Abstinence from sex means avoiding any kind of sexual contact with anyone.

When you abstain from sex, it means that you will not get unwanted/early pregnancies and Sexually Transmitted Infections including HIV/AIDS.

You can abstain from sex until you are above 18 years, finished school and married.

Both boys and girls can abstain from sex. Some people decide never to have sex in their life time.

Edward, 15, Kitayita Chance PS says: I am not worried of getting infected by sexually Transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

Leilah, 12, St Jude Kasudde PS, says: My parents are proud of me. I Say NO to gifts from strangers. I dont want to drop out of school.

YoungTalk visited Masulita and Namayumba Sub Counties in Wakiso district, to hear your stories on abstinence.Read on!

Nabuganda Betty, Assistant District Health Officer Wakiso says: Abstinence is cheap, effective, healthy and available to everybody at all times. Nothing will happen to your body as a result of abstinence. Choose your friends wisely. Always avoid situations that expose you to sex.

In Uganda, it is a crime to get married before the age of 18. You could be imprisonment. A girl who gets married early risks death during child birth since her pelvis is immature and not ready to deliver. She is also at risk of getting Fistula.

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Parents should provide for their children’s needs especially girls to avoid the temptation of gifts for sex.

Remember, you are important, stay in school.Your life counts. Do not accept to be deceived. Sex can wait.

Abstinence is healthy

Drug abuse is a big problem among youth and children in Uganda. What can you do to avoid abuse of drugs like Marijuana? Write to PO Box 22366 Kla.
**Why abstinence is my choice**

You can avoid early sex if you stay true to your decisions. It shows that you have great control over yourself. Young Talkers shared the benefits of Abstinence. Read on.

**Early marriage**

Huzaislah, 11, Bbaale Wasswa PS: I don’t want to suffer. When you get a girl pregnant you will be forced to marry her.

Bridget, 12, Kitayita Chance PS Namayumba, says: "When you stay a virgin, you don’t get old quickly. Virginity is good and you will be respected.

Felister, 13, Masulita Junior PS, says: "I am not worried about getting STDs. Some children are defiled and they contract HIV/AIDS."

**Editor’s Choice:**

BRAVO! CHILDREN FOR CHOOSING ABSTINENCE. DO NOT BE MISLED. SEX DOES NOT NEED PRACTICE. WAIT UNTIL YOU ARE OLD ENOUGH TO HANDLE THE CONSEQUENCES OF SEX.

**Not important.**

Cyrus, 12, Muguluka PS, says: I have discovered that sex is not important and that is why I have decided to abstain.

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**Key messages**

- Abstinence is the best protection against HIV/STDs and early pregnancies
- STDs are the major cause of infertility.
- Abstinence from sex does not cause any sickness.
- You will not develop a rock in your private parts
- Abstinence means you respect and love yourself.

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**SCIENCE CORNER**

Early Sex Causes Cancer

**What is cervical cancer?** Winnie, 13, St. Jude Kasudde PS.

This is a type of cancer that affects the cervix. The cervix is the lower part of the uterus (womb) that opens at the top of the vagina. Cervical cancer is caused by HPV (Human Papilloma Virus). It is spread through unprotected sexual intercourse. Having sex at an early age exposes girls to cervical cancer.

Other risk factors for cervical cancer include:
- Failure to get the HPV vaccine
- Weakened immune system and smoking
- Cervical Cancer is a top killer of women and girls in Uganda.

**Symptoms**

They may include: Abdominal pain, vaginal bleeding, bloody or smelly vaginal discharge, periods that last longer than usual, back pain, single swollen leg and weight loss

**Prevention**

Abstain from sex. Get immunised against HPV virus. If you are ten years old, go to the nearest government hospital for immunisation. It is free of charge. Get regular checkups to detect early signs and symptoms, which can be treated before they turn into cervical cancer.

Reviewed by Dr Joel Lwasa, St Charles Lwanga Hospital, Buikwe.

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**HIV Basics**

My mother died of HIV/AIDS. Could I also be infected?

I am worried. Girl, 13, Buwembo PS.

You should not worry. Your mother’s death does not necessarily mean that you have HIV/AIDS. She could have contracted HIV when you were already born. However, to confirm your status, ask someone you trust to take you to the nearest hospital and test for HIV.

If you test positive, do not lose hope. Stay in school and work hard to achieve your goals. With proper counseling and treatment you can still live a healthy and productive life.

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**Grow vegetables, make money**

Dear children, the rainy season is on and it is time to plant your vegetables. Examples include: cabbages, tomatoes and dodoo. They are easy to grow and cheap. Where rain is not enough, water your vegetables.

In about 3 Weeks months they will be ready for harvesting. You can make money by selling your vegetables. Talk to your parents or school to give you a small piece of land to start your vegetable garden. You can have one at home and another at school with your friends. Vegetables can also grow in containers within your compound like the one below. Okurut Godwin, Livelihood and Environment Officer, StraightTalk Foundation.

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**IT IS A SIN.**

Catherine, 12, Bbaale Wasswa PS Masulita, says: Sex before marriage is a sin before God and as a Christian I have to respect my faith.

**Why abstinence is my choice**

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Child marriages are a common problem in Uganda. They are caused by poverty, limited access to education for girls and ignorance on the risks that come with getting involved in sex at an early age. Some Young Talkers are forced into early sex by adults. Read on!

Amos, 13, Masulita Junior PS says: My sister was raped and infected with HIV/AIDS by bad people. She is now taking ARVs.

Angel, 11, St Jude Kasuddde PS, says: My friend's mother was forcing her to get married to an old man. The girl refused and ran away.

Gerald, 13, Buwembo PS, says: My sister was deceived by a boda boda man with money. She accepted to have sex with him. She died while giving birth.

