**

If your child shows interest, then you can develop the conversation. However, if your child remains quiet and disinterested, it is not wise to force a discussion. You can just explain that you raised the issue because you are concerned about your child and are happy to talk with them about this whenever they are ready or have a problem.

If your child asks a question that you are too uncomfortable to answer, you can say the following: **“I can’t answer that, but I will ask someone who knows the answer and tell you.”** You could also ask another relative who is close to the child to answer the more sensitive questions.

If your child starts asking questions when you are tired or in a bad mood, don’t shout or respond harshly to your child. Instead, tell them frankly that you are too tired to discuss this at present and need some quiet time to get into a better mood. You can tell them that you will discuss the topic with them the next day.

# 10 attributes of the ideal parent in the eyes of the child

1. Parents who do not constantly talk about how things were better in the old days and do not compare their child to another family's child.

2. Parents who look after their child so that they are well-disciplined and orderly, despite their child's irritability at the parents for commenting on their messy room.

3. Parents who do not spoil their child, even when their child protests about not being indulged.

4. Parents who talk and listen to their child, trust their child and give counsel on various issues. Children will turn away if their parents are the only ones allowed to talk.

5. Parents who have confidence in their child, do not nag, and are ready to listen; parents who can explain decisions related to their child calmly, without using cruel or harsh words.

6. Parents who say "I love you" often and show it; parents who do not complain all the time.



7. Parents who let their child make their own decisions, even if it results in mistakes on occasion; this way the child learns from their own experience. But the parents continue to watch over their child to point out mistakes, suggest better courses of action, and serve as role models.

8. Parents who praise their child when s/he performs well so that they will be motivated to continue to do well.

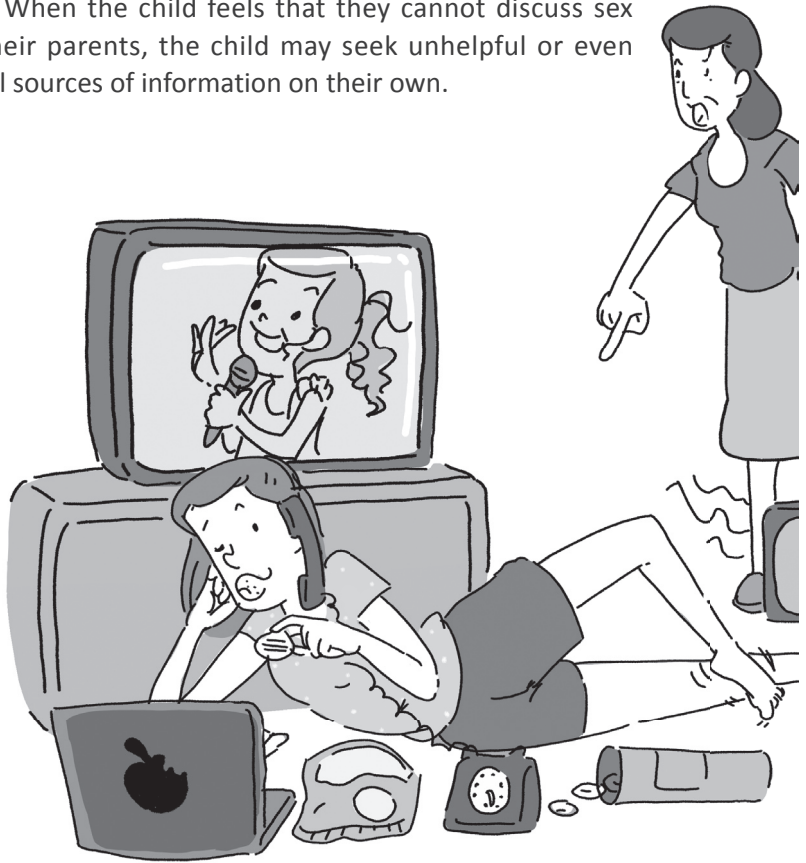
9. Parents who support (healthy) activities that their child likes without disparaging it.

10. Parents who spend time with their child and join in activities that the child likes, such as listening to music with them without criticizing their preference.



## Scolding, cursing, complaining, prohibiting, and raging will not eliminate your child's interest in sex

Indeed, such parental behavior could make the situation worse. When the child feels that they cannot discuss sex with their parents, the child may seek unhelpful or even harmful sources of information on their own.



Parents are tired of saying and children are tired of hearing the following:

“Where are you going now? Why can’t you stay at home?”

“I don’t see you doing anything constructive all day. Why don’t you study your textbooks?”

“Why can’t you find a better group of friends to hang out with? You always seem to be with the bad crowd. They will lead you astray for sure.”

“Can’t you help out around the house? You are old enough now but still won’t help out your parents.”

“Who’s calling you all the time? Every morning, every evening, and you talk for hours. Why do you have all this free time?”



## Speak nicely to your child

When you want to know what is happening in your child’s life, why they came home late, why they are gone all day, or why they are quiet and keep to themselves:

- o Don’t jump to conclusions and assume that something bad is going on
- o Don’t cut off the communication channels by needing them or being sarcastic
- o Don’t always start talking to them with questions starting with **“why”**



## Start the conversation with a sentence which shows that you are genuinely concerned about your child

If your child returns home late, your child would prefer to “There you are! Are you tired? Today you came home a bit late.”

“You must have had a lot of school work. You had me worried.”

If your child does not respond and seems unusually withdrawn, try the following:

“You look tired. Is the school work tough?”

Do you have a lot of homework?”

“You didn’t eat much dinner.

Are you feeling OK?”

“You’ve been in your room all day. Did you sleep late last night?”



# Questionnaire for Parents

**Ask yourself why the following sentences might discourage your child from talking with you**

If you do this and get into trouble, don't come running to your parents to get you out of it.

Why are you so lazy? How many times have I told you to clean your room?

How dare you take the allowance we give you and spend it on your lover? You can't even earn your own income yet.

Don't ask. When the time comes, you will know the answer.

Are you crazy or what? How can you go out in public wearing such a short skirt?

You act like you have all the answers, always arguing with us.

Why are you just getting home? Where have you been? You never tell us where you are going.

You never stay at home or help out with the housework.

Don't let me find out that you are lying to me.

I don't care if your friends do it – I am telling you not to do it.

## Some words will always feel like blame to your child

When words are spoken too forcefully and with angry emotions, it will create a negative feeling in the listener and make them feel victimized without having a chance to explain their side of the story. For example:

- Finding fault, interrupting, or using phrases such as “Tell me now...” or “I don’t want to hear that...”
- Not giving your child a chance to explain their side of the story by cutting them off with leading statements such “You did....am I right or wrong?”
- Showing a manner of behavior or speech which sends the message that you do not want to listen.
- Dominating the conversation at the outset discourages the other person from speaking truthfully or saying anything at all.

### **How to speak to your child so that they will want to listen**

Talk in a way that encourages your child to respond freely and express their viewpoint. Control your tone of voice so that it is pleasant to listen to, and display an expression and eye contact that is inviting and shows interest in the other person.



## Two-way communication

- **Use vocabulary that shows concern and empathy**

“I am sad to see you use our money wastefully. I think you know how hard we work to earn it. I was exhausted while working to earn this money for you.”

