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## *That's what he said:* What guys think about sex, love, contraception and relationships

Recently, in the United States, the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy and *Seventeen* magazine developed and commissioned a survey of 1,200 boys and men ages 15-22. This article is taken from the report's *Introduction* and provides basic key findings.

Teen and unplanned pregnancy remain a serious challenge in the United States. Consider the following:

- At present, nearly three in ten girls get pregnant by age 20.
- After declining for 14 straight years, the teen birth rate has increased five percent since 2005.
- The rates of teen pregnancy and childbearing in the United States remain far higher than in other comparable countries.
- Fully seven in ten pregnancies among unmarried women in their 20s are unplanned.

To date, much of the research on teen and unplanned pregnancy - its causes and remedies - has focused on girls and women. But the nearly 1.5 million teen girls and single women in their early 20s who find themselves unintentionally pregnant every year don't get there by themselves.

To better understand what guys think about these issues, The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy and *Seventeen* magazine developed and commissioned a survey of 1,200 boys and men ages 15-22. The survey results presented in *That's What He Said* shed light on what guys think and how they behave when it comes to love, sex, contraception, relationships, unplanned pregnancy, and related issues. Too often, discussions about guys' responsibility don't happen until it's time to buy diapers. We asked about their attitudes and actions pertaining to romance

and relationships in order to paint a more complete picture and encourage more informed conversation.

The results may be surprising. Many commonly accepted stereotypes about guys:- that they're all in a rush to have sex; that relationships don't matter; that they don't care what girls or their parents think are not supported by this survey. However, other stereotypes - the double standard that exists between the genders when it comes to sex, and the fact that guys tend to lie a lot about sex - live on.

Interestingly, there are not a lot of dramatic differences between the responses from those aged 15-18 and those aged 19-22. Certainly the older group has had more relationships and more sexual experience, but their attitudes, anxieties, intentions, and knowledge gaps tend to be consistent with those of the younger group.

### Key findings

Relationships are more important than - and even preferable to - sex.

Guys feel pressure to have sex - and from many different sources.

Guys have a lot to say about respect, relief, and regret. The first time is meaningful.

What they don't know about preventing pregnancy could get them into trouble, especially because they think they know it all.

Guys often talk a good game when it comes to responsibility, but many are risk-takers too.

There's lots of lying about sex.

Girls have more influence than they may think, and guys are waiting for them to speak up.

Parents play an important role.

Sex doesn't guarantee anything.

The double standard is alive and well.