



Reproductive Health

Even if you are under 18, you have a lot of control over your reproductive health! Educate yourself, contact any of the resources here, and talk to an adult you trust about your options. **Here are a few fast facts that are good to know:**

Birth control and contraception

- Even if you are under 18, you **CAN** consent to getting birth control, pregnancy tests, and testing for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV on your own, without permission of a parent or guardian.

Pregnancy & Teen Parenting

- A teenager who is pregnant or has been pregnant can consent to her own medical care, including prenatal care, without her parent's involvement.
- Teen parents may consent to medical care for their child.
- Children of youth who are in foster care **should not** be automatically placed in foster care. A child may only be removed from a parent if there has been abuse or neglect.

Health Insurance

- **Most pregnant teens who are low income are eligible for Medicaid.** If you are pregnant, you will receive prenatal care through your Medicaid coverage. If you are in foster care, you will most likely be receiving Medicaid. If you are not in care, you should apply for Medicaid at the local county assistance office.
- **Most newborns and children up until age 6 are eligible for health care coverage through the Healthy Beginnings programs through their Medicaid coverage.** After age six, your child may be eligible for Medicaid or coverage through the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). You can apply at your local county assistance office or apply online.

Counseling

- Most health care providers are able to provide or refer you for **counseling about your options regarding your pregnancy.** Options counseling involves discussing topics such as carrying the child to term, abortion, and adoption.
- For more resources on options counseling, call the **CHOICE hotline at 215-985-3300 if you are in Philadelphia and 1-800-848-3367 outside of Philadelphia.** You can also call your local health care center or search online for a health care center near you.



Adoption

- Teen parents can give up their children for adoption without their own parents' consent. Likewise, a teenager's parent cannot force her to place her child for adoption.
- An adoptive parent and birth parent can agree to the birth parent and child staying in touch and the court will allow this if it is in the child's best interest.

Abortion

- The right to decide whether to have an abortion belongs to an adult pregnant woman. The father's consent is not required nor does he have a right to be notified.
- Minors in Pennsylvania cannot consent to an abortion without the informed consent of a parent or guardian. BUT, the minor can ask the court for a "judicial bypass" which will give her authorization to get an abortion if a parent refuses to consent or if the minor does not want to ask for her parents' consent.
 - **Judicial Bypass** - A youth can get help filing the petition for a judicial bypass by the court and can be appointed an attorney. If you need help finding an attorney to help you, call the Women's Law Project at 215-928-9801 or read the Project's brochure, "Young Women's Guide to Abortion in Pennsylvania," found at http://www.womenslawproject.org/brochures/wlp_teen_piece.pdf.
- In Pennsylvania, **Medicaid does not pay for abortions unless the pregnancy is life-threatening or is the result of rape or incest**. The minor and her doctor will need to provide a statement that one of these conditions exists. You also need to provide proof that you have reported the rape to police unless your doctor signs a form that it is not in your best interest to report the rape. If you need **help paying for an abortion**, call CHOICE at 1-800-848-3367. If you live in Philadelphia, you should also call the Women's Medical Fund at 215-564-6622. You can also call the National Abortion Federation Hotline at 1-800-772-9100.

Get Help

- For information and referrals, call Juvenile Law Center at 215-625-0551 or visit their website at www.jlc.org
- For information about legal assistance, call Community Legal Services at (215) 981-3700 or Philadelphia Legal Assistance at (215) 981-3800. Note: Philadelphia Legal Assistance does not provide legal assistance regarding abortion.

