



## Pot tempts teens

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By Kevin O'Connor

Pot-smoking teenaged girls are more likely to have sex than those who don't, a new study suggests.

Drunkenness also increases sexual activity in teens, especially when boys and girls are allowed to spend too much time together, according to a report by the Institute of Marriage and Family Canada released yesterday.

"Adolescent sexual behaviour places teens at risk of ill health, unintended pregnancy and emotional concerns. The earlier teens initiate sex the greater the risk," said Peter Jon Mitchell, an analyst for the institute.

The report recommends that parents should be "warm and communicative" in their parenting style, keeping in mind that one high-risk behaviour may be the tip of the iceberg.

"While teen pregnancy and STDs dominate discussion of teen sex, a number of factors like substance use and emotional health are related to the decision to initiate or delay sexual activity and should not be ignored," Mitchell said.

The study found 39% of teens aged 14 to 19 have had sexual intercourse, which is 41% of girls and 38% of boys.

Teen smoking also increased the likelihood of promiscuity. Girl smokers were 78% more likely to have sex while boys were 98% more likely to engage in sexual activity, the report says.

"Analysis also revealed that teen girls who reported they had never smoked were 58% less likely than the national average to have had sexual intercourse while boys who reported they never smoked were 56% less likely," Mitchell said. The study also reports that having early sex mixed with drugs can lead to teen depression and even suicide.

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