Adolescent contraceptive use
DATA FROM THE NATIONAL FAMILY HEALTH SURVEY-3 (NFHS-3), 2005-06

Adolescent population: who are they?

In the Republic of India, there are 240.7 million adolescents aged 10–19 years - 18.8% of the country’s total population. More than two thirds of adolescents live in rural areas, 67.3% of adolescent girls and 67.5% of adolescent boys.

By age 19, the mean number of years of schooling attended by adolescent girls is 6.9, while for adolescent boys it is 8.5. Among adolescents who become parents before age 20, the average age at which Indian adolescent girls have their first baby is 17.1 years, while the average age at which adolescent boys first become fathers is 18.2.

Sexual activity and marital status

Analysis of data from the NFHS-3 show that over 19.7 million Indians aged 15–19 are currently sexually active – they are either unmarried and have had sex in the last three months or they are in a union (i.e. married or living together). On average, among adolescents who had sex before age 20, adolescent girls first have sexual intercourse at age 16.2 years and adolescent boys at 17.2 years.

Among unmarried adolescents, 1.1% of adolescent girls report ever having sex and 0.3% are currently sexually active; among adolescent boys, 8.6% report ever having sex, while 4.0% are currently sexually active.

Among all Indian adolescents, 27.1% of adolescent girls and 2.8% of adolescent boys are in a union. Among these adolescents, the mean age of the first union is 16.2 years for adolescent girls and 17.4 for adolescent boys.

What can be done to support Indian adolescents to prevent unintended pregnancy?

Plan for how, when and where different groups of sexually active adolescents (married and unmarried, boys and girls, rural and urban) use and do not use contraception.

Learn the reasons why adolescents are not using contraception, and develop policies and programmes to better address their needs.

Understand that adolescents may get contraception from a variety of sources and ensure that each of these sources can provide high quality services for adolescents.
Contraceptive use and non-use among adolescent girls

Unmarried, sexually active

According to NFHS-3 analyses, of the less than 1% of adolescent girls that are unmarried and sexually active, 32.4% report not wanting a child in the next two years, yet none of them are currently using any method to prevent pregnancy. The main reasons these adolescents report for not using a contraceptive method include:

- not married (44.1%)
- infrequent sex (29.7%)
- not having sex (24.7%)

Among all unmarried, sexually active adolescent girls aged 15–19, 74.5% are not using a method of contraception. Male condoms are the most common modern method used (13.3% of these adolescent girls). Traditional methods, withdrawal or periodic abstinence, are used by 9.8% (see Figure 1).

In union

According to NFHS-3 analyses, 29.8% of adolescent girls in a union report not wanting a child in the next two years, yet only 15.7% of them are currently using any method to prevent pregnancy. The main reasons these adolescents report for not using a contraceptive method include:

- breastfeeding (27.5%)
- menses has not returned after giving birth (15.8%)
- husband or partner is opposed (13.9%)

Among all adolescent girls in a union aged 15–19, 87.0% are not using a method of contraception. Male condoms and pills are the most common modern methods used (3.3% and 2.2% of these adolescent girls, respectively). Female sterilization, which is a permanent method, is used by 1.1%. Withdrawal or periodic abstinence, traditional methods, are used by 6.1% (see Figure 2).

LEARN MORE AT who.int/reproductivehealth/adol-contraceptive-use
Adolescent contraceptive use
ANALYSIS OF THE INDIA NATIONAL FAMILY HEALTH SURVEY-3, 2005-06

Among adolescents who had sex before age 20, the average age at first sex is
16.2 years for adolescent girls
17.2 years for adolescent boys

Among adolescents who become parents before age 20, the average age at first birth is
17.1 for adolescent girls
18.2 for adolescent boys

What can be done to support Indian adolescents to prevent unintended pregnancy?

Plan for how, when, and where different groups of adolescents use or don’t use contraception.

Learn the reasons why adolescents are not using contraception.

Report not wanting a child in the next two years.

Sexually active, unmarried

- 32.4% sexually active, unmarried adolescent girls
- 29.8% adolescent girls in union

Main reasons for not using contraception

Sexually active, unmarried

- 44.1% not married
- 29.7% infrequent sex
- 24.7% not having sex

In union

- 27.5% breastfeeding
- 15.8% menses has not returned after giving birth
- 13.9% husband or partner is opposed

Understand that adolescents may get modern contraception from a variety of sources.

Sexually active, unmarried

- 46.0% from a private facility
- 44.3% from a pharmacy

In union

- 32.3% from a shop
- 27.5% from a pharmacy

Use and non-use of contraception adolescent girls, aged 15-19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Sexually active, unmarried</th>
<th>In union</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not using</td>
<td>74.5%</td>
<td>87.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawal</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodic abstinence</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male condom</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pill</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injectable contraceptives</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IUD</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female sterilization</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LEARN MORE AT who.int/reproductivehealth/adol-contraceptive-use
REASONS FOR NON-USE:

- Not married
- Not having sex
- Infrequent sex
- Menses has not returned after birth
- Breastfeeding
- Fatalistic (up to god)
- She is opposed
- Husband/partner is opposed
- Religious prohibition
- Knows no method
- Knows no source
- Fear of side effects/health concerns
- Inconvenient to use
- Others opposed
- Lack of access/too far

SOURCE OF METHOD:

- Government facility
- Private facility
- Pharmacy
- Shop
- Friends or parents
- Other
- Community Health Worker