Abstinence

You may think of abstinence as “Just say no,” or “Wait until marriage.” These thoughts are your choice and you should stick to them.

Abstinence can also mean waiting to choose the right person, time, and place to have sex. A decision to abstain may be for an evening or for years, or any time in between. Abstinence can mean total abstinence from sexual intercourse, but hugging and kissing are okay. Abstinence could even include some intimate caresses. It might allow for everything except sexual intercourse. Any of these are healthy choices.

Before you become physically involved in a relationship, ask yourself the following questions. If you have trouble answering them, talk with a friend or someone you can trust. Talking about the issues can help you figure out what you want to do.

1. Why am I choosing abstinence?
2. What do I mean by abstinence? What are my limits?
3. What values about sex was I raised with? How important are they to me now?
4. What are my goals now? Will being abstinent help me reach them?
5. What are my long-term goals?
7. Am I ready for this kind of commitment? Does having sex fit into my life?
8. Can I talk to my partner about sex? If I’m not comfortable talking about sex, am I ready to have sex?
9. Can I and will I do what it takes to protect myself and my partner from STD or unexpected pregnancy?
10. How will I feel if I have sex with someone and relationship doesn’t last?

Being abstinent doesn’t mean you stop being a sensual, sexual person. Sexual intercourse is only one way to express affection and sexuality. You might find that not having sex will make you appreciate your sexuality more fully and give you the opportunity to explore other creative ways to express your sexuality and affection.

Abstinence is a choice. It’s a choice that can be made at any time. It can be a lifelong choice, or one that lasts until the time for having sex is right for you.