



Teen Pregnancy

The Facts

Becoming a parent requires a lot of adjustments, which may be associated with physical, emotional, financial and general lifestyle changes. These modifications will not only affect parents, in addition the new child will come bearing his own set of needs. All of these alterations cannot compare to the priceless benefits of having a child and growing into a family. However, the weight rested on being a parent may become heavier when the parent is a teenager.

What Changes?

Relationships –

- Teen parents should take time in considering the outcome of their personal relationships before they start a family. Marriage should require thought and time. It is an investment that should not be rushed.

Residence –

- More people equals more space. Housing costs are on the rise and may be sparse, especially for teens with lower incomes. With this in mind teens may find it hard to find proper housing.

Knowledge on Parenting –

- Teenagers will be in the process of growing themselves. Therefore, at a time when they are developing, they will have to start learning about how to become parents and care for another life-the life of their baby.

The Way People React –

- When a teen's friends, family and loved ones learn about their pregnancy, they will obtain a wide range of emotions. They may react with anger, sadness, joy or confusion. Whatever the reaction, a teen parent should put forth extra effort in communicating with them in trying to gain their understanding and support through this transitional time.

Finances

- Most teens are in the process of learning the skills of money management. Budgeting and managing money will become a necessity in a teen parent's lifestyle, however; may be difficult based on their low income.



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Education/Employment

- Some teens may decide to stay in school, some may enter the workforce and some may attempt both responsibilities. Whatever the decision, the parent needs to think about the care and health of the baby and make a choice that will work with their situation.

These changes in lifestyle aren't the only changes that will need to occur in order to prepare for a child.

Teen mothers should:

- Seek prenatal care at an early period of their pregnancy, based on the fact that teenage pregnancies may face more problems.
- Sleep enough for both them and their baby.
- Exercise, based on doctor recommendations, in an effort to maintain energy, fitness and health.
- Eat healthy foods full of nutrition and avoid dangerous habits. Smoking, drugs and alcohol can result in birth defects and damage to the baby's health.

Teen fathers should:

- Be there for their spouse/partner/girlfriend and support her emotionally.
- Partake in the responsibilities, birth, parental decisions and all changes associated with the birth.

What's Needed?

A baby will require needs associated to physical, emotional and medical attention. Such as:

Physical Needs –

- Food, clothing, safety, exercise and rest

Emotional Needs –

- Love, communication, encouragement and understanding

Medical Needs –

- Checkups, immunizations, injury and illness

According to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, over 7,000 teenage girls in Colorado ranging from 15 -19 years old gave birth in 1999. This statistic is a decline from previous years. More teenagers are becoming aware of how to abstain from getting pregnant. Ways to insure that a teenager does not get pregnant is to educate them on abstinence and the use of contraception. If you are a teen parent or know of someone who is, let them know that there is help out there. Social service agencies, family planning clinics, health departments and teen parenting programs within a community can help assist with all of these new changes and responsibilities a teen parent faces.

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