

## Special points of interest:

- Over 20% of youth in the survey have had sex
- The number of sexually active youth increases with age
- Most sexually active youth first had sex when they were between 15 and 16
- Most sexually active youth are using condoms or other forms of birth control

## Fact Sheet #10 Sexuality

### Sexuality

#### Sexual intercourse

Between 14 and 17, the percentage of rural youth having had sexual intercourse increases steadily from 9.4% of 14 year olds to 54.8 % of those 17 and older. These numbers are slightly lower than other recent Canadian studies, however, a recent study of Canadian youth, reported declining rates of sexual intercourse among younger students and among older male students between 1988 and 2002 (CCSD 2006).

In the CCSD study, the most common reason students gave for not having sex was that they were “not ready.” Boys were more likely than girls to cite “not having the opportunity to have sex” as their main reason. A small proportion of students – and more girls than boys – cited “fear of pregnancy” as the main reason and less than 2% said they abstained from sex due to fear of HIV/AIDS or other STIs. (CCSD 2006). Love for the person, curiosity/ experimentation, and influence of alcohol/ drugs were the most common reasons youth gave for having sex (CCSD 2006).

#### Fewer sexual partners

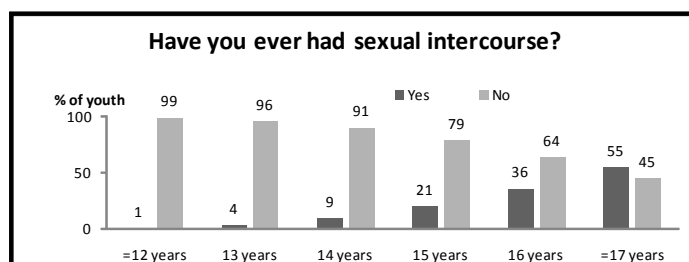
Canadian youth also appear to be having fewer sexual

partners and the percentage of youth who have more than one sexual partner seems to be declining (CCSD 2006). In this study of rural youth, the vast majority of youth had only had 1 or 2 sexual partners.

#### Sexually transmitted infections

Infection rates of sexually transmitted diseases are increasing substantially in Canada (CCSD 2006). Condom use is the most common form of birth control for rural youth and is the only form of birth control that provides protection from STD's. Of concern is the finding that only 71% of rural youth used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse. 11% used no birth control or couldn't remember what method of birth control they had used.

### 55% of youth 17 years and older have had sex



Over 20% of youth from all age groups have had sexual intercourse. There is a significant relationship with age; 0.8% of youth 12 years old and younger compared to 54.8% of youth 17 years and older reported having had sex. There is a sharp increase

in youth having sex each year between 14 and 17 years of age; from 9% of 14 year olds to 21% of 15 year olds to 36% of 16 year olds and 55 % of youth 17 years or older . There are no reported differences between males and females and sexuality.

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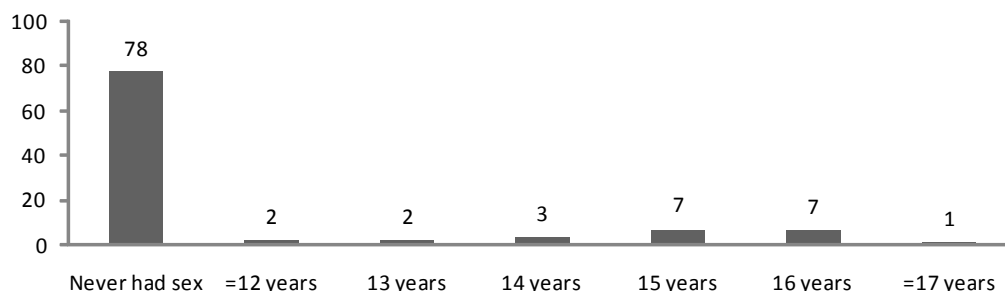
*“The development of intimacy and trust, gender identification and positive sexual and sensual experiences begin in early childhood and influence healthy sexuality and sexual decision making throughout life.” (Health Canada 1999)*

## Youth sexual activity increases after age 15

*“While sexual and reproductive health is important to both men and women, the onus for preventing pregnancy most often falls on young women. There is strong evidence to suggest that teen parents have lower lifetime earnings and more social problems throughout life” (Health Canada, 1999c, p. 4)*

### How old were you when you had sexual intercourse for the first time?

% of youth



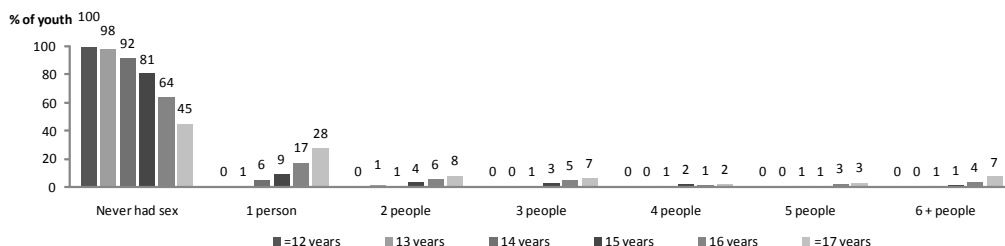
Most youth in the study who had sex reported that they were 15 and 16 years old when they had their first sexual encounter (7.1% and 6.7% respectively).

