

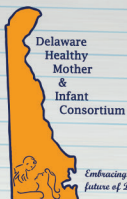
To hear from other teens, visit **POWERTODECIDE.ORG/TEEN-TALK**.

To help incorporate eating better and getting physical exercise into your life, visit **GETUPANDDOSOMETHING.ORG**.

To find health services or help near you, **DIAL 2-1-1**, or text **302-231-1464**. You may also text your zip code to **898211**.

For additional health tips, visit **KIDSHEALTH.ORG/TEEN**.

For information on how to cut out bullying, visit **DETHRIVES.COM/THRIVING-COMMUNITIES/BULLYING**.



DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
Division of Public Health
Center for Family Health Research and Epidemiology



Delaware
Department of Education

By putting together this plan,
I am taking charge of my future.
Now nothing can stop me
from making healthier choices
and living the life I want!

KEEP OUT!!!



PROPERTY OF: _____
MY LIFE PLAN

MY LIFE.
MY PLAN.

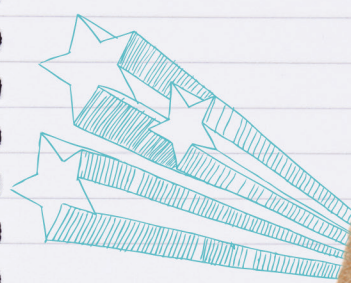


dethrives.com/teens



My teen years are a great time in my life—I have lots of fun things going on and a world of possibilities lie ahead of me! As I'm discovering what's in store and figuring out what kind of person I want to be, I know I'll be faced with plenty of choices. This booklet can help me make healthy decisions along the way.

My goal is to enjoy this exciting time. And take charge of my health so I can live the life I want.



What is a
Life Plan?

And why should I care now?

Now's the time to start deciding what you want for your life, and that's where the life plan comes in. It will help you take better care of yourself and set goals. And, most important, it will help you understand how pregnancy will affect your goals.

Being a parent could be years away for you. Be informed so you can take the best care possible of your health — and stay true to your dreams.

This guide will help you get started. That way, when the time comes, you'll be ready.

There are steps you can take to be in the best health.
Consider all of the following:

1

Decide what you want from life.

- Do you want to go to college?
- What career are you interested in?
- Do you want to be in a relationship?
- Do you want a family someday?

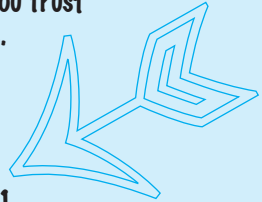
Abstinence

The only 100% effective way to not have a baby and to avoid STDs is to not have sex.

2

Develop healthy relationships.

- Learn about yourself — what makes you happy, sad, or stressed?
- Surround yourself with caring and supportive friends and family that value and respect you.
- Speak to a trusted adult if you feel you are being verbally, physically, relationally, sexually, or cyber bullied.
- Think before you text, speak, or post. Be true to what you value. Don't let other people push you to do something that doesn't sync up with who you are.
- Reach out to the people in your life that you trust and can talk to about how you are feeling.
- If you feel depressed or helpless, or unsafe in any relationship, dial 2-1-1 or text 302-231-1464. You may also text your zip code to 898211.



**You are not alone.
Get help now.**

Over 1 in 4
high school students
report symptoms
of depression.



3

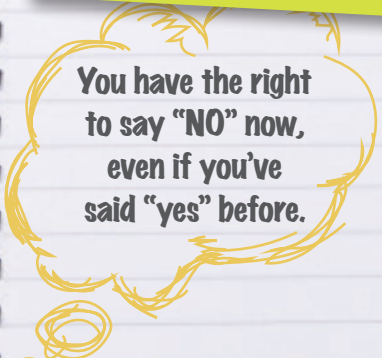
Live a healthy life.

