



Give Kids Respect, Not Contraceptives

BY SUSAN WILLS & THERESA NOTARE

The sexual drive is a natural impulse in adults and adolescents. At the same time, cultures throughout history have recognized that sexual activity often results in the procreation of children who will require from their parents' full-time care in childhood and continued nurturing and guidance into adulthood. Thus, for millennia, it was almost universally agreed that the only appropriate context for sexual relations is within marriage. So, children will be reared by parents who, together, share a long-term commitment to their well-being.

The advent of hormonal contraception changed that. "The Pill" reduces the likelihood of pregnancy from intercourse, but by no means eliminates it. This fostered a false sense of security and disregard of the consequences of "free love" apart from pregnancy risk. Adults and even adolescents therefore began to see sex outside marriage as an entitlement.

The consequences of the contraceptive mentality – multiple

“For millennia, it was almost universally agreed that the only appropriate context for sexual relations is within marriage.”

sexual partners instead of one lifetime partner, an epidemic of sexually transmitted diseases, the increased health risks (including breast cancer, blood clots and strokes) associated with hormonal contraceptives – are now well documented. But the media rarely reports on these lest they be seen as lending support to religious "fanatics" who espouse abstinence until marriage.

Today a kind of fatalism expects kids to become sexually active the moment they reach puberty. Adolescents are assumed to have no control over the sex drive, so teaching them self-mastery is thought to be impractical, if

not impossible. The solution, they propose, is to help them avoid one consequence of their behavior – pregnancy – through easy access to contraceptives.

The recent decision by the Portland, Maine school board to permit a middle school clinic to hand out contraceptives to girls as young as 11 is the latest example of this insanity. Parents and physicians are cut out of the process. Clinic staff alone will judge whether Susie is mature enough and "at risk" of pregnancy to consume potent steroidal hormones. Yet it remains illegal to give boys steroidal hormones to increase their strength and athletic ability.



There are many reasons why this decision is wrong. Here are just a few:

Middle school age girls who begin using chemical contraceptives will be at greater risk for developing cancer as adults. This is so because combined estrogen-progestin contraceptives are among known carcinogens published on the lists of both the World Health Organization and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

Middle school age girls are not physically developed enough

to have intercourse without adversely affecting their health. Because their cervixes are immature, they are more susceptible than adult women to contracting sexually-transmitted infections. Middle school aged girls lack the emotional maturity to engage in intercourse. Teen sexual activity is shown to be associated with high rates of clinical depression and attempted suicide.

Kids should not be having sex. It is the job of parents to teach their children about human sexuality in the context of living a responsible moral life. This includes the

gift of chastity, respect for oneself and others, and the meaning of sex within marriage. Parents have every right to demand that teachers, politicians, journalists and celebrities do not undermine their efforts to raise healthy and responsible adults.

Susan Wills, Esq., is the former Director of Education, Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, Theresa Notare, MA, is the Assistant Director for the Natural Family Planning program of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, DC.