Adolescent contraceptive use
DATA FROM THE NAMIBIA DEMOGRAPHIC AND HEALTH SURVEY (NDHS), 2013

Adolescent population: who are they?

In the Republic of Namibia, there are 538,000 adolescents aged 10–19 years – 24.5% of the country’s total population. More than half of adolescents live in rural areas, 62.7% of adolescent girls and 67.2% of adolescent boys.

By age 19, the mean number of years of schooling attended by both adolescent girls and boys is 9.6. Among adolescents who become parents before age 20, the average age at which Namibian adolescent girls have their first baby is 17.5 years, while the average age at which adolescent boys first become fathers is 18.3.

Sexual activity and marital status

Analysis of data from the NDHS shows that nearly 71,000 Namibians 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 17.1 years and adolescent boys at 16.3 years.

Among unmarried adolescents, 41.7% of adolescent girls report ever having sex and 22.1% are currently sexually active; among adolescent boys, 42.7% report ever having sex, while 25.1% are currently sexually active.

Among all Namibian adolescents, 5.4% of adolescent girls and 0.8% of adolescent boys are in a union. Among these adolescents, the mean age of the first union is 16.9 years for adolescent girls and 17.6 for adolescent boys.

What can be done to support Namibian 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 NDHS\(^\text{i}\) analyses, 80.3% of unmarried, sexually active adolescent girls report not wanting a child in the next two years, and 76.2% of them are currently using a method to prevent pregnancy. The main reasons these adolescents report for not using a contraceptive method include:

- infrequent sex (21.4%)
- not married (11.8%)
- fear of side-effects or health concerns (9.2%)

Among all unmarried, sexually active adolescent girls aged 15–19, 34.2% are not using a method of contraception. Male condoms and injectable contraceptives are the most common modern methods used (44.2% and 17.4% of these adolescent girls, respectively). Only a small proportion, 0.1%, are using periodic abstinence, a traditional method (see Figure 1).

In union

According to NDHS\(^\text{i}\) analyses, 53.9% of adolescent girls in a union report not wanting a child in the next two years, yet only 35.9% of them are currently using any method to prevent pregnancy. The main reasons these adolescents report for not using a contraceptive method include:

- lack of access or too far (19.7%)
- breastfeeding (13.9%)
- not having sex (12.7%)

Among all adolescent girls in a union aged 15–19, 62.8% are not using a method of contraception. Injectable contraceptives are the most common modern method used (23.3% of these adolescent girls), followed by male condoms (5.8%) or pills (3.1%) (see Figure 2).

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Among adolescents who had sex before age 20, the average age at first sex is 17.1 years for adolescent girls and 16.3 years for adolescent boys.

Among adolescents who become parents before age 20, the average age at first birth is 17.5 years for adolescent girls and 18.3 years for adolescent boys.

**What can be done to support Namibian adolescents to prevent unintended pregnancy?**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use and non-use of contraception</th>
<th>Adolescent girls aged 15-19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Method</strong></td>
<td>Sexually active, unmarried</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not using</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodic abstinence</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female condom</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male condom</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pill</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injectable contraceptives</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Learn the reasons why adolescents are not using contraception.**

- **Report not wanting a child in the next two years:** 80.3% for sexually active, unmarried adolescent girls, 53.9% for adolescent girls in union.

**Main reasons for not using contraception**

- **Sexually active, unmarried**
  - 21.4% infrequent sex
  - 11.8% not married
  - 9.2% fear of side-effects or health concerns
  - 19.7% lack of access or too far
  - 13.9% breastfeeding
  - 12.7% not having sex

- **In union**
  - 88.9% from a government facility
  - 5.8% from a private facility

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

- Sexually active, unmarried: 59.2% from a government facility, 24.5% from a shop.

**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

## 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

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