“I’m really worried when I see you spending money this way. If you are in trouble you know you can tell me about it.”

### Avoid using expressions such as the following:

“...How dare you spend your parent’s hard-earned money on your lover...you can’t even earn your own income yet.”



- **Try to use open-ended questions to allow your child to respond with an explanation. Avoid using declarative statements and instead use questions to invite an exchange, for example:**

“Can you explain why you did that?”

“I need to understand why you think that way.”

### Avoid using the following threatening expression:

“...if you get in trouble from this, don’t come running to your parents for help.”



“Poo Yai Pert Jai Luke Lan (rak) Plawt Phai” / 45

- **Use a phrase that lets the child know what your expectations are,** for example:

“If you think you will be coming home late, please call us first. Otherwise I will be worried.”

“So how do you think we feel when you don’t call us before staying out later than expected?”

Avoid the following:

“...Why are you just getting back now? Where have you been? You never tell us in advance when you will get back.”

- **Provide a clear rationale when expressing disagreement with your child’s behavior,** for example: “I am not happy when I see you dress this way. Can you first please tell where you are going?”

Instead of:

“Are you crazy? How can a girl go out dressed in such a skimpy skirt?”

- **Allow your child to propose an acceptable scenario,** for example:  
“To help you tell me honestly what you’ve been up to, you can tell me how you want me to react.”

Instead of:

“Don’t let me find out that you’ve been lying to me.”

# Listen to your child

- Youths often complain that parents do not want to hear about their problems. They view that parents just like to complain about the same issues over and over again and say things like “How many times have I told you about this – you never listen.”

- The child does not want to listen to the parent in this case because they don’t feel the parent will have anything helpful to say; they feel like the parents simply wants to vent their frustration on their child.

If you are feeling tired and annoyed that you have to keep saying the same things to your child, you may need to consider the following:

- Have you ever asked your child why they behave the way they do?

- When you do ask them, do you stop talking and listen to their response before continuing to scold them?

- Do you give your child enough time to respond to your question? Don’t jump to the conclusion that your child is concealing something from you. Your child may simply be trying to decide how to express themselves so that you will be more understanding and less angry.



# Survey Form Are you a parent who can talk freely with you,

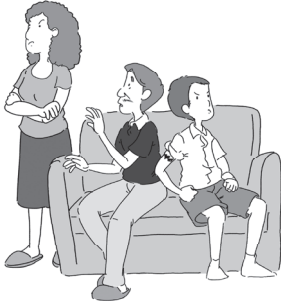
How often do you do the following to your child?	Often	Not often	Seldom	Never
1. Show respect for your child's decisions				
2. You reassure your child that there is a solution for every problem				
3. You show your child that you are willing to listen to anything that's on their mind, even if it is something they think you disapprove of				
4. You show your child the importance of listening during conversations with them				
5. You do not rush to express your opinion about what your child has told you, you ask what their opinion is first				
6. You answer your child's questions directly without making them feel that their questions are silly or irrelevant				

## makes your child feel that they and ask you anything?

How often do you do the following to your child?	Often	Not often	Seldom	Never
7. You tell your child directly why you disapprove of their behavior without going into a long diatribe about the past				
8. You reassure your child that making mistakes is part of a life learning experience and that no one is perfect				
9. When you feel uncomfortable or awkward in answering your child's question you tell them frankly that you feel this way				
10. You share in the enjoyment or humor of the things that your child tells you				

### Scoring

<b>Often</b>	<b>= 4</b>
<b>Not often</b>	<b>= 3</b>
<b>Seldom</b>	<b>= 2</b>
<b>Never</b>	<b>= 1</b>



## Tips on effectively communicating with adolescents

- It is natural for adolescents to want to assert their independence from their parents. Try to think of the time when you were their age. Try to imagine feeling as they do. Remind yourself to listen to your child first.
- Think carefully about the effects on your relationship with your child before reprimanding them. Don't forget that mutual trust and closeness between you and your child is very important and will help protect your child from risk.
- Try to accept that sometimes you will go overboard. Try to calm down first and then go back to your child and start over with a gentler approach. If you can tell your child you are sorry then apologize for losing control.
- Allow your child to have time by themselves so that they can reconsider what has happened.
- Find a friend or relative who understands you to help console you when you are discouraged or frustrated with your child's behavior. Try to learn from their experience and advice on how to manage stress.

# How parents can adapt to improve interaction with their adolescent child

Talking with your adolescent child and doing activities together, such as eating meals, gardening, and sports can help build a stronger parent-child relationships..Discussions about love, relationships and even sex should be conducted in a relaxed atmosphere, not in a didactic or training-type setting. If appropriate, parents can describe their experiences as an adolescent. Children like to hear their parents' personal stories so that they can ask questions and gain easier understanding.

**Inviting your child to talk about their hopes, dreams and life aspirations is an important step towards earning your child's trust so that they will share their stories or problems with you. This will help them make correct life choices based on their future goals, reduce their association with problematic peers, and decrease risk behaviors.**

In any case, becoming closer to your child does not mean trying to be their friend. Parents still need to behave like parents such as by ensuring that their child obeys the rules of the house. Spending time with and showing an interest in your child's life will increase their self-confidence and reduce any risk behavior or obsession they may have with the opposite sex. You can engage in activities that both you and your child like, or try some new activities for variety, to create a strong parent-child relationship.

## Sample parent-child conversations about sex



## When your son has his first wet dream

One morning your son is awake earlier than normal and you see him washing his underwear, something he has never done before. You can assume he has had a wet dream as part of going through puberty, in the same way that adolescent girls experience menarche.

### How to respond:

In a natural way, by asking to speak to your son

Don't make a big fuss or assume a disapproving manner. At the same time, you shouldn't ignore it either since it is an opportunity to begin a dialogue with your son. Find a time when you are alone together, use a gentle tone of voice and expression, and try the following phrases:

"Say, did you know that when boys are becoming adults most experience wet dreams? Did you ever hear about that?"

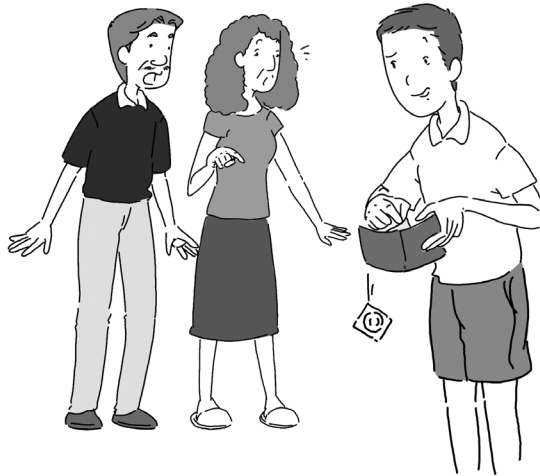
If your child nods, you should continue the conversation a bit to see how he feels about it:

"And did it surprise you when it happened?"

"I'm just curious. Don't worry there's nothing wrong. It's just a sign that you are growing normally. "Let me know if there is anything your parents can do for you."

"And do you know what that liquid is that stained your underpants?"





## Condoms

You notice a condom in your 14-year-old son's pants pocket while cleaning their room.

