

Know Your Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights

KNOW your RIGHTS

Helpful Tip: If you feel like someone violated your rights, or you need support making a complaint, call the Office of the Ombudsperson toll-free at

1-877-846-1602

My case worker is: _____

Phone #: _____

My attorney is: _____

Phone #: _____

My CASA is: _____

Phone #: _____

My trusted person is: _____

Phone #: _____

Your Sexual and Reproductive Health Care and Related Rights

No judgements! You have the right to sexual health information that only includes medical facts and not anyone's opinions.

Do you know your rights when it comes to your sexual and reproductive health? Even if you're under age 18, you have rights! Knowledge is power, so read your rights below:

1. You have the right to have your personal rights explained and provided to you in a manner that you understand.
2. You have the right to get health care, including reproductive and sexual health care.

Continue reading to learn more about what kind of reproductive and sexual health care services you can get.



3. You have the right to make your own decision about the following kinds of care (meaning you can say "yes" or "no" and do not need permission from a parent, caregiver, social worker, or any other adult if you want this care):
 - a. Female or male birth control or protection, pregnancy testing, and prenatal (pregnancy) care, at any age,
 - b. Abortion, at any age,
 - c. Health care you need because of a rape or sexual assault, at any age,
 - d. Health care to prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV, at age 12 or older, and
 - e. Testing and treatment for STIs and HIV, at age 12 years or older.
4. You have the right to get the information you want about sexual health care. You can ask your doctor or another trusted adult about:
 - a. Reproductive and sexual health care,
 - b. Ways to prevent pregnancy and pregnancy testing,
 - c. Abortion,
 - d. Prenatal (pregnancy) care, like monthly or weekly doctor visits during pregnancy, and
 - e. How to prevent and treat STIs, including HIV medication and the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination.
5. When you get sexual or reproductive health care, or ask your doctor questions about sex, your doctor cannot share that information with your parents, caregivers, group home, social worker, or probation officer without your written consent. There are a few small exceptions.
6. You have the right to ask your doctor to explain "privacy" to you and who can and cannot get your medical information before you get any health care.
7. You have the right to choose your own health care provider for sexual and reproductive health care, as long as the provider is covered by your Medi-Cal or other approved insurance.
8. Your caregiver, group home, or social worker must help you with transportation to get reproductive and sexual health care services in a timely manner.
9. You have the right to get, have, and use the birth control or protection of your choice, including, but not limited to:
 - a. Condoms, including the female condom
 - b. Diaphragm
 - c. Birth control patch, pill, ring, or shot
 - d. Spermicide
 - e. Dental dam
 - f. Emergency contraception (morning after pill)
 - g. Medications to prevent STIs
 - h. Intrauterine Device (IUD) or Implant
 - i. Medications to treat or prevent HIV such as Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) or Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP)
10. You have the right to keep your personal items, like birth control, in your own private storage space. Condoms or other protection, or birth control cannot be taken away from you as a punishment or due to your caregiver's religious beliefs or personal feelings. You have the right to be free from unreasonable searches of your belongings.
11. You have the right to fair and equal access to services, placement, care, treatment, and benefits. You have the right to not be treated unfairly, harassed, or discriminated against because of your sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, HIV status, or other factors like race, religion, ethnic group identification, ancestry, national origin, color, or mental or physical disability.
12. You have the right to contact and make complaints about violations of your rights to state agencies, including the Community Care Licensing Division of the California Department of Social Services and the state Foster Care Ombudsperson (**See the "Resources" section of this brochure for more information.**)

Complaints are confidential and you cannot be threatened or punished for making complaints.

Foster Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health Care Rights

TALKING TO OTHERS ABOUT SEX AND YOUR RIGHTS: SUGGESTED QUESTIONS TO ASK

Whether you're abstinent (not having any sex), thinking about having sex, or already sexually active, it's important and okay to talk about sex and relationships with a trusted adult. Your trusted adult may be a *doctor, social worker, mentor, attorney, judge, teacher, family member or someone else you feel comfortable talking to*. It is also important and okay to talk about these things with a romantic partner. But how do you know what to say or how to start a conversation? It is not always easy, so here are some suggested questions to start the conversation:

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR PARTNER

- » Will you respect my decision about sex, and about what I'm okay doing and not doing? How do you feel about my decision?
- » How are we going to make sure we protect ourselves against STIs?
- » Have you ever tested positive for an STI? If so, were you treated?
- » Are you having sex with other people?
- » Have you thought about your future goals? How do you feel about an unplanned pregnancy?

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR

About your rights...

- » I know I have a right to privacy in sexual and reproductive health care. What does that mean in this office? Are you always going to ask for my written permission before you share any of my information?

About birth control or protection...

- » How do I know what birth control method is right for me? What are the common side effects of the different birth control methods?
- » Will my caregiver or parent find out if I decide to use a birth control? Can they pressure me to use a certain kind of birth control?
- » Do I need to use birth control or condoms if I'm transgender or dating someone of the same gender as me?
- » How do you use a condom correctly?
- » What is emergency contraception and how can I get it?

About STIs...

- » I had sex without a condom. Should I get tested for an STI and/or pregnancy?
- » What do I need to know about STIs, including testing, treatment, and prevention?



QUESTIONS TO ASK A TRUSTED ADULT

About relationships...

- » What does a healthy relationship look like? How can I show my partner I love them?
- » Is jealousy a sign of love?
- » I'm being hurt or threatened by my partner. What can I do?
- » I feel like my partner is pressuring me to have sex or do things I am not ready for or feel uncomfortable with. What should I do?
- » How do I know when I'm ready to have sex with someone?

About sexuality and gender identity...

- » How does someone know they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning?
- » If I have a same sex crush, does this mean I'm gay or lesbian?
- » Can I sleep in a room or use the restroom based on the gender I identify with?
- » Is touching myself wrong? Is it okay if I'm in a private place such as my bedroom or bathroom?

About going to visit the doctor...

- » How do I make an appointment to visit the doctor? Are doctor appointments confidential between me and my doctor?
- » What information and documents will I need when I visit the doctor?
- » I need information about local community resources and public transportation to visit the doctor. Where can I get this information?

About pregnancy or birth control...

- » I need information about birth control. Where can I get this information?
- » Does someone have the right to take away my birth control or condoms?
- » Can someone force me to go on birth control?
- » I think I might be pregnant. Where can I get information about pregnancy testing, prenatal care (If I need it) and/or the different options that are available?



Resources:

California Office of the Foster Care Ombudsman – To file a complaint regarding your foster youth rights, contact the Ombudsman at 1-877-846-1602 or email fosteryouthhelp@dss.ca.gov

California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing – To file a complaint against a state licensed group home or foster home call 1-844-538-8766

www.genderspectrum.org/ – Information and resources about gender sensitive topics

www.glaad.org/transgender/resources Information and resources for transgender people

www.loveisrespect.org – Information about sex, healthy relationships, dating, dating abuse, and sexting

www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/birth-control/ – Information about birth control

www.bedsider.org/methods – Information about birth control

www.safehelpline.org – National Sexual Assault Hotline 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

www.stayteen.org – Information about relationships, love, sex, and pregnancy

www.teenhealthrights.org – Youth friendly guide to sexual health rights

www.teensource.org/condoms/free – Sign-up for free condoms if you are 12-19 years old and live in California



The suggested resources in this brochure are provided for your convenience for general informational purposes only. The California Department of Social Services bears no responsibility for accuracy, legality, or content of these external websites.