

**UNITED STATES: "Oral Sex Often a Prelude to Intercourse for Teens"**  
**Reuters Health (11.02.10):: Lynne Peoples**

Students who engage in oral sex within the first two years of high school are much more likely than those who do not to report having vaginal intercourse by the end of 11th grade, a new study suggests. The study involved surveying 627 ninth-grade students in two northern California high schools every six months between 2002 and 2005.

Among students reporting oral sex by their ninth-grade year, just 9 percent had abstained from vaginal sex through 11th grade, reported Dr. Bonnie L. Halpern-Felsher of the University of California-San Francisco and Dr. Anna V. Song of UC-Merced. The overwhelming majority experienced oral sex before vaginal sex, with most of those transitioning to the latter doing so within six months.

Students "who initiated oral sex at the end of the ninth grade had a 50 percent chance of initiating vaginal sex by the end of the 11th grade," reported the authors. "In comparison, adolescents who delayed until the end of 11th grade had a 16 percent chance of initiating vaginal sex by the end of 11th grade."

In addition, students reporting sexual activity before ninth grade or after 10th grade had a lower chance of intercourse by the final survey than those initiating oral sex in ninth or 10th grade. Of those who abstained from oral sex through 11th grade, 80 percent had also avoided vaginal sex.

"In a past publication, we showed that adolescents perceived that oral sex was more acceptable and more prevalent compared to intercourse, and that adolescents believe that oral sex carries less risk of health consequences - sexually transmitted infections, HIV, and pregnancy - as well as social and emotional consequences than does vaginal sex," Halpern-Felsher wrote.

"These findings highlight the need for health care providers, health educators, and parents to include discussions of oral sex within a comprehensive sexual education curriculum," Halpern-Felsher said.

The study, "Predictive Relationships Between Adolescent Oral and Vaginal Sex," was published in *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine* (doi:10.1001/archpediatrics.2010.214).