### **How to respond:**

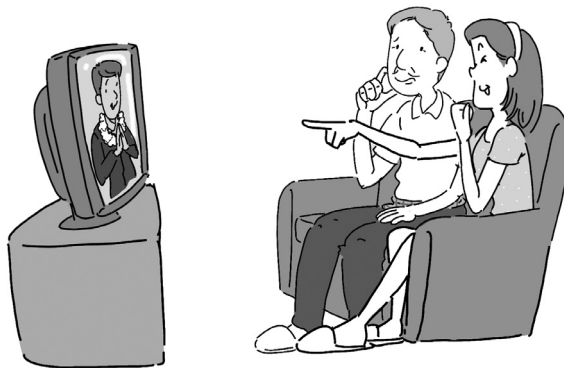
First, consider that your child already has a basic of knowledge about condoms and consider the reasons he may be using them.

"I noticed you have some condoms. What do you need those for? Don't worry. I'm just curious."

"How do you feel about carrying condoms around with you?"

## When your daughter starts to notice guys

Suppose you are watching the evening television news broadcast with your daughter and there is an interview with a handsome man. Your daughter, who is becoming an adolescent, says “Dad, that guy fits my preference.”



### **How to respond:**

#### **Speak naturally**

Don't ignore your daughter or show disapproval either. Otherwise she may become withdrawn and lose some sense of trust of you as a confidante. If she becomes withdrawn it doesn't mean she is no longer thinking about the opposite sex. She will next turn to her peer group to discuss boys and men. But some of her friends may not be sympathetic to her or act in her self-interest. Thus, it is important that you use these opportunities to begin a dialogue with your daughter and increase her trust, perhaps by responding as follows:

“Really? Do you know any guys like this?”

“So, you are becoming a woman. Have any guys started to flirt with you yet? You can tell me.”

## How would you answer if asked the



### **How does a girl manage her sexual feelings?**

Adolescent girls may become sexually aroused if they see erotic photos, are in close proximity to a male peer, or are being petted.

These are natural reactions and will dissipate on their own if there is no further stimulation. A significant percentage of adolescent girls will masturbate to manage their erotic feelings. Masturbation is conducted by gently massaging the genitals or erogenous zones around the breasts, lower stomach, arms, legs, cheeks, and back. A girl can stimulate her clitoris with her fingers by gently pressing in a circular motion around the tip of the clitoris. She can also insert and remove her finger from her vagina in a repetitive motion. It is important to do this gently in order to not bruise or tear the skins in/around the genitals.

## following questions?



### **Why does a boy's penis become erect?**

When an adolescent boy is aroused his penis will enlarge from a flaccid to an erect state.

### **What is leucorrhea?**

This is a thick yellow or whitish vaginal discharge that may occur at different times during the menstrual cycle. Leucorrhea after the end of menses is slightly thick and sticky, and becomes clear about two weeks later around the time of ovulation. The consistency may resemble raw egg whites at that time. This is part of the natural menstrual cycle.

### **Does frequent masturbation increase the size of the genitals?**

Masturbation merely releases the sexual energy that has built up inside a person. It has no effect on the size of the genitals.

# How would you answer if asked the

**What is normal pubic hair for a girl? Should it be soft? Mine is coarse – why is that?**



Pubic hair has special features. Pubic hair is beneficial by acting as a barrier to infection, reducing friction during sex, and masking odors from perspiration. Pubic hair is natural and beneficial for everyone.

**I find myself talking more frequently with a certain guy. The more we talk, the more I like him. He makes my heart beat fast. Is this love?**

Love and having a crush can be difficult to separate. You have to consider how well you know the other person, and differentiate between whether you actually love him or are merely pleased that he is showing interest in you. A crush can happen frequently with anyone due to their appearance, personality, or other attractive feature. But love takes longer to develop and is a deeper emotion.

## following questions?



### What is orgasm?

Orgasm is the peak sexual feeling that results from masturbation or sexual intercourse. There will be a burst of sexual feeling and one's heart beats rapidly. The muscles flex. In males, there will be ejaculation of semen at the point of orgasm. In females, the vagina will contract and there will be release of vaginal lubricant.

### How can you tell if a girl is a virgin or not?

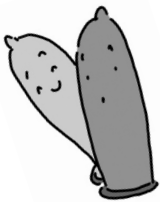
If a girl bleeds or not as a result of sexual intercourse is not necessarily an indication of virginity since the hymen may be ruptured during other activities such as riding a bicycle or playing sports. A more important indicator of virginity or lack of virginity is the emotional feeling between the couple, in which there is mutual attraction and consideration. That shared emotion is more valuable than one's virgin status at the time.



# How would you answer if asked the following questions?

## **If I'm pregnant, can I take a medicine to abort it?**

The liquid abortifacients that you drink tend to have high alcohol content and stimulate blood circulation. This causes a strain on the heart and dilation of peripheral blood vessels. The face may become flushed. Taking this type of medicine will not necessarily cause an abortion and may result in fetal deformity. In some cases, this medicine may cause severe hemorrhaging that can be life-threatening.



## **Is it safer to wear two layers of condoms?**

One male condom is enough to prevent pregnancy and STI if used correctly. You need to squeeze the tip of the condom before applying it to the penis so that it will not break during use. Make sure that the condom package is not expired or damaged. Wearing two layers of condoms is not necessary and may actually increase friction, which might cause the condoms to tear.

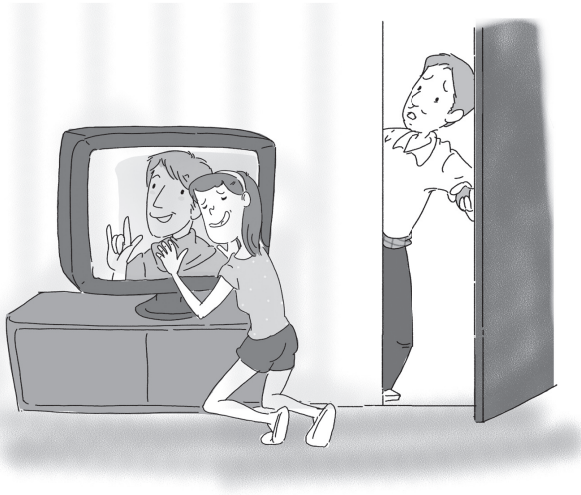
## Samples of knowledgeable responses to questions about sex

Areas for caution	Recommended actions
<p>Try not to be evasive, non-responsive, or change the subject</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Be attentive when listening to your child’s question</b> and encourage more discussion by raising different examples from the current activity, such as while watching television dramas, walking in department stores, traveling in the car, etc..</li> <li>- <b>Provide short answers</b> if you feel awkward talking about the topic, such as when you’re in a public place or during an inappropriate moment. You might say “Let’s wait until we get home to discuss that” or “Let me finish this task first and then we can chat.”</li> </ul>
<p>Try not to refer you child to the other parent for an answer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Tell your child frankly</b> when you don’t know the answer to a question and tell them you will find out the answer and report back.</li> <li>- <b>If you are feeling awkward</b> or embarrassed tell your child you need some time to collect your thoughts and you will provide them with an answer soon.</li> </ul>

Areas for caution	Recommended actions
<p>Try not to laugh, tease or make your child feel that their question is irrelevant. This will confuse your child and could cause them to feel anxiety in the future when they have a problem involving sex; they may not know what the appropriate action is under those circumstances.</p>	<p><b>Try to be supportive</b> with an encouraging tone of voice that sends the message to your child that their questions about sex are welcome.</p>
<p>Try not to use a disapproving tone of voice when your child has a question about sex.</p>	<p><b>Be open to your child’s question.</b> Show your child that you are interested in their thoughts and experiences. Let them feel that sex is natural and not abnormal.</p>
<p>Avoid using a disparaging tone of voice when referring to the genitals.</p>	<p><b>Use the proper terms</b> when referring to the genitals</p>
<p>Do not provide more information than your child can absorb from one conversation.</p>	<p><b>When talking with your child about sex</b> try to use terms that are age-appropriate and not overly technical.</p>

What to do in the following situations:





## When your child is obsessed with a foreign pop star

**Think back to the time when you were an adolescent** when you might have had a fixation on a movie star or popular singer. Re-examine your feelings at that time and how you expressed yourself. Your child is probably going through a similar phase. The only difference is that their fixation is on a non-Thai celebrity.

