

# Adolescent contraceptive use

DATA FROM THE GHANA DEMOGRAPHIC AND HEALTH SURVEY (GDHS), 2014

## Adolescent population: who are they?

In the Republic of Ghana, there are **5.6 million** adolescents aged 10–19 years – **21.7%** of the country's total population.<sup>i</sup> Fewer than half of adolescents live in rural areas, **44.8%** of adolescent girls and **49.3%** of adolescent boys.<sup>i</sup>

By age 19, the mean number of years of schooling attended by adolescent girls is **9.1**, while for adolescent boys it is **9.3**.<sup>ii</sup> Among adolescents who become parents before age 20, the average age at which Ghanaian adolescent girls have their first baby is **17.2** years, while the average age at which adolescent boys first become fathers is **18.4**.<sup>ii</sup>

## Sexual activity and marital status

Analysis of data from the GDHS<sup>ii</sup> shows that over **564 000** Ghanaians 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 the age of 20, adolescent girls first have sexual intercourse at age **16.7** years and adolescent boys at **16.8** years.

Among unmarried adolescents, **38.9%** of adolescent girls report ever having sex and **20.8%** are currently sexually active; among adolescent boys, **26.3%** report ever having sex, while **13.4%** are currently sexually active.

Among all Ghanaian adolescents, **6.4%** of adolescent girls and **0.5%** of adolescent boys are in a union. Among these adolescents, the mean age of the first union is **16.6** years for adolescent girls and **17.5** for adolescent boys.

## What can be done to support Ghanaian 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

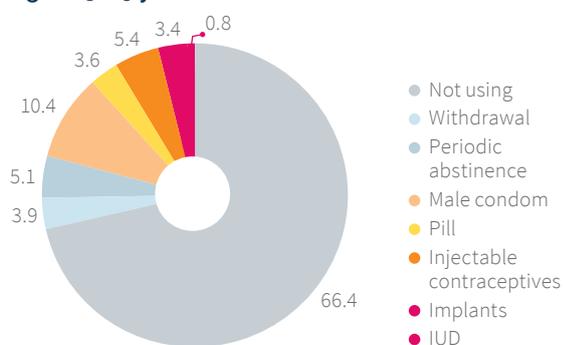
## Unmarried, sexually active

According to GDHS<sup>ii</sup> analyses, **89.9%** of unmarried, sexually active adolescent girls report not wanting a child in the next two years, yet only **27.5%** of them are currently using any method to prevent pregnancy. The main reasons these adolescents report for not using a contraceptive method include:

- **fear of side-effects or health concerns (37.4%)**
- **infrequent sex (22.7%)**
- **not married (17.1%)**

Among all unmarried, sexually active adolescent girls aged 15–19, **66.4%** are not using a method of contraception. Male condoms and injectable contraceptives are the most common modern methods used (**10.4%** and **5.4%** of these adolescent girls, respectively). Implants and IUDs, which are considered to be among the most effective methods, are used by **3.4%** and **0.8%**, respectively. Withdrawal and abstinence, traditional methods, are used by **9.0%** of these adolescent girls (see Figure 1).

**FIGURE 1. Use and non-use of contraception: unmarried sexually active adolescent girls, aged 15–19 years (%)**



Source: analysis of GDHS 2014<sup>ii</sup>

LISTED FROM LEAST EFFECTIVE TO MOST EFFECTIVE

Unmarried, sexually active adolescents who are using a modern method most often get it from a **pharmacy (53.1%)** or a **government facility (28.5%)**.

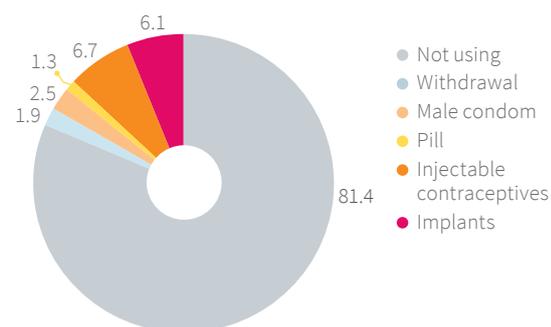
## In union

According to GDHS<sup>ii</sup> analyses, **66.3%** of adolescent girls in a union report not wanting a child in the next two years, yet only **24.6%** of them are currently using any method to prevent pregnancy. The main reasons these adolescents report for not using a contraceptive method include:

- **infrequent sex (21.4%)**
- **fear of side-effects or health concerns (20.5%)**
- **breastfeeding (16.0%)**

Among all adolescent girls in a union aged 15–19, **81.4%** are not using a method of contraception. Injectable contraceptives and implants are the most common modern methods used (**6.7%** and **6.1%** of these adolescent girls, respectively). Other modern methods used include male condoms (**2.5%**) and pills (**1.3%**). Withdrawal, a traditional method, is used by **1.9%** (see Figure 2).