Approximately 2% of youth reported having sex for the first time at 12 years of age or younger. There is no significant difference between males and

females for the age they had sex the first time. Responses are generally similar for both sexes across all the age categories.

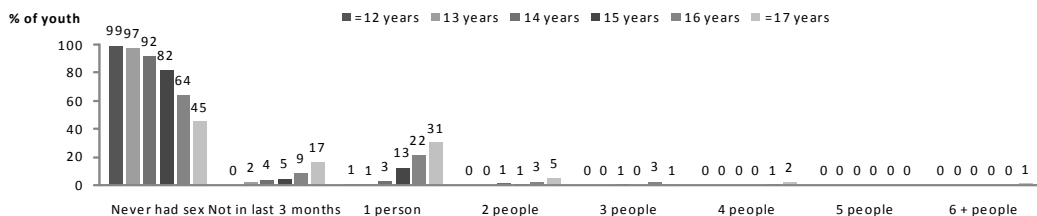
## Low numbers of sexual partners among youth

### During your life, with how many people have you had sexual intercourse?



*“...it's kind of like kids see on media, or some romantic TV series, like two people in the series have dated for a year have suddenly decided to have sex, well kids are going to kind of get the impression, well we dated for pretty much a year so it's okay for us to have sex, so they kind of get what's right for them from movies like that too.”- Youth Focus Group Participant*

### During the past 3 months, with how many people have you had sexual intercourse?



The tables above highlight that youth in the study are not overly sexually promiscuous, both over the past three months or in life.

Most youth across all the age groups have had only 1 or two sexual partners. Not surpris-

ingly, the number of sexual partners youth have increases with the ages of survey participants.

## 71% of sexually active youth used a condom last time they had sex.

*"So many girls are afraid to talk to their parents about having sex and they're not going to want to talk to them and tell them they're going to want to go on birth control, and so using a condom, I thought, would be way higher."- Youth Focus Group Participant*



Overall, 71% of sexually active youth used condoms in their last sexual encounter. There is not a strong relationship between the age of youth and whether or not

they used a condom the last time they had sex. There was also no difference between girls and boys and whether or not they used a condom in their last sex-

ual encounter. With the rapid rates of increase in STD's among youth, efforts to increase condom use as a preventative measure are critical.

## Forced sexual intercourse, sad feelings and thoughts of suicide

When controlled for age and sex, (except for youth 12 years or younger), youth who reported being forced to have sex were more likely to have had drugs or alcohol before their last sexual encounter. They were also more

likely to feel sad to the extent it affected their daily activities or to have seriously considered suicide.

In addition, with the exception of youth 12 years or younger or youth 17 or older, female youth

who had reported having sexual intercourse were also more likely to have sad feelings and thoughts of suicide. Males who had sex were not more likely to have had sad feelings or thoughts of suicide.

*"...I think that lots of times sex occurs when you're intoxicated and so then people don't really take many precautions either like if you're wasted out of your tree or whatever, you're not going to say, oh I need a condom or something."- Youth Focus Group Participant*

## Sex, drugs and alcohol



Across all age groups, 39.5% of sexually active youth used alcohol or drugs the last time they had sex. The number of youth using drugs or alcohol before

their last sexual encounter sharply increases between 14 and 15 years of age, where 52% of sexually active 15 year olds used drugs or alcohol before

their last sexual encounter, compared to only 12 percent of 14 year olds. There is no significant difference between males and females and alcohol/drug use before their last sexual encounter.

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## Saskatchewan Rural Youth Healthy Lifestyles and Risk Behaviour Study

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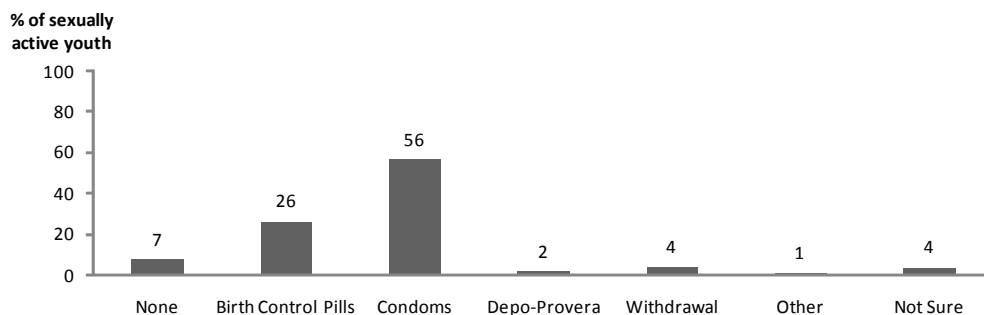
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## Roughly 10% of sexually active youth likely used no birth control the last time they had sex

The last time you had sexual intercourse, what one method did you or your partner use to prevent pregnancy?



When asked to pick one method of birth control they used the last time they had sex, the most common birth control method for sexually active youth was condoms (56.4%), followed by birth control pills (26.2%) and the withdrawal method (4%).

Approximately 7% of youth had no form of birth control the last time they had sex and another 3.5% were not sure. There is a relationship between birth control method and age. For example, youth start to use birth control and other non-barrier methods

such as Depo Provera at a later age when compared to the use of condoms. While there is no strong relationship between birth control method and sex, female youth were more likely to use the pill and male youth were more likely to use condoms.

*"Well I do have a few friends that have had sex but it's not like, so what did you do this weekend, oh you had sex, tell me about it, it's just awkward." - Youth Focus Group Participant*