Reflecting on your own feelings at a similar age as your child **can help you to empathize with them**, rather than rushing to judge. This will also help you remain calm and be a better listener. Try to identify some positive attributes of the

pop star and his/her home country as a way to start a dialogue with your child about their fixation. In this way you can turn a problem into an opportunity. You can also leverage their interest in the pop star or bands by offering to buy concert tickets to their show if your child gets good grades in the school term, or if they demonstrate other positive or responsible behaviors.

*“Conversations between parents and their adolescent child are very important because youths can become overly infatuated with pop singers. It is a phase they go through and parents need to be patient until their child outgrows it, while continuing to provide consistent love and intimacy.”*

Surangkana Suntornpanawes (actress)

## When you discover that your child is trying cigarettes or alcohol

- Try speaking with your child calmly, without showing emotion. Don't try to dominate them. When your child says something that makes you want to scold them or swear, remain calm and quiet. Do not shout. Getting angry will not stop your child from wanting to experiment and may even cause them to increase their habit.



66 | “Poo Yai Pert Jai Luke Lan (rak) Plawt Phai”

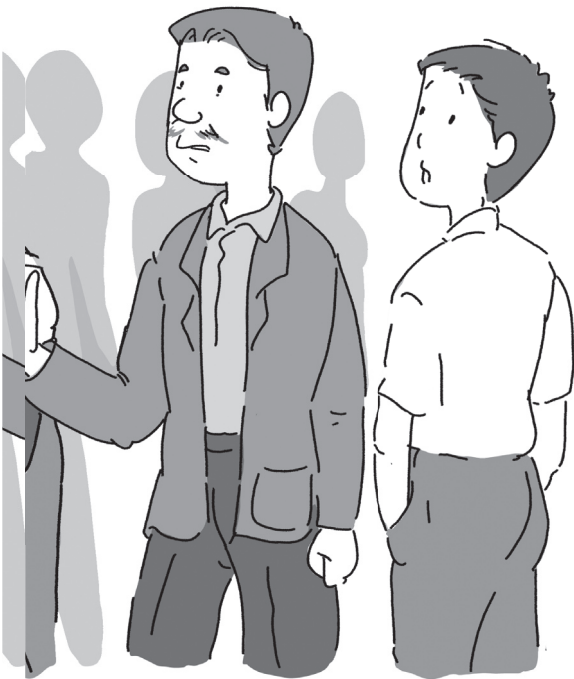
- Gently probe the motivation of your child by asking questions such as “**why**,” “**what do you think about this**,” or “**how will you handle potential adverse consequences?**”
- Listen respectfully to your child when they explain why they are engaging in these behaviors. Some youth may simply respond that they wanted to try it, or there was peer pressure. Remember that during adolescence peers are some of the most influential people in your child’s life.
- **Establish clear rules** and the limits to such behaviors. Define what is clearly not allowed and what punishment will result if your child breaks those rules.
- Let your child know that you believe in them and trust them. This helps build self-esteem. Interviewed youths indicated that that they would learn how to take care of themselves and avoid risky situations if they felt that their parents respected their choices and had confidence in their sense of responsibility.

## Parents are role models for their children regarding the use of tobacco, alcohol and narcotics

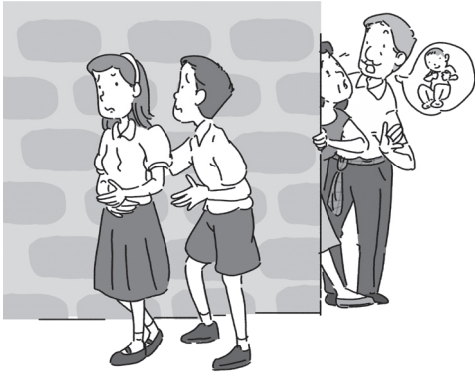
- It is currently estimated that, out of about 15 million Thai youth 15 – 24 years of age, 1.2 million are smokers and 4 million drink alcohol. One-fourth of youths see members of their family getting drunk on alcohol. Research conducted by the Foundation for Women in 2003 found that families in which the head of household drank alcohol are also at higher risk of domestic violence.
- Research conducted by the Department for Juvenile Observation and Protection shows that, out of 60,000 youth in detention centers, one-third committed offenses while under the influence of alcohol. Most of these youths came from households in which some of the adults drank alcohol and smoked; these youths therefore emulated the behaviors.



- If you do not want your child to think it is acceptable to drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, or use narcotics then you must be a role model of abstinence.
- If parents feel that alcohol and tobacco are acceptable adult activities then they need to speak frankly to their child as to why they want to prohibit their adolescent child from using these drugs so that the parents do not seem hypocritical.



*"Poo Yai Pert Jai Luke Lan (rak) Plawt Phai" / 69*



## What if your daughter becomes pregnant while still in school?

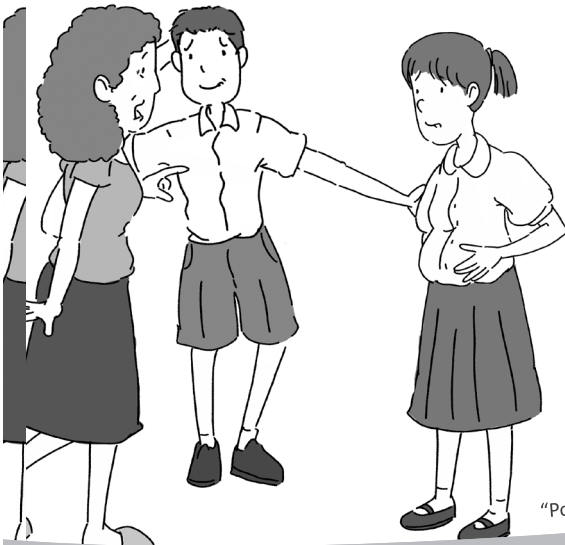
Parents may be understandably distraught and disappointed if their daughter becomes pregnant before finishing school, and are concerned how this will limit their daughter's future choices. But after taking time to consider the situation, you need to reflect on the following:

- Your daughter may go on to live an ordinary life. It is not the end of the world. Your daughter still has the opportunity to advance.
- You need to work together as a team to find the optimal solution.
- It is important to allow your daughter to play a full role in the decision as that will make her more responsible for her actions in the future.
- Don't send the message that this is an irreversible sin that will stick with your daughter for her entire life. Let her view it as a life lesson.
- Be confident that the future still holds good things for your daughter.
- Scolding, blaming or otherwise threatening your daughter in this situation is wrong. This might encourage your daughter to harm herself.



