



Dating Smarts: 20 Suggestions

... to prepare for future dating experiences

1. Long-term relationships should be with someone who knows and shares your values and ideals.
2. Keep the relationship healthy. Long passionate make-out periods get dangerous, and relationships become harder to satisfy without becoming longer and more passionate.
3. Understand each other's triggers – learn to avoid the things that get hormones flowing to keep things from getting out of hand.
4. Getting physically intimate and/or sexually active in your relationship really IS dangerous! This is when hormones control your body and the brain typically cannot think clearly!
5. Group dating is great common sense. You can have a lot of fun and together, get to know others, stay out of situations where you can get too physical.
6. Don't start dating too early – the earlier you start, the harder it is to stay out of a physical relationship.
7. Plan your dates – know what you will be doing...don't just "hang out." Have plans so you won't have long periods of time with nothing to do.
8. Know who you are dating. Make sure you know this person and are sure that you are in a safe situation. Another great reason for group dating.
9. Don't be in place you aren't sure you're safe, such as alone in a car away from a place you can get help, or at someone's house you don't know.
10. Make sure the other person knows your standards, limits, and boundaries before you go out with them.
11. Keep your reasons for waiting clearly in mind. You're waiting because you want to avoid the possibility of serious disease, unplanned pregnancy, and distorted relationships. Set your standards ahead of time, not when you're in the middle of a date.
12. Alcohol and drugs cloud judgment and weaken your ability to think clearly. Stay sober.
13. Don't be a sucker for sexual come-ons and games...have some responses in mind.
14. Understand that you don't have to give a reason for saying no.
15. Find healthy ways to express your feelings for each other.
16. Start slowly and deliberately in a relationship. Most fast starting relationships end abruptly as well.
17. Know that if your family and friends don't approve of this relationship, in most cases it's not a healthy one for you.
18. If you can't talk about "sex," sexual limits, boundaries, your moral/values in a relationship, then you're too immature to be in it.
19. Ask yourself, "Am I happy because I'm being respected?" Or "Am I happy because I don't want to lose them?"
20. Know the extreme danger of "being under the influence" of hormones and know when to communicate before your brain is unable to think!

Share these with your parent/guardian/caring adult and see what they think.