

Everyone is NOT doing it!

It's true! It's tempting to think that everyone in Zambia is having sex but they're not. Many people in this day and age are deciding to wait to have sex, especially because of HIV/AIDS. Waiting to have sex is called abstinence.

With 16% of the population HIV positive in Zambia, you must know how to protect yourself from contracting HIV and AIDS. Abstinence is the only 100% protection from getting pregnant, getting a sexually transmitted infection (STI) or HIV.

What is abstinence?

Abstinence is:

- No touching at all
- Some touching (like kissing and hugging) but no sex
- Everything else but sex

Abstinence is not about 'just saying no,' it is about you knowing the consequences of having sex and making an informed choice to wait.

Wait for What?

...for whatever great dreams you want to come true or for the time when...

- You feel emotionally ready to have sex
- You are ready to engage in sex safely and responsibly
- You feel ready to become a parent
- You've achieved everything you want to in life

So why don't some people want to abstain?

Some people say:

"Abstinence is only for virgins."

Truth: You have a right to say no, even if you have been sexually active before.

"Abstinence is just about religion."

Truth: Abstinence is about good health, body, mind and spirit. You don't have to be a saint to abstain

"Having an STI is a sign of manhood."

Truth: Having an STI is an advertisement for being stupid!

"I can't talk about things like that with the opposite sex."

Truth: If you can't talk about it, you're not ready to have sex.

"Being abstinent means that you can't have a boyfriend or a girlfriend."

Truth: Being abstinent doesn't mean not having a girlfriend or boyfriend. In fact, being abstinent can even make your relationship better because you'll spend more time talking and getting to know each other. Sometimes people have sex because they can't talk to each other. They confuse sex and love.

10 Benefits you'll get from saying no.

1. You learn the difference between sex and love
2. You avoid the pain that comes from having sex when you're not ready
3. You won't be used just for sex and have hurt feelings as a result
4. You won't feel guilty or have bad sexual experiences, which you may regret
5. You won't have to worry about people saying that you're loose
6. You'll be seen as someone valuable to have because you see sex as a gift to be given to someone you love and who loves you in return
7. You'll have real intimacy with the person you love because you spend lots of time talking and getting to know each other
8. You won't become a mum or dad before you're ready
9. You will respect yourself and be confident in your decisions
10. And best of all you'll be choosing life because you won't put yourself at risk of getting an STI or HIV/AIDS. Being abstinent is not something that's easy to do but it may be one of the best decisions that you'll ever make. To stick to your decision you have to know why you want to abstain.

How to be Abstinent

No one should force you into having sex. It should be a choice. Always remember that and do the following:

Be clear, set your boundaries

Tell anyone whom you are intending to get into a relationship with that you are abstaining so that you can avoid misunderstandings later.

Have a back-up plan

Don't let one day spoil your life...just because you went too far one time doesn't mean you can't renew your decision to stay abstinent. Just remember what caused you to get into that situation so that you can avoid it next time.

Avoid secluded places

Being alone with your partner presents an excellent opportunity for you to get hot 'n' heavy, which you may want to avoid if it makes you uncomfortable.

Avoid alcohol and drugs

They make you lose control and before you know it, you'll end up doing something you didn't want to and will regret later.

Don't fondle or caress if you can't control yourself

If you are struggling to control your sexual urges then don't indulge in intimate touching - it will make you want to have sex.

Get support from your partner about your decision to abstain

Abstinence only works when both partners agree to it.

Practice how to say no

Sometimes we just don't have the words to use when someone is pressuring us to have sex. Practice what you could say to the person ahead of time so that you'll be prepared if such a situation arises.

Saying No!

Anyone who pressures you to have sex is not worth the time, energy or risk to your health. Get some confidence and tell them to get lost!

Here are some lines you could use:

S/he says: If you love me, prove it.

You say: If you love me you'll respect my decision to wait.

S/he says: If you don't have sex with me I'll find someone else.

You say: So go! But you'll never find someone as good as me.

He says: But I took you out, you owe me!

You say: Sorry no way! What you want doesn't have a price tag on it; even if it did you couldn't afford it because it's priceless.

S/he says: Come on, don't be childish.

You say: If being an adult means having sex when I don't want to I'd rather be a child.

S/he says: Everybody's doing it.

You say: Well I'm not everybody. or Good, then you'll have no trouble finding someone else.

He says: You want to make me happy and I want to have sex.

You say: Well I don't. What about making me happy? I don't want to get pregnant or get a sexually transmitted infection!

S/he says: We had sex before, what's the problem now?

You say: You! I have the right to change my mind.

He says: If you get pregnant, I'll marry you.

You say: Marriage won't solve the problem of unplanned pregnancy; I'll still have a baby I wasn't ready for or may get sexually transmitted infections.

Showing Love without Sex

There are many ways to show love without having sex, you could:

- Make a CD of love songs.
- Choose a special venue for your dates.
- Cuddle each other while respecting each other's decision to wait.
- Have your picture taken together.
- Find out what makes each other happy.
- Do things for each other without asking.
- Give a special gift.
- Be faithful.
- List the things you love about each other.
- Tell the other person that you love them.



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Risk Reduction:
Abstinence