## What if your son gets a school-age girl pregnant?

- Parents cannot avoid responsibility in this situation and need to work with the parents of the pregnant girl to find an acceptable solution for both families.
- You should not leave it up to your son and the girl to try to solve the problem since they may make dangerous choices.
- You should not make decisions on behalf of your child since that sends the message that your son is not responsible for the consequences of his behavior.
- Help your son learn from this mistake so that it is never repeated. Speak openly with other members of the family to create full understanding.



"Poo Yai Pert Jai Luke Lan (rak) Plawt Phai" / 71

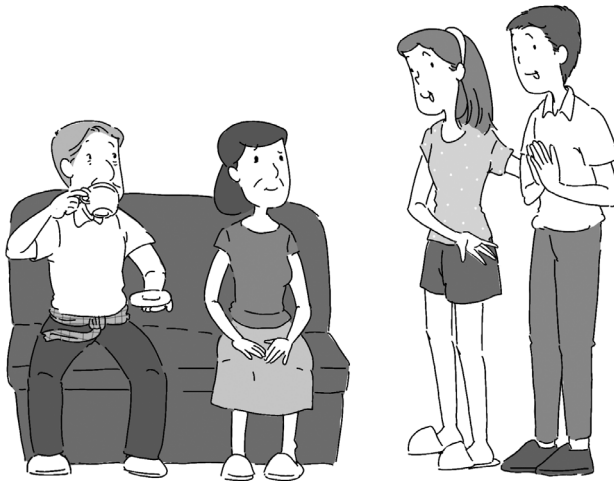
# What if your child invites their boyfriend/girlfriend to spend the night at your home?

**Any parent facing this situation must not be indifferent or ignore the situation.** Similarly, the parents should not over-react or throw a fit since this may only drive your child to spend the night somewhere else that is less safe.

## What to do?

Parents should calmly ask their child what their intention is in bringing their boyfriend/girlfriend to spend the night.

Your child may feel that he/she is old enough to take responsibility for his/her actions. If so, then you need to ask your child whether each person has willingly agreed to spend the night together and whether they are knowledgeable and prepared to prevent pregnancy and STI. If you do not feel your child is old enough or mature enough to be responsible you should ask them directly what they intend to do.



If your child says they are going to work on a school project or give tutoring sessions you can arrange a space for them to work where they can be observed. You also need to confirm that the parents of the other child know what is going on. Your child also needs to know that it is illegal to have sex with anyone less than 15 years of age.

*Section 277 of the Thai Penal Code states that anyone who has sex with a youth under 15 years of age who is not their spouse, regardless of consent of the youth, is committing a crime punishable by 4 to 20 years imprisonment and a fine of 8,000 to 40,000 baht.*

Many parents allow their child to bring an intimate friend to their house with the reasoning that it is safer if they know where their child is and who they are with. This may be an optimal solution since prohibiting your child from being with their boyfriend/girlfriend is more difficult than allowing them to stay in a house with adults present. However, parents should communicate to their child about the importance of being responsible and not making mistakes.



## In the case your child is raped

Obviously, the initial reaction to the news that your child has been raped may be shock, deep sadness, anger, and vengeance against the rapist. But you need to maintain emotional control and focus on the emotional state of your child first.

If your child comes home and tells you they've been raped it means they are desperate and don't know who to turn to. You need to reassure your child that you are on their side and will always support them. Determining the circumstances of the rape is not as important as consoling your child and mending their emotional state. If you show them that you feel deeply depressed and hopeless this will only reinforce the child's guilt. Let time heal the emotional trauma for both of you. **You need to reassure your child that life is still meaningful for them and for the family, and that there is a good future ahead.**



## Concern that one's child might become gay or transgender

- There is still no scientific confirmation whether homosexuality is genetically determined or caused by circumstances in the family and environment. Sexual orientation is not something that can be imitated. Thai medical institutions have asserted that homosexual individuals are not abnormal, mentally disturbed or deviant.
- It is important to understand those with same-sex preferences. Trying to force them to conform to heterosexual norms will only push them away from you. Sexually diverse individuals make positive contributions to society and are no threat to others.
- You are not the owner of all aspects of your child's life. You have to accept the fact that you will not be welcome in some areas of their life. You need to continue to love and care for them anyway. Even if your child has same-sex preferences your child can still be a good child with value to society.
- If your son is gay that does not detract in any way from the honor of their manhood and does not disparage their lineage. If the parents continue to have overly high or unrealistic expectations for their child this may cause anxiety and stress, which may cause the child to seek self-destructive outlets.

# Some misconceptions about same-sex preferences

**Dr. Yongyuth Wongpiromsan has provided the following information on misconceptions in general society about homosexuality:**

## **1. Homosexuals are perverts**

Sexual perversion refers to individuals who get sexual pleasure from behaviors that society does not accept, such as visiting peep shows. Thus, perverts can be either heterosexual or homosexual.

## **2. Gays and lesbians tend to be moody, aggressive and sharp-tongued**

This misconception probably comes from actors in television dramas and comedies, which tend to exaggerate the characteristics of gays. Also, studies of psychiatric patients tend to generalize about these characteristics when, in fact, mental health patients are not representative of the whole homosexual population. In general, there is no evidence to show that homosexual men and women have more aggressive personality traits. Aggressive individuals can be present in either homosexual or heterosexual people.

### **3. Gays and lesbians are exhibitionists**

Both heterosexuals and homosexual populations have individuals who are loud and like to show off. There is no evidence that gays and lesbians are any more likely to be exhibitionists than straights.

### **4. Gays and lesbians have unique gifts for tenderness and cleverness**

There is no evidence that gays and lesbians are any more likely to be tender or clever than straights.

### **5. Exposing young children to gays and lesbians will result in the children copying their sexual behavior**

The science of psychiatry has not found any evidence that you can change your sexual orientation by copying others. Children begin to develop their sexual orientation from 3-5 years of age. Thus, there is no need to be concerned that your adolescent child will try to change their sexual orientation after being exposed to television dramas that feature gays. The same is true of gay or lesbian teachers at your child's school. There is no possibility that they could influence your child's sexual orientation.

### **6. Acceptance of homosexuals is equivalent to promoting homosexuality**

If we accept the disabled in mainstream society does that mean we are promoting everyone to be disabled? If we are accepting of persons living with HIV does that mean we

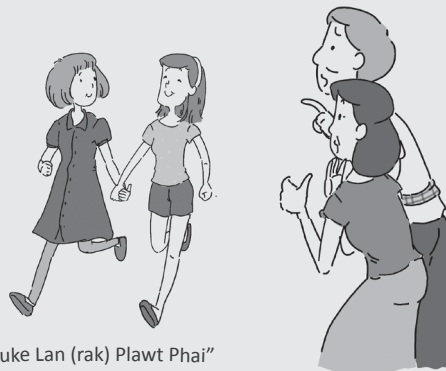


“Poo Yai Pert Jai Luke Lan (rak) Plawt Phai” / 77

are promoting the spread of HIV? Obviously not, and the same is true for the tolerance and acceptance of gays and lesbians who we encounter in our daily life. What is more, accepting them as persons worthy of respect prevents them from hiding, and will encourage them to be more socially responsible as a result.

