

The Hook Up Generation

A startling new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says half of all young people in the U.S. will get a sexually transmitted disease by the time they're 25. In addition, researchers say half of all high schoolers and nearly all 20- to 24-year-olds have had sex. This news comes on the heels of another depressing report-according to a study of 12,000 teenagers by researchers at Yale and Columbia, about nine out of 10 kids (88%) who made a pledge to stay abstinent until they married had sex anyway. It's ironic that in January the CDC told Congress that abstinence, not condom education and use, is the surest way to help kids fend off STDs.

"The myth of 100 percent condom effectiveness has undoubtedly led many individuals to the dangerous and false conclusion that condom use will make them immune to a host of sexually transmitted diseases," says Gene Rudd of the Christian Medical Association. After years of scientific studies, experts generally hold that condoms can offer at best an effectiveness rate of 85 to 95 percent."

Other related news:

- *Almost three-quarters of all teenagers (74%) surveyed by Blue Fusion, a youth marketing consultant organization, say CBS overreacted to the Janet Jackson "wardrobe malfunction."

- *Almost three-quarters of teenagers (70%) responding to a Teen People poll said abstinence-only sex education isn't the best approach-they prefer to hear about safe-sex methods as well.

- *Sex education is taught in 93% of all U.S. public secondary schools, but abstinence-only education is most prevalent in the South and least prevalent in the Northeast.

- *A 2002 Kaiser Family Foundation study found that almost three-quarters of 15- to 17-year-olds believe that sex on TV influences the behavior of their peers & there's plenty of sex on teen-favorite shows.

- *CCM stars such as Stacie Orrico and Rebecca St. James have been outspoken in their opposition to the kind of sexy clothing worn by teen idols such as Britney Spears. Orrico says, "The reason I don't dress trashy is that I'm trying to set an example for little girls. From the time they're 7 or 8 years old, [girls] are being taught that the only thing that makes them special and beautiful is their sexuality, and I think that's wrong."