This is sad, many children face this problem. Early sex denies you the right to a healthy and happy childhood.

According to the 2015 Uganda demographic and Health survey (UDHS), 46 percent of girls have had sex and marry before they reach 18 years. This means that one out of every four girls is most likely to be married off by the age of 18 years.

Hildah, 12, Masulita Junior PS says: I started menstruating at 10 years. I thought something had cut me. The blood was coming out of my Vagina for three days. I talked to my mother and she bought me pads.

Esther, 12, Muguluka PS says: I was in the garden with my uncle. I saw blood stains on my dress, my knicker also had blood. My uncle told me to go home and bathe.

Menstruation is normal. It is not a disease. Every woman goes through it.

It is a sign that your body has developed and you have grown into a woman. You can get pregnant anytime you have unprotected sex. Menstruation should not make you drop out of school. You can still play and live a normal life. In case of abdominal pain, see a medical person for advice.

Know your body

Is it true that when a boy starts experiencing wet dreams he can make a girl pregnant? Boy, 14 Kitalya PS, Namayumba.

A wet dream happens when a boy releases semen through the penis. It happens during puberty. At this stage a hormone called testosterone starts manufacturing sperms in a boys testicles. It also means that a boy can make a girl pregnant.

Lwanga Hospital Buikwe, says: Menstruation is experienced by girls at puberty. It may happen between the ages of 8-15. Every girl has her own time of starting because our bodies are different. Some can delay up to 20 years. Please see a doctor if your periods don’t start by then.

During menstruation your body sheds the lining of the uterus (womb). Blood slowly flows from the uterus and comes out through the vagina.

Menostruation lasts 3-7 days in a month. Some girls may miss a month or bleed several times each month because their bodies are still growing.

This may be due to change of diet, emotions or environment. Your periods will become regular as you grow.

FOR TEACHERS

Dear teachers, children spend 60% of their time with you. It is important that you guide them well and encourage them to stay in school. This will enable them become the kind of people you will be proud of. Take interest in each child. Take note of the sudden change in behaviour. For example, play dodging lessons without any reason. Play your role as a counselor; tell both boys and girls the dangers of early sex.

Fredrick Kiyangi Kinobe, District Education Officer Wakiso.
Dear Young Talk
P.O.Box 22366, Kampala

If my friend has a wound and I also have one, and we have blood contact yet he is HIV positive will I get HIV? Hazifa,11,Bbaale Wasswa PS.
Dear Hazifa, If you get exposed to blood of an infected person in such a way, you are at risk of catching HIV. Please seek help from a health centre where you can be given PEP (Post Exposure Prophylaxis), a drug that will reduce your chances of catching HIV.

How can you prevent yourself from menstruation? Ruth,12,Bbaale Wasswa PS.
Dear Ruth, Menstruation is normal and a natural process for all women and girls. There is nothing you can do to stop it. It is a sign that your body is growing up well. Sex is in the mind so always occupy yourself with activities such as games and sports.

Does breast cancer kill? Jane, 12, Kitalya PS.
Dear Jane, breast cancer if not attended to kills. However, if detected in earlier stages, it is treatable.

What are bad touches and how can we avoid them? Mary, 11, Holy Cross PS.
Dear Mary, these are unwelcome touches usually from the opposite sex, towards particular body parts such as breasts, buttocks, private parts. Please report the offender to an adult or responsible person or police for help.

Can a girl who is 13 produce children? Shebah, 12, Kitalya Chance PS.
Dear Shebah, yes, a girl who has started menstruation has a high chance of getting pregnant if she engages in unprotected sex. Please stay in school, delay sex.

if you test HIV positive? Ishaam,11,Kitalya Chance PS.
Dear Ishaam, any person found HIV positive should talk to a health worker, and possibly be started on ARVs. This will prevent the HIV virus from weakening their bodies.

What do you do if you test HIV positive? Ishaam,11,Kitalya Chance PS.
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Pupils of Kitalya PS say: “AN IDLE MIND IS THE DEVIL’S WORKSHOP”

Pupils of St Jude Kassude say: “LET GIRLS BE GIRLS NOT BRIDES”

A sticky whitish watery substance always comes out of my Vagina and it is smelly. What should I do? Girl, 12, St Jude Kasudde.
Dear Girl, please visit the nearest health unit and talk to a medical health worker there for help.

What should I do to control sexual feelings? Felistar, 13, Masulita Junior PS.
Dear Felistar, sexual feelings are normal and a sign that your body is growing up well. Sex is in the mind so always occupy yourself with activities such as games and sports.

Is it true that boys who are Circumcised can’t be infected with STDs? Vincent, 14, Buwembo PS.
Dear Vincent, Circumcision of boys and men is a good practice because it helps to reduce sexually transmitted infections. However, it does not completely remove the risk of getting them. Abstain from sex. Counsellor. Dr Joel Lwasa St Charles Lwanga Hospital Buliwe.

Youngtalkers of Masulita Junior PS say: “SAY NO TO SEX. IT LEADS TO SPREAD OF STDs AND DEATH”

Essay competition winner

Nancy Auma, a primary seven pupil at Padibe PS Lamwo district emerged the overall winner in the national Red Card to Underage alcohol consumption campaign Essay writing competition.

The competition required young people to share their experiences about the effects of underage alcohol consumption as well as suggesting solutions towards stopping the problem.

Auma was awarded a brand new laptop while the other four received mobile phones. The Speaker of Parliament, Rebecca Kadaga, presided over the ceremony. She promised to speed up the process of passing the alcohol bill aimed at stopping underage alcohol consumption.

The Red Card Campaign targets young people aged 10-17 years. aimed at stopping underage alcohol consumption.