Misconceptions about homosexuality lead to social prejudice, which keeps many gays and lesbians “in the closet” with low self-esteem. Some go as far as to harm themselves or commit suicide rather than endure the persecution. Eliminating this prejudice will help reduce social dysfunction and other related problems.

**Source:** Excerpted from the publication on “Misconceptions about homosexuality” first published in *Sarakadi Magazine*, No. 158, Volume 14, 1998. Content drawn from a panel discussion on “The rights of women who love women: The role of academia and the media,” held on December 13, 1997 and organized by the Friedrich-Ebert Foundation, Ancharee Group, ACCESS Foundation, Foundation for Women, Friends of Women Foundation, Association for Freedom and Rights, and Women’s Health Network of Mahidol University and Payap University.



# When parents decide to split up

## **The first action is to help your child cope**

When parents are fighting and in a depressed state, their focus is on winning and they tend to think only about their personal benefits. They overlook the impact on their child. If parents decide to separate, then both parents need to help their child in the following ways:

- Help the child understand why the separation is necessary
- Reassure the child that both parents still love them as much as before
- Explain clearly which parent the child will live with, how they will manage, and the advantage of that arrangement for the child and parents
- Encourage the child to express their feelings and listen carefully to what they have to say
- Parents need to understand and accept their child's feelings. If the child loses confidence or develops a sense of abandonment because of the separation the child might act out in a negative way to get the parents' attention



"Poo Yai Pert Jai Luke Lan (rak) Plawt Phai" / 79

# You want to know if your child is infected with HIV or not

You cannot tell from outward appearance who has HIV or not. The only way to know is to have a blood test. Each person has the right to decide for themselves whether to get tested or not.

## Getting the HIV blood test

The hospital or clinic will take a sample of blood to see if you have been exposed to the HIV virus. If HIV enters a person's body, it will destroy the immune system, which will lead to AIDS later on.



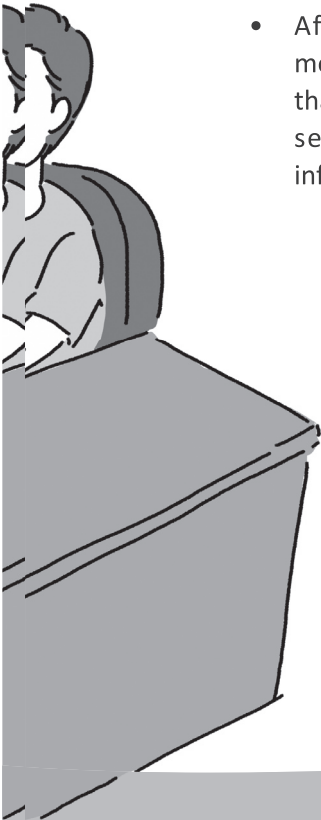
## The blood test result is either negative or positive

### What does a positive test result mean?

A positive result means you are almost certainly infected with HIV and can spread the virus to others unless you take preventive measures, such as using a condom for all sexual intercourse and not sharing unsterilized needles.

### What does a negative test result mean?

- A negative result means that you are probably not infected, but you need to be re-tested to be sure.
- After the first test you need to wait about three months – without having any HIV risk behavior during that time – and take the test again. If it is negative a second time, then you are almost certainly not infected.



# Something parents should know before talking with their daughter

## **Why do pre-adolescent girls like to look into the mirror so often?**

As a girl enters puberty (age 9 – 11 years) she grows taller, has more fat deposits and muscle mass, her chest and hips expand, her legs and buttocks enlarge, and she begins to have pubic and underarm hair. All these changes are caused by a shift in production of female hormones. Because of the speed of some of these changes, girls want to look at themselves to monitor the transformation.

## **Breasts**

The importance of breasts as a sexual attraction has been exaggerated by the advertising industry. The original function of a woman's breasts is for breastfeeding. Small or large breasts can function equally well for this purpose and there is wide breast size variation in any population. There is no ideal breast size.

## **Menses**

The menstrual cycle is the result of fluctuations of female hormones in the blood and revolves around ovulation during the (approximately) 28-day cycle (which can range from 21 to 40 days). When an egg is ready, it is released in the fallopian

tube and makes its way to the uterus. If the egg is not fertilized with a sperm cell it will fail to implant into the lining of the uterus, and menstrual bleeding is the dissolving of uterine tissue that was being prepared as a “nest” for the fertilized egg.

### **Key facts about menstruation**

#### **1. Is menstrual blood bad blood that the body ejects every month?**

No. Menstrual blood is merely extra uterine tissue that was created by small blood vessels to prepare a “nest” for the fertilized egg. The menstrual blood looks darker than normal bleeding because of the concentration of tissue and clotting. It is not bad blood; it is a healthy response to the build-up of hormones.

#### **2. How long does menses last?**

Among some women, menses can come approximately every 21 days. In some instances, menses can come every 40 days. The average interval is every 28 days. The number of days of bleeding can range from 3 to 5, and is rarely longer than 7 days. Normally, an adolescent will use 3 to 4 sanitary napkins per day during menses. If there is excessive bleeding then a physician should be consulted. There is no need to be alarmed if the menstruation is irregular, especially in the first year, because the functioning of the ovaries is still not yet mature. Menstruation becomes more regular over time.

### **3. How should a girl take care of herself during menses?**

- Use clean sanitary napkins or tampons, and replace them often. Change underwear and wash the vaginal area daily with soap and water. You should not use a cleansing solution for cleaning the genital area since this might cause irritation or infection.
- A girl can exercise normally during menses as long as it is not too rigorous. In fact, some exercises can help relieve the pains associated with menstruation.
- You can have sex during your menstrual period but the male partner should use a condom to prevent STI and HIV.
- Other side effects of menstruation include headaches and uterine pains. If these are not severe then rest and relaxation is recommended along with a pain medication. If the pain is severe, a physician should be consulted.

# Something parents should know before talking with their son

## **What changes does the adolescent boy experience?**

Puberty in males begins around age 10 to 12, but some may experience puberty earlier or later than this. It depends on genes, upbringing, nutrition, and the environment of each individual. By age 13 to 14, the secondary male sex characteristics are becoming obvious. The boy will grow taller with broader shoulders and puffy chest. The arms and legs will become more muscular, especially if the boy is physically active.

## **Body hair**

Puberty includes the growth of hair on the legs, arms, chest, armpits, genital area and face. The amount of body hair varies among individuals.

## **Acne**

Male adolescents usually experience some facial acne. Others have acne on their back, chest and neck. Acne is natural and varies among individuals. Daily washing of the face and affected areas can reduce symptoms.

### **Deepening of the voice**

A boy's voice deepens at the same time as the enlargement of their hyoid bone. These secondary characteristics continue until the youth is 18 – 19 years old, or as late as their early 20's.

