



CDC Study Says Teen Virgins Are Healthier

High school students who are virgins rate significantly and consistently better in nearly all health-related behaviors and measures than their sexually active peers.

By [Glenn T. Stanton](#) November 29, 2016



A new **report** from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the first ever of its kind, examines a large and diverse array of high school students' health behaviors according to their self-reported sexual activity.

What makes this report particularly interesting, beyond its categorization by sexual activity, is it examines widely varied safety and health behaviors from bike helmet and seat belt use to substance abuse, diet, doctor's visits, exercise, and even tanning bed use. The report's two major conclusions are quite stark:

- The virginal students rate significantly and consistently better in nearly *all* health-related behaviors and measures than their sexually active peers.
- Teens who have sexual contact with the same or both sexes have remarkably lower percentages of healthy behaviors overall than their heterosexually active peers.

An additional **report** conducted by Child Trends, a Washington DC-based think-tank focusing on children's health, adds to the robust research literature on this topic. It finds that teens from homes where mother and father have a healthy relationship, both have warm, monitoring relationships with their children, and the family has regular, dependable schedules and practices at home are substantially less likely to be sexually active by every measure.

Here's a sampling of various measures the CDC examined and the health disparities between the three categories of students: virginal, heterosexual active, and same-sex or bisexually active.

Seat Belt Use: Opposite-sex-active (OSA) teens are 143 percent more likely to never or rarely wear a seat belt than virginal peers. Same-sex/bisexual-active (SS/BA) teens are 317 percent more likely than virginal peers.

Passenger with a Drinking Driver: OSA teens are 94 percent more likely to ride with a driver who's been drinking than virginal peers. SS/BA teens are 115 percent more likely than virginal peers.

Dating Violence: OSA teens are 260 percent more likely to experience some form of physical violence in dating relationships than virginal peers. SS/BA teens are 683 percent more likely than virginal peers.

Smokes Daily: OSA teens are 3,300 percent more likely to smoke daily than virginal peers. SS/BA teens are 9,500 percent more likely than virginal peers.

Ever Binge Drank: OSA teens are 337 percent more likely to ever binge drink than virginal peers. SS/BA teens are 375 percent more likely than virginal peers.

Pot Use: OSA teens are 336 percent more likely to be currently using marijuana than virginal peers. SS/BA teens are 483 percent more likely than virginal peers.

Ever Injected an Illegal Drug: OSA teens are 500 percent more likely to have ever injected a non-prescription drug than virginal peers. SS/BA teens are 2,333 percent more likely than virginal peers.

Felt Sad or Helpless: OSA teens are 48 percent more likely to report feeling so sad or helpless almost every day for two or more weeks in a row that they stopped doing some of their usual activities, compared to virginal peers. SS/BA teens are 181 percent more likely than virginal peers.

Tanning Beds: OSA teens are 282 percent more likely to use indoor tanning beds than virginal peers. SS/BA teens are 364 percent more likely than virginal peers.

Eat Breakfast Daily: OSA teens are 24 percent less likely to eat breakfast daily than virginal peers. SS/BA teens are 48 percent less likely than virginal peers.

Eight Hours of Sleep: OSA teens are 21 percent less likely to get eight hours of sleep a night than virginal peers. SS/BA teens are 34 percent less likely than virginal peers.

Asthma: OSA teens are 24 percent more likely to have ever had asthma than virginal peers. SS/BA teens are 48 percent more likely than virginal peers.

Physical Fighting: OSA teens are 133 percent more likely to have been in a physical fight than virginal peers. SS/BA teens are 187 percent more likely than virginal peers.

Sexual chastity and attentive parenting pay huge dividends, and good research proves it. It is intriguing to note how many of these health measures have no direct relation to sexual activity and decision making, even tangentially. The risk factors studied are things like seat belt use, eating breakfast daily, smoking, dentist visits, illegal drug use, suffering from asthma, etc. Obviously, there's a curious and meaningful relationship between our teens' sexual values and activity and a substantial number of unanticipated but very consequential health behaviors.

It's difficult to determine from this CDC report alone just how these various measures are related to one another. Does sexual activity drive the increase in other negative health behaviors, or vice versa (if at all)? This data does not say. But the fact that the CDC measured all these health behaviors by sexual activity and distributed it to health professionals around the world in this major report certainly indicates the relationships they studied are of important interest to health-care workers.

These findings should be very concerning to all parents and professionals concerned with our teens' general health and well-being. The sexual choices and values our young people hold have real-life consequences far beyond sexuality itself. Thus, there are indeed compelling reasons to encourage teens to choose not to be sexually engaged with peers of the opposite or same-sex.

Our children should know there's very compelling scientific evidence on so many levels showing how saving the precious gift of their sexuality for the safe harbor of marriage is nothing about old-time moralism or unhealthy sexual repression. Just the opposite is true. Chastity is related to so many substantial measures of human health and well-being that it should be strongly appreciated by parents and health and education professionals as one of the most important health-boosting factors for our nation's young adults.

Glenn T. Stanton is the director of global family formation studies at Focus on the Family and the author of eight books on various aspects of the family including "The Ring Makes All the Difference" (Moody, 2011) and "Loving My LGBT Neighbor" (Moody, 2014). He blogs at glenntstanton.com.

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