- Eat a healthy diet. Try to make your meals and snacks 50% vegetables and fruit.
- Be physically active for at least 60 minutes each day.
- Stay away from tobacco, nicotine, alcohol, marijuana, and other illegal substances. This includes vaping, juuling, and misusing prescription drugs.
- Take care of health problems — don't ignore them.
- Learn about your family's health history.
- See a health care provider for yearly checkups. Talk to them about any concerns. Did you know you can sign up for your school-based health center to see a health care provider?

4

Make a Reproductive Life Plan

- Learn the facts about sexual health.
- Decide if you want to have children someday.
- Make a plan to prevent pregnancy until you are ready. What's your strategy — abstinence or birth control? Discuss your choices with your health care provider.
- Wait until you are ready to have sex and stick to your decision. Don't let anyone pressure you into doing something you're not comfortable with.



You have the right to say "NO" now, even if you've said "yes" before.

7 in 10 teens—both girls and boys—say they wish they had waited until they were older to have sex.



I will:

- ☐ Work hard in school and stay on track to receive my high school diploma in order to go to college.
- ☐ Think of a career I am interested in, and earn the amount of money I think I will need.
- ☐ Decide whether or not I want to go to college, and talk to my school counselor for guidance and information on the application process. (delawarestudentsuccess.org can help you prepare.)
- ☐ Decide to be in a healthy relationship with people who support, value, and respect me.
- ☐ Get help if I feel depressed, helpless, anxious, or sad for long periods of time, or think about hurting myself. (Dial 2-1-1, text 302-231-1464, or ask your health care provider for help.)
- ☐ Reach out to a trusted adult and get help if I am feeling bullied in any way such as being verbally, physically, relationally, sexually, or cyber bullied. (dethrives.com/thriving-communities/bullying offers tons of resources.)
- ☐ Get help if someone is physically, mentally, or sexually abusing me. (The Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence offers a 24-hour domestic violence hotline. In Northern Delaware, call 302-762-6110—bilingual. In Southern Delaware, call 302-422-8058 or 302-745-9874—bilingual. You can also dial 2-1-1 or text 302-231-1464.)

- ☐ Be smart about my digital presence and social media use.
- ☐ Eat better—try for 50% veggies and fruit. (myplate.gov offers great ideas for healthy eating.)
- ☐ Exercise 60 minutes a day.
- ☐ Stay away from tobacco and nicotine—this includes vaping and juuling. (kbqde.org offers information on how to live tobacco- and nicotine-free lifestyles.)
- ☐ Stay away from alcohol, marijuana, and illegal substances, and use prescription drugs only as prescribed. (helpsherede.com has information on how to prevent addiction.)
- ☐ Make and keep regular appointments with my health care provider and dentist.
- ☐ Ask my parents and family members about what types of health problems run in my family.
- ☐ Make a promise to myself to stay healthy—this will also help me have the best chance of having a healthy baby when the time is right.
- ☐ Talk to my health care provider and ask questions about sexual health, using abstinence as an option, and birth control if I am thinking about having sex.
- ☐ Take the time to really think about how a teen pregnancy could affect my life and my goals. (powertodecide.org/teen-talk can help.)
- ☐ Talk to my partner about practicing safe sex and getting tested for STDs.

3 key goals I want to focus on + notes

Based on the steps and checklist, I've thought about what's right for me and agree to make at least 3 life changes a priority right now. I will write them down here, because that's the first step to making them happen. I'll also be sure to take notes on any good info and advice I receive along the way.

1

2

3

The Reality of Teen Pregnancy

● Being a teen parent will force you to grow up fast. You have plenty of time to be a grown-up—why rush it?

* Think about it—being a teen parent is like babysitting all day, every day, and not getting paid.

● * Parenthood is the main reason why most teen girls drop out of school.

* A baby won't solve relationship problems or make your partner stay with you. Most teen fathers don't marry the mother of their child.

● * Graduation, college, parties, spring break, sleeping in... all the fun things you're looking forward to will have to be put on hold, maybe even forever.

● * The majority of families begun by a young unmarried mother are poor.

● * Babies are expensive. Costs can add up to \$10,000 in the first year alone. Without a degree or a job, how would you pay for that?