### **Wet dreams**

Wet dreams are a normal reaction of the body to a build-up of semen and there is spontaneous ejaculation, normally while asleep. Some adolescents might have these nocturnal emissions several times a week. Others may never experience wet dreams.

### **Male genitals**

The male genitals consist of the head of the penis, which is the most sensitive part. The foreskin in uncircumcised males covers the head of the penis when not erect. There are the testicles, which are responsible for producing sperm and male hormones.

### **Penis size**

The size of the penis depends on genes and stage of maturity. When not erect, an adult male penis averages 5 to 10 cm in length and 8 – 18 cm when erect. The width of the erect penis is 3-4 cm.

## **Erection**

The penis is normally flaccid. But when one is sexually aroused or rubbed in the genital area then there will be increased blood flow to the penis, which causes an erection. Boys and men often have a spontaneous erection when waking up in the morning. An erect penis may hang at a slight angle to one side. All these features are natural.

**Parents should advise their uncircumcised son to wash inside the foreskin since there could be an accumulation of exudate which could develop a foul odor.**

# Contraception

## Condoms

Condoms have many advantages as a contraceptive:

- Easy to obtain since they are sold in all convenience stores, in addition to vending machines
- Easy to carry around
- Easy to use for each instance of sexual intercourse; no need to check the calendar or remember to take a pill
- Provide dual protection from pregnancy and STI/HIV

## How to apply a condom

1. Open the condom package without scratching the condom with your fingernails
2. Unroll the condom about 1-2 cm and squeeze the tip with the fingers of one hand. Slip the condom on the erect penis with the other hand and roll it down to the base of the penis. Only put on one condom.
3. After ejaculation, remove the condom while the penis is still erect taking care not to spill semen from inside the condom.
4. If the condom slips off or tears during intercourse, immediately put on a new condom. Condoms should not be stored in hot temperatures since this will degrade the latex.

**Oral contraceptives:**

The “pill” is an efficient means of contraception if taken correctly and regularly. Currently the pill comes in 28-pill and 21-pill packs, and both types are equally effective.

The 28-pill pack has 7 vitamin or iron pills to help the user remember to take the pill daily. Both types of pills should be taken the first time five days after the first day of menses.

For the 28-pill pack, the user takes one pill a day and simply continues a new pack when finished. For the 21-pill pack, the user takes one pill a day until the pack is finished, then waits 7 days before starting with a new pack of 21 pills. The pill should be taken at the same time of day to prevent forgetfulness.

**When you forget to take a pill:**

- a. If you forget to take a pill then take the pill as soon as you remember if the delay is less than one day. If the delay is more than one day, then take two pills together.
- b. If you forget to take the pill for two days, then take two pills as soon as you remember and two pills the next day.
- c. If you forget to take the pill for more than two days, stop taking the pill. In the meantime, use condoms, and start using a new pack of pills in your next menstrual period.

Some side effects of the pill include nausea, vomiting, spotting, etc. These symptoms usually subside after several months of use.

**Emergency contraception (EC):**

This is another option for use after unprotected sex but should not be used often.

**Method of EC use:**

Type 1: This is taken in pill form no more than 72 hours after sex. Take the two pills 12 hours apart.

Type 2: This is taken in pill form no more than 72 hours after sex. Both pills are taken at the same time.

Both types of EC have the same level of effectiveness. EC has only minor side effects but no more than four EC pills should be taken in a month since they will disrupt the menstrual cycle and possibly cause ectopic pregnancy. The failure rate is higher among those who are highly sexually active. Thus, EC should only be relied on for emergency situations, such when you have forgotten to take regular oral contraceptives, condom leakage, an error in counting safe days, or in the case of rape. Using the 21 or 28-pill method is a better choice of contraceptive for the highly sexually active. The efficiency of EC is about 85-89% whereas the efficiency of the pill is 95-99%. Oral pills and EC can prevent pregnancy but not STI/HIV. Taking EC before sex or taking only one pill is not effective in preventing pregnancy.

## Methods of contraception with higher failure rates

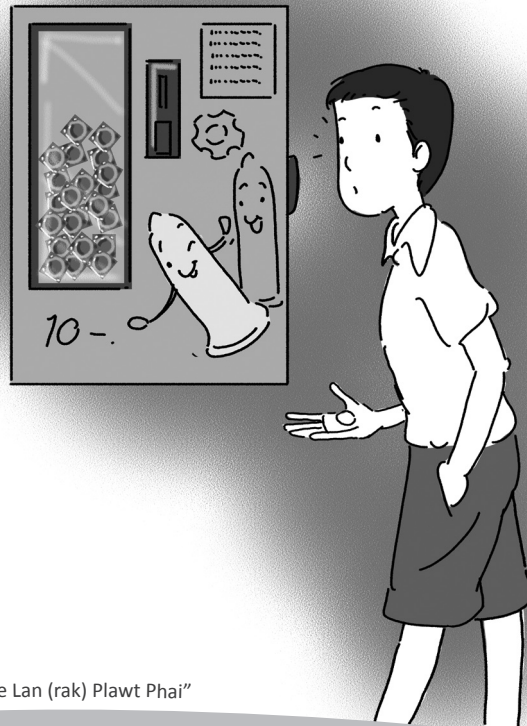
### Safe period (rhythm method)

This method attempts to predict the day when ovulation is likely to occur so the couple can avoid sex around that time. Alternatively, the seven days before and seven days after the first day of menstruation are estimated to be safe for sex. However, because there can be variation in the days of ovulation and menstruation, sex might not be completely safe in the calculated “safe” period. This method has the advantage of being totally natural but does not prevent against STI/HIV.



## Withdrawal

This method requires the male partner to remove the penis from the vagina before ejaculation. It is the easiest method of contraception but carries many risks. First, even without ejaculation there is some semen in the pre-ejaculate discharge that could result in pregnancy. Second, some men or male youths may not be able to control themselves well enough to withdraw in time or at all. Third, this method still carries risk of STI/HIV for both partners because of contact with genital fluids that are released during intercourse prior to ejaculation.



# Appendix

## Organizations and Agencies Providing

Name of Agency	Phone contact	Legal advice	Counseling for families, children, adolescents; general health advice
Dept. of Labor Protection and Welfare	1546 (Monday-Friday)		
Bridge Group	(8.30-16.00) 08-5041-8477 (Monday-Friday 9.00-17.30)		
Anonymous Clinic of the Thai Red Cross	0-2256-4107-9 ext 207 (Monday-Friday 8.30-16.30)		
Adolescent Clinic, Siriraj Hospital	0-2419-7000 ext 5996		✓
Clinic of the Planned Parenthood Association of Thailand (Ubon Province)	0-4524-3380 (Monday-Saturday 9.00-17.00)		
Single Family Network of the Family Network Foundation	0-2954-2346-7 (Monday-Friday 8.30-16.00)		✓
Bangkok Rainbow	0-2618-5635 (Every day 10.00-20.00 ) 0-2618-3221 (Every day 16.00-22.00)		✓
Emergency Shelter of the Thai Women's Association	0-2929-2222 (24 hours a day)		
Mercy Home	0-2759-1201, 0-2759-1238 (Monday-Friday 9.00-17.00)		
Children and Family Shelter, Nakornsawan Province, Program to Combat Trafficking of Children and Women	0-5625-7313-7, 08-1727-6385		

