

Sources

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For additional information, read [Living Together: Questions and Answers Regarding Cohabitation and the Church's](#)

7 Reasons Why

Living
Together
before
Marriage
is
NOT
a good
idea

A summary of
empirical studies
related to

1**Those who live together before marriage tend not to marry.**

Over 50 percent of couples who live together will end their relationships before marriage.¹ Moreover, while

many couples choose to cohabit in an attempt to test the relationship and prevent the pain of divorce, the “premarital divorce” is often times just as painful as divorce itself.²

2**Those who live together before marriage have higher separation and divorce rates.**

The Journal of Marriage and Family reported marriages that are

preceded by living together have 50 percent higher disruption rates than marriages without premarital cohabitation.³ The Universities of Chicago and Michigan reported that those who cohabit before marriage have substantially higher divorce rates than those who do not; the recorded differentials range from 50 to 100 percent.⁴

The University of Wisconsin at Madison researchers report that cohabitators perceived greater likelihood of divorce than couples who did not cohabit before marriage and the longer couples live together outside of marriage, the higher likelihood of divorce.⁵

3**Those who live together before marriage have unhappier marriages.**

A review of 10 cohabitation studies found that those who cohabit prior to

marriage show a significantly lower marital quality and have significantly higher risk of marital dissolution at any given duration.⁶

Couples who lived together before marriage also separated more often, sought counseling more often and regarded marriage as a less important part of their life than those who did not live together before marriage.⁷

4**Those living together before marriage have more frequent disagreements, more fights and violence.**

Three studies find this to be true. Pennsylvania State

University researchers found that those who live together were more negative and less positive when resolving a marital problem and when providing support to their partner.⁸ They also found that husbands and wives who had lived together before marriage were more verbally aggressive, less supportive of one another and generally more hostile than spouses who had not lived together.⁹

Another study found that couples who cohabit before marriage have less problem solving skills, poorer communication skills, and are more negative while attempting to resolve marital conflicts compared to married couples who had never cohabitated.¹⁰

Research reports couples who live together have more frequent disagreements, more fights and violence, lower levels of fairness and happiness with their relationships compared to married people.¹¹

5**Those who live together do not experience the best sex.**

The National Institute for Healthcare Research found that couples not involved before

marriage and faithful during marriage are more satisfied with their current sex life than those who were involved sexually before marriage.¹² Another study done by the Family Research Council found that 72 percent of all married “traditionalists” (those who strongly believe out-of-wedlock sex is wrong) reported high sexual satisfaction. This is roughly 31 percentage points higher than the level by unmarried “non-traditionalists.” Religious women are most satisfied with the frequency of intercourse and were more orgasmic than are the nonreligious.¹³

6**Those who live together before marriage experience more behavioral problems.**

Compared with married couples, cohabitators report higher levels of:

- Alcohol problems.¹⁴
- Aggression is twice as common.¹⁵
- Greater marital instability, lower marital satisfaction and poorer communication.¹⁶
- Depression rates are three times higher.¹⁷ According to a study done by the National Institute of Mental Health the depression rates of cohabitating women are second only to those twice divorced.¹⁸
- Women being assaulted is 56 times higher.¹⁹

7**Living together outside of marriage negatively impacts their children.**

David Popenoe and Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, researchers from the National

Marriage Project, found that children living with cohabiting biological parents who are unmarried are 20 times more likely to be abused and children whose mother lives with a boyfriend who is not the biological father are 33 times more likely to be abused than children with married biological parents.²⁰

Compared to children in intact families, children in cohabiting households had more behavioral problems and poorer academic scores,²¹ and are five times more likely to experience their parents separating.²²



Numerous empirical studies indicate that living together does not produce healthier, happier marriages, but the contrary. Mature love is built on the security of knowing that your love is exclusive and permanent.