

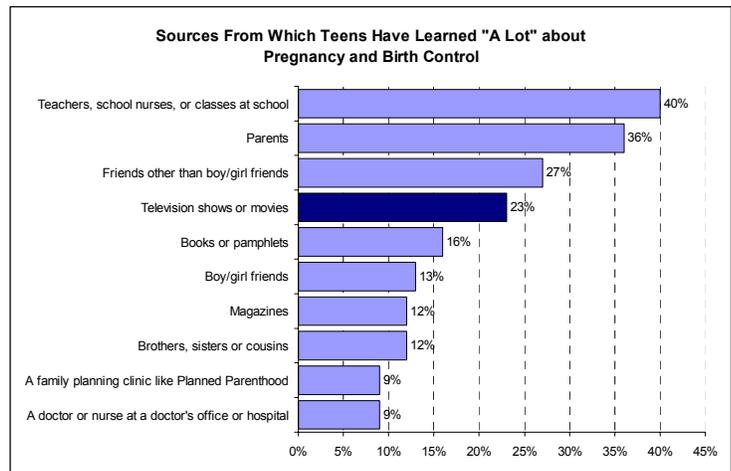
## TEENS AND SEX: THE ROLE OF POPULAR TV

### TV shows and movies are an important source of information for teens about sexual health issues.

Young teens (ages 13-15) rank entertainment media as the top source of information about **sexuality and sexual health**. Sixty-one percent say kids their age get “a lot” of information about these issues from entertainment media like TV, magazines, movies and music. [Source: *1997 Kaiser Family Foundation and Children Now National Surveys: Talking With Kids About Tough Issues.*]

Twenty-five percent of teens (ages 12-17) say they learned “a lot” about **HIV and AIDS** from TV shows or movies. [Sources: *2000 Kaiser Family Foundation Survey of Teens on HIV/AIDS.*]

Lots of teens (40% of 13-18 year-olds) say they get ideas from TV and movies about **how to talk with their partners** about sexual issues. TV and movies ranked third as a source of ideas, after friends and school. [Source: *1998 Kaiser Family Foundation and YM Magazine National Survey of Teens: Teens Talk about Dating, Intimacy, and Their Sexual Experiences.*]



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation Survey on Teens and Sex, June 1996

Nearly one out of four teens (ages 12-18) say they learn “a lot” about **pregnancy and birth control** from TV shows and movies. TV and movies rank fourth among teens as a common source of information about these issues, after school, parents and friends. [Source: *1996 Kaiser Family Foundation Survey on Teens and Sex: What They Say Teens Today Need to Know, And Who They Listen To.*]

Four out of ten 15-17 year-olds say they have learned “a fair amount” from TV shows and movies about **sexually transmitted diseases**. [Source: *1999 Kaiser Family Foundation, MTV, and Teen People Survey of 15 to 17 Year-Olds: What Teens Know and Don't (But Should) About Sexually Transmitted Diseases.*]

### Parents say TV often sparks conversations with their kids about sexual issues.

Seventy percent of parents of children under age 18 say they have had a conversation about a sexual issue with their child because of something one of them saw on a TV show. [Source: *Sex in the 90s: Kaiser Family Foundation/ ABC TV: 1998 National Survey of Americans on Sex and Sexual Health.*]

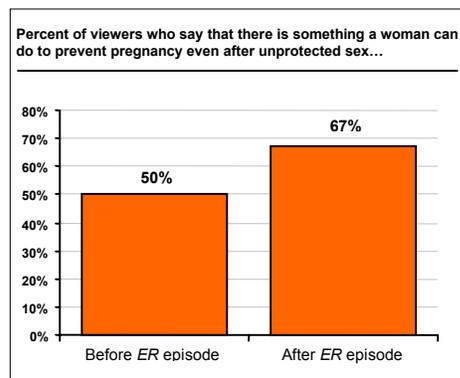
Forty-five percent of parents of 8-12 year-olds say their child has at some point asked a question about sex, AIDS, or some other sensitive issue because of something they saw on TV. [Source: *1996 Kaiser Family Foundation and Children Now Survey on Sex, Kids and the Family Hour.*]

## Even a brief mention of a sexual health issue on a TV show can have a significant impact on the audience.

After a short mention of the issue of emergency contraception on an April, 1997, episode of the NBC drama *ER*, the number of viewers who were aware of this contraceptive option increased by one-third, from 50% to 67% of viewers. [Source: 1997 Kaiser Family Foundation Surveys of *ER* Viewers: Documenting the Power of Entertainment TV.]

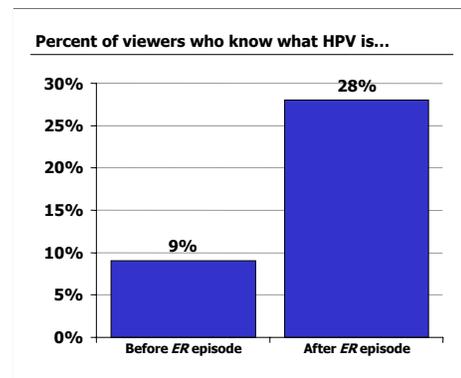
After a brief mention of the STD human papilloma virus in a February 2000 episode of the show, the number of viewers who knew what HPV was tripled from 9% to 28%. [Source: Kaiser Family Foundation, *Survey of ER Viewers*, February 2000.]

**ER Viewers' Awareness of Emergency Contraception:  
Before and After April 1997 Episode**



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation Surveys of *ER* Viewers, April 1997

**ER Viewers' Awareness of HPV:  
Before and After February 2000 Episode**



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation, *Survey of ER Viewers*, February 2000

## There is a significant amount of sexual content on TV today, and most does not include any reference to safer sex or the consequences of unprotected sexual activity.

Two-thirds (68%) of all TV shows other than news, sports and children's shows contain sexual content. On broadcast TV, three out of four (75%) network prime-time shows contain either sexual dialogue or sexual behavior. [Source: 2001 Kaiser Family Foundation Report: *Sex on TV*.]

One out of ten shows (10%) with sexual content includes any mention of possible risks or responsibilities of sexual activity, or any reference to contraception, protection, or safer sex. While a few programs feature issues of sexual health as a primary storyline of an entire episode, these are the exception: Only two percent of all shows with sexual content had a primary emphasis on safer sex related issues. [Source: 2001 Kaiser Family Foundation Report: *Sex on TV*.]

## Many Americans believe TV shows can play a positive role in educating young people about responsible sexual activity, but most think there need to be important changes in this regard.

Nearly two-thirds of parents (64%) say TV and the movies have "a lot" of influence on the way their own and other children think about sex, violence, and drugs and alcohol. [Source: 2001 Kaiser Family Foundation and Nickelodeon Survey on Talking with Kids about Tough Issues.]

Thirty-five percent of parents say TV could have "a lot" of influence, and 43% say it could have at least "a little" influence in helping children learn about making responsible decisions about sex. [Source: 1996 Kaiser Family Foundation and Children Now Survey on Sex, Kids and the Family Hour.]

A quarter of teens (24% of 12-17 year-olds) say they would like more information about sex and relationships from TV. [Source: 2001 Kaiser Family Foundation and Seventeen Survey of Teens: *Teen's Opinions, Attitudes, and Awareness of Sexually Transmitted Diseases*.]

Seventy percent of Americans believe there should be more references to condom use in TV shows and movies that contain sexual content. [Source: *Sex in the 90s: Kaiser Family Foundation/ ABC TV: 1998 National Survey of Americans on Sex and Sexual Health*.]