# Family Crisis Hot-line Service

	Counseling on the rights of women and children, violence, and sex rights violation	Accepts rights violation grievances	Drug counseling	Family planning counseling	Counseling for unplanned pregnancy	HIV/AIDS counseling	Counseling on sexual diversity and homosexuality
	✓						
							✓
						✓	
				✓			
					✓		
					✓		
						✓	✓
					✓		
					✓		
					✓		

## Organizations and Agencies Providing

Name of Agency	Phone contact	Legal advice	Counseling for families, children, adolescents; general health advice	
Children and Family Shelter, Srisaket Province, Program to Combat Trafficking of Children and Women, Dept. of Social Development and Welfare of the Ministry for Social Development and Human Security	1300 (24 hours a day)			
Children and Family Shelter, Ubon Ratchatani Province, Program to Combat Trafficking of Children and Women, Dept. of Social Development and Welfare of the Ministry for Social Development and Human Security	08-5766-5747, 1300 (24 hours a day)			
AIDS ACCESS Foundation	0-2372-2222 (Every day 10.00-20.00 )			
Thongbai Thongpao Foundation	0-2551-6416, 0-2551-6468 (Monday-Friday 9.00-16.00)	✓		
Paveena Hongsakul Foundation for Children and Women	1134, 0-2577-0500-1, 0-2577-0496-8 (Monday-Friday 9.00-18.00)			
Foundation for Women	0-2433-5149, 0-2435-1246 (Monday-Friday 9.00-16.00)			
Friends of Women Foundation	0-2513-2708, 0-2513-1001 (Monday-Friday 9.00-17.00)	✓		

# Family Crisis Hot-line Service

	Counseling on the rights of women and children, violence, and sex rights violation	Accepts rights violation grievances	Drug counseling	Family planning counseling	Counseling for unplanned pregnancy	HIV/AIDS counseling	Counseling on sexual diversity and homosexuality
					✓		
					✓		
						✓	
	✓						
	✓						
	✓						

## Organizations and Agencies Providing

Name of Agency	Phone contact	Legal advice	Counseling for families, children, adolescents; general health advice
Foundation for Child Rights	0-2412-1196, 0-2412-0739 (Monday-Friday 9.00-17.00)		
Hotline Foundation	0-2277-7699, 0-2277-8811 (Every day 8.30-18.00 )	✓	✓
Police Hospital	0-2253-0121, 0-2652-5317, 0-2207-6187-8 (Every day 8.00-16.00 )		
Thammasat University Hospital in collaboration with the Faculty of Medicine	0-2926-9935 (Monday-Friday 8.30-16.30)		
Bamrasnaradun Hospital, Nonthaburi Province	0-2590-3737 (Monday-Friday 8.30-16.30)		
Phra Samut Chedi Sawatyanon Hospital, Samut Prakan Province	0-2425-9407		
Nong Jok Hospital	0-2988-4100-1		
Narenthorn OSGC, Samut Prakan Hospital	1669 (24 hours a day)		
Prachabodi Center, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security	1300 (24 hours a day)		✓
Center for the Protection of the Rights of Children and Women, Medical College of Bangkok and Vachira Hospital	0-2241-4517		

# Family Crisis Hot-line Service

	Counseling on the rights of women and children, violence, and sex rights violation	Accepts rights violation grievances	Drug counseling	Family planning counseling	Counseling for unplanned pregnancy	HIV/AIDS counseling	Counseling on sexual diversity and homosexuality
	✓						
	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
					✓		
				✓	✓		
						✓	
					✓		
					✓		
	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
					✓		

## Organizations and Agencies Providing

Name of Agency	Phone contact	Legal advice	Counseling for families, children, adolescents; general health advice
OSCC, Pathum Thani Hospital	0-2598-8719 (Thai Govt. working hours)		
Office for Citizens' Rights Protection and Legal Assistance	0-2515-4042, 1157 (Thai Govt. working hours)	✓	
National Human Rights Commission	1377 (Thai Govt. working hours)		
Mental Health Department Hotline	1323 (24 hours a day)		✓
Drug Addiction Hotline	1165 (Monday-Friday 8.30-20.30)		✓
Population and Community Development Association	0-2229-4611-28 ext. 510, 512, 524, 526 (Monday-Friday 8.30-16.30)		
Rainbow Sky Association of Thailand	0-2731-6532-3 (Every day 10.00-22.00 )	✓	
Planned Parenthood Association of Thailand	Din Daeng Branch 0-2245-7382-5 (Monday-Friday 9.00-20.00 and Saturday-Sunday 9.00-17.00 Closed on holidays)		
	Rangsit Branch 0-2567-4759 (Thai Govt. working hours)		

# Family Crisis Hot-line Service

	Counseling on the rights of women and children, violence, and sex rights violation	Accepts rights violation grievances	Drug counseling	Family planning counseling	Counseling for unplanned pregnancy	HIV/AIDS counseling	Counseling on sexual diversity and homosexuality
					✓		
		✓					
		✓					
			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
				✓	✓		
						✓	✓
				✓	✓		

## Organizations and Agencies Providing

Name of Agency	Phone contact	Legal advice	Counseling for families, children, adolescents; general health advice
Mental Health Association of Thailand	0-2245-2733, 0-2247-9292 (Thai Govt. working hours)		✓
Sahathai Foundation	0-2381-8834-6, 0-2381-1318, 0-2392-9397 (Monday-Friday 8.30-17.00) for appointments		
Medecins Sans Frontieres (Belgium)	0-2370-3087-90 (Monday-Friday 9.00-18.00)		
Auden House	0-2435-7287 (Monday-Friday 9.00-16.00)		
Adolescent Hotline, Faculty of Medicine, Ramathibodi Hospital	08-7053-5500 (24 hours a day)		✓

# Family Crisis Hot-line Service

	Counseling on the rights of women and children, violence, and sex rights violation	Accepts rights violation grievances	Drug counseling	Family planning counseling	Counseling for unplanned pregnancy	HIV/AIDS counseling	Counseling on sexual diversity and homosexuality
					✓		
						✓	
				✓		✓	

When my son was becoming an adolescent at around 11 to 12 years of age,

**he started asking me about sexual questions, such as when did my breasts become large.**

My first reaction was to want to scold him for asking a rude question. But, instead, I responded frankly that my breasts began growing in the 2nd and 3rd years of junior high school. After hearing my response he was quiet and did not ask any more questions.

**Isn't it true that we, as parents, need to be a source of support and advice for our children?**

Mother of an adolescent



“The parents who brought their adolescent child in for counseling often observed that their child was lovable and well-behaved at ages 6, 7, or 8. But they said that their child seemed to transform into a different person when they entered junior high school, becoming stubborn and rebellious, spending more time on the phone and the Internet, spending more time with their peers, and talking less and less with their parents. In some ways, this is typical behavior of teenagers. Why don’t Thai parents understand this?”

Because Thai culture dictates that children must obey their parents. But I can say, as a parent and psychiatrist, that adolescence is a time when parents need to try harder to listen to their child and to understand what their child is thinking.”

*Dr. Sukamon Wipaweeponkul*  
*Psychiatrist*

Developed by : Teenpath Project



[www.teenpath.or.th](http://www.teenpath.or.th)