**FIGURE 2. Use and non-use of contraception: adolescent girls in union, aged 15–19 years (%)**



Source: analysis of GDHS 2013–14<sup>ii</sup>

LISTED FROM LEAST EFFECTIVE TO MOST EFFECTIVE

Adolescents in a union who are using a modern method most often get it from a **government facility (76.9%)** or a **pharmacy (23.1%)**.

LEARN MORE AT [who.int/reproductivehealth/adol-contraceptive-use](http://who.int/reproductivehealth/adol-contraceptive-use)

<sup>i</sup> Urban and rural population by age and sex, 1980–2015 [online database]. New York (USA): United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division; 2014 (<https://esa.un.org/unpd/popdev/urpas/urpas2014.aspx>, accessed 4 November 2016).

<sup>ii</sup> Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) [Ghana], Ghana Health Service (GHS) [Ghana], ICF International. Ghana Demographic and Health Survey 2014 [Datasets]. GHIR71.DTA and GHMR71.DTA. Rockville (MD): ICF International; 2015 ([http://dhsprogram.com/data/dataset/Ghana\\_Standard-DHS\\_2014.cfm?flag=0](http://dhsprogram.com/data/dataset/Ghana_Standard-DHS_2014.cfm?flag=0), accessed 4 November 2016).

# Adolescent contraceptive use

ANALYSIS OF THE GHANA DEMOGRAPHIC AND HEALTH SURVEY, 2014



Among adolescents who had sex before age 20, the average age at first sex is



16.7 years  
for adolescent girls



16.8 years  
for adolescent boys

## REPUBLIC OF GHANA



5.6

million  
adolescents  
ages 10-19

Among adolescents who become parents before age 20, the average age at first birth is

17.2

for adolescent girls

18.4

for adolescent boys

## What can be done to support Ghanaian adolescents to prevent unintended pregnancy?

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

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

Method	Sexually active, unmarried	In union
Not using	66.4%	81.4%
Withdrawal	3.9%	1.9%
Periodic abstinence	5.1%	--
Male condom	10.4%	2.5%
Pill	3.6%	1.3%
Injectable contraceptives	5.4%	6.7%
Implants	3.4%	6.1%
IUD	0.8%	--

Learn the reasons why adolescents are not using contraception.

Report not wanting a child in the next two years

89.9%

sexually active, unmarried adolescent girls

66.3%

adolescent girls in union

Main reasons for not using contraception

Sexually active, unmarried

- 37.4% fear of side-effects or health concerns
- 22.7% infrequent sex
- 17.1% not married

In Union

- 21.4% Infrequent sex
- 20/5% fear of side-effects or health concerns
- 16.0% breastfeeding

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



Sexually active, unmarried

53.1%

from a pharmacy



28.5%

from a government facility



76.9%

from a government facility



In union

23.1%

from a pharmacy

LEARN MORE AT [who.int/reproductivehealth/adol-contraceptive-use](http://who.int/reproductivehealth/adol-contraceptive-use)

Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) [Ghana], Ghana Health Service (GHS) [Ghana], ICF International, Ghana Demographic and Health Survey 2014 [Datasets], GHIR71.DTA and CHMR71.DTA, Rockville (MD): ICF International; 2015 ([http://dhsprogram.com/data/dataset/Ghana\\_Standard-DHS\\_2014.cfm?flag=0](http://dhsprogram.com/data/dataset/Ghana_Standard-DHS_2014.cfm?flag=0), accessed 4 November 2016).  
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# Icon Directory

## METHODS:

-  Not using
-  Withdrawal
-  Periodic abstinence
-  Rhythm/calendar
-  Female condom
-  Male condom
-  Standard days/cycle beads
-  Pill
-  Injectable contraceptives
-  Lactational amenorrhea (LAM)
-  Implants
-  IUD
-  Male sterilization
-  Female sterilization

## 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