Adolescent contraceptive use

DATA FROM THE LIBERIA DEMOGRAPHIC AND HEALTH SURVEY (LDHS), 2013

Adolescent population: who are they?

In the Republic of Liberia, there are 1 million adolescents aged 10–19 years – 23.2% of the country’s total population. Just over half of adolescents live in rural areas, 52.8% of adolescent girls and 51.7% of adolescent boys.

By age 19, the mean number of years of schooling attended by adolescent girls is 5.8, while for adolescent boys it is 6.8. Among adolescents who become parents before age 20, the average age at which Liberian adolescent girls have their first baby is 16.9 years, while the average age at which adolescent boys first become fathers is 18.1.

Sexual activity and marital status

Analysis of data from the LDHS shows that nearly 230,000 Liberians 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 15.7 years and adolescent boys at 16.6 years.

Among unmarried adolescents, 65.0% of adolescent girls report ever having sex and 50.5% are currently sexually active; among adolescent boys, 40.2% report ever having sex, while 30.5% are currently sexually active.

Among all Liberian adolescents, 14.4% of adolescent girls and 1.5% of adolescent boys are in a union. Among these adolescents, the mean age of the first union is 16.3 years for adolescent girls and 17.6 for adolescent boys.

What can be done to support Liberian 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 LDHS\textsuperscript{i} analyses, 85.0\% of unmarried, sexually active adolescent girls report not wanting a child in the next two years, yet only 34.0\% 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 (19.3\%)
- fear of side-effects or health concerns (19.1\%)
- she is opposed (15.8\%)

Among all unmarried, sexually active adolescent girls aged 15–19, 69.3\% are not using a method of contraception. Injectable contraceptives and pills are the most common modern methods used (16.0\% and 5.1\% of these adolescent girls, respectively). Implants, which are considered to be one of the most effective methods, are used by 4.6\%. A small proportion is using periodic abstinence (1.6\%), a traditional method (see Figure 1).

In union

According to LDHS\textsuperscript{i} analyses, 75.0\% of adolescent girls in a union report not wanting a child in the next two years, yet only 17.8\% of them are currently using any method to prevent pregnancy. The main reasons these adolescents report for not using a contraceptive method include:

- breastfeeding (60.4\%)
- not having sex (16.7\%)
- fear of side-effects or health concerns (7.5\%)

Among all adolescent girls in a union aged 15–19, 86.8\% are not using a method of contraception. Injectable contraceptives are the most common modern method used (10.7\% of these adolescent girls). Pills are used by 2.0\% and implants, among the most effective methods, are used by 0.5\% (see Figure 2).

Source: analysis of LDHS 2013\textsuperscript{ii}

Unmarried, sexually active adolescents who are using a modern method most often get it from a government facility (61.4\%) or from a private facility (21.7\%).

Adolescents in a union who are using a modern method most often get it from a government facility (72.8\%) or a private facility (24.7\%).

LEARN MORE AT who.int/reproductivehealth/adol-contraceptive-use


### Adolescent contraceptive use

**ANALYSIS OF THE LIBERIA DEMOGRAPHIC AND HEALTH SURVEY, 2013**

#### Use and non-use of contraception among 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>69.3%</td>
<td>86.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodic abstinence</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male condom</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pill</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injectable contraceptives</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implants</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Main reasons for not using contraception among adolescent girls

- **Sexually active, unmarried**
  - 19.3% infrequent sex
  - 19.1% fear of side-effects or health concerns
  - 15.8% she is opposed

- **In union**
  - 60.4% breastfeeding
  - 16.7% not having sex
  - 7.5% fear of side-effects or health concerns
  - 7.5% she is opposed

#### What can be done to support Liberian 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.
- Understand that adolescents may get modern contraception from a variety of sources.

#### Report not wanting a child in the next two years

- 85.0% sexually active, unmarried adolescent girls
- 75.0% adolescent girls in union

#### Overweight

- 16.9 million adolescents aged 10-19
- 1.0 million adolescents ages 10-19

#### Sexually active, unmarried

- 15.7 years for adolescent girls
- 16.6 years for adolescent boys

#### In union

- 16.9 years for adolescent girls
- 18.1 years for adolescent boys

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