

NOTES FOR SERVICES ON 'LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX'

Ating pag-usapan ang seks (Let's Talk about Sex) is a family planning and sexual health information booklet produced by Women's Health West, Family Planning Victoria and the Centre for Philippine Concerns Australia, Victorian branch.

It draws on the Filipino tradition of conveying information through cartoons. Providing information in people's first language means that they can better relate it to their own lives. The booklet incorporates two stories, information about types of contraception (translated here from Tagalog to English) and contacts for more information.

STORY 1 SYNOPSIS

A young Filipino couple living in Australia are to be married. Filipinos tend to seek advice from god-parents. Mina and Joey are asking their godmother, or 'Ninang', about contraception

Joey suggests that Mina go on 'the Pill'. Ninang emphasises that choosing contraception is a joint decision, and that they need to talk about it together and with their doctor or health nurse. Mina is concerned that it may be considered a 'sin' to take the Pill.

They talk about the Pill and methods such as condoms and natural family planning, and discuss withdrawal not being reliable. Joey and Mina ask Ninang what contraception she used. She tells them that before she remarried she discussed this with her future husband. As they didn't have much money and both already had older children, they decided her husband would have a vasectomy.

Joey says for Ninang to only have three children was a bit 'stingy' as he comes from a large family. Ninang talks about parenting not being a joke, and about spacing of children and being able to provide for them. She also mentions that there are no helpers for them in Australia.

Mina says she would like to continue working and discusses maternity leave. Ninang talks about the

importance of men helping out with child rearing. 'The key to a long relationship is respect and love for each other and to keep the communication lines open,' she says.

Ninang returns to the topic of the Pill, talking about myths and potential side effects such as weight gain and headache, reinforcing that it does not make women infertile. She discusses the permanence of sterilisation for males and females, and myths associated with vasectomy, explaining that it does not make a man impotent or prevent orgasm.

STORY 2 SYNOPSIS

Three young women are having a night out. Gayle has a crush on Alfia, who has a reputation for 'sleeping around'. Alfie calls Gayle and invites her for a drink. Gayle is excited, but her friends suggest that because she is a bit 'tipsy' she should perhaps wait and go out with Alfie later.

Gayle's gay friend Jay – who is like a big brother to her – gives her advice, discussing the risks of 'sleeping around'. Gayle says she is on the Pill but Jay talks to her about sexually transmitted infections (STIs). He suggests it might not be a good idea to meet someone she hardly knows when 'tipsy'. "Talk about drinking and driving," says Jay. "We also need to think about drinking and dating!"

Jay emphasises that STIs don't discriminate according to sexual preference. They discuss the affects of STIs including chlamydia, which can lead to infertility if not treated early. Alfie rings again and Gayle decides to decline the date.

The stories are followed by the following contraception information in Tagalog:

CONTRACEPTION

It is important to remember that in choosing a contraception you need to consider the way you use them and the efficacy of their usage. It is also important to remember that you DO NOT have protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs) by using contraception, except

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if you use condoms in a proper way.

Natural Family Planning Method:

This does not use medicine or artificial means. There are a few natural methods such as the calendar/rhythm method and Billings Method. These are not really effective methods and you may need a combination of a few natural ways to prevent pregnancy.

Pill: There are different kinds of Pills. To be effective, it is important that each pill is taken at the scheduled time. The Pill can have different side effects. They can have some effects if you are taking antibiotics, smoking, or if you have high blood pressure, heart or liver disease. It is important to consult your doctor to clarify what kind of pills are appropriate for you. There is also a Pill for breastfeeding mothers.

Emergency Pill or "Morning After Pill": This tablet, which has a higher dosage, contains a synthetic hormone that may prevent pregnancy when a condom or contraception is not used. This tablet has to be taken within three days after unsafe sex. The earlier the more effective. If you are breastfeeding you can take it, but it is important to contact a doctor or nurse first.

Implanon: This soft rod contains a synthetic hormone, progesterone. This is placed by a doctor under your skin in the upper arm. It cannot be seen but you should feel it. This is effective for three years.

Depo Provera: Is a synthetic hormone injection given every 12 weeks.

Intra Uterine Contraception Device or IUCD: An IUCD is a plastic device placed in your uterus. There are two types: the copper and hormone (Mirena). For further information consult your health worker.

Diaphragm: This dome-shaped device is made of rubber that you can put in your vagina to prevent sperm from entering. You need to be measured to ensure that the diaphragm fits. This can be done by a doctor or a nurse.

Sterilisation for men and women: This a PERMANENT method to prevent having children.

For the male it is a vasectomy and the female tubal ligation. This is done by means of an operation.

Condoms: There are two type of condoms, one for female and male. They must be used and worn in a proper way to be effective. They should be worn before having any genital contact. They can also protect against STIs including Human Immune Virus or HIV. There are different types of condoms. For further information consult your doctor or nurse.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER

- ◆ It is important to consult a doctor/nurse before using any type of contraception in order to clarify the correct way to use it.
- ◆ It is important to consult your doctor regularly to ensure that your contraception is appropriate for your health and condition.
- ◆ It is important that you do not stop using contraception if you do not plan to have children. If you wish to stop using your contraception, consult your doctor/nurse for information about alternative methods.
- ◆ It is important that once you become sexually active have a Pap smear every two years.
- ◆ It is important to consult with your doctor about the type of contraception you will use and your decision to change. It is also important that you DO NOT stop using it until you reach menopause.
- ◆ It is important to use condoms when you have sex, to prevent sexually transmitted infections.
- ◆ It is important to know as early as possible if you have an STI to prevent complications. All STIs can be treated, the earlier it is detected the quicker it can be treated.
- ◆ It is important to remember even when you are breastfeeding you can also take the 'emergency pill' . Consult a doctor to advise you what to do when taking the 'emergency pill'
- ◆ YOU have the right to decide what type of contraception is best for YOU.

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