

Mobile app educates teens on risky sexual behavior

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Teenagers, parents, educators and clinicians will have a new tool to help adolescents make more informed decisions about their sexual behavior. "Seventeen Days," a mobile app based on the interactive movie of the same name, will be available at no cost on iPhone, iPad and Android devices beginning June 4.

"Our goal is to create and make readily available a tool that will help teenagers make better decisions for themselves," said Julie Downs, associate research professor of social and decision sciences at Carnegie Mellon University who studies how social influences affect decision making and how people can make better decisions by understanding these influences. "For the most part, adolescents don't want to get pregnant. They definitely don't want to contract a disease. By building on our research about what goes into their decisions, we have crafted an application that will help them avoid these negative outcomes."

Seventeen Days - in both the video and [mobile app](#) form - are results from a five-year, \$7.4 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to update Downs' earlier interactive video, "What Could You Do?" which was shown to increase abstinence among teenage girls. Preliminary research indicates that giving young women access to the Seventeen Days film leads to better knowledge about the risks associated with different sexual behaviors and a stronger sense that they can carry out safer behaviors themselves.

Developed with researchers at West Virginia University, the University

of Pittsburgh and Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, the goal of creating the mobile app is to get the interactive tool into as many hands as possible.

"We know that teenagers are having sex, and addressing this is a very important part of their healthcare needs," said Pamela Murray, M.D., M.P.H., professor of pediatrics at the WVU School of Medicine and section chief for WVU Healthcare's Adolescent Medicine. "The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has highlighted teen pregnancy as a winnable public health battle. In the same way that we've reduced infectious diseases with immunization, we can reduce [teen pregnancy rates](#) and unwanted pregnancies with better communication."

The mobile app's release coincides with the American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors and Therapists (AASECT) annual conference.

More information: On June 4, download the Seventeen Days mobile app at www.seventeendays.org/app/

Provided by Carnegie Mellon University

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