What comes to mind when you hear of teenage pregnancies? Is it a friend? A family member? Or someone who sat next to you in math class? We tend to see these sorts of things in movies or read it in books; we do not usually see it happening to people we know and care about. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, approximately 750,000 young girls become pregnant each year in the United States. Out of this amount, 53% of the girls actually give birth, while about 34% have abortions. In fact, the US has the higher rate than any other industrialized nation in the world. Our ally, Great Britain comes in second.

I never really used to consider this matter and how often it actually occurs. After all, no one I was close to was considered to be a “pregnant teenager.” I probably knew one or too girls from my school; but I was not close to them. Therefore, I could not exactly identify with this situation and how much of an impact it has on the individual and the people around them. Yet, that all changed last year, when my younger sister got pregnant.

Like many other girls in her same position, motherhood came at a young age for my sister, Victoria. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy reports that 31% of young girls get pregnant at least once before reaching the age of twenty and eight out of ten of those pregnancies are unintended.

What many of these girls don’t consider are the consequences. Not only does their schooling usually get put on hold, but they are putting their health at risk. According to Medline Plus, as a result of not receiving timely prenatal care, pregnant teenagers have a higher risk of pregnancy-related high blood pressure and its complications. For instance, the Boston Globe reports that if untreated, this high blood pressure could lead to coma or even death. In addition, babies tend to usually be premature and have a low birth-weight. Therefore these low birth weight babies are more likely to have organs that are not fully developed, which can result into harmful complications such as bleeding in the brain, breathing difficulties, and intestinal problems.

My sister, for instance, had to have a check-up every two weeks during her pregnancy. Because she was only sixteen years old, Victoria had to be extra conscious about gaining adequate weight as well as having better eating habits. After all, a majority of teenagers do not have the best eating habits: lets be honest, sometimes chips and dip may be considered dinner. However, my sister could not do that anymore if she wanted to have a healthy baby.

Right now, Victoria is finishing her last year of high school and is preparing for college; you can say she’s one of the lucky ones. According to Family First Aid, only 1/3 of teen mothers finish high school. The statistics for college are even lower: just 1.5% receive a college degree by the age of thirty. It is unfortunate that some of these girls are unable to continue their education. This
tends to happen because they usually don’t have an encouraging support; someone to be behind them along the way and show them that they are not alone.

Although the teen pregnancy rate is dropping because of more awareness as well as available contraceptives, 750,000 girls a year is still a lot. Many people tend to say that these girls put themselves in this situation, but that is not necessarily true; things happen, accidents occur. My sister did not intend to become a mom right now; it was not a part of my family’s plan for her of her plan for herself. Although Victoria loves her son deeply, she still wishes that things were different and that she could be like any other typical teenager, and be able to go out and not have constantly worry.

I regret the fact that I never spoke to my sister about the “sex” topic; I believed that it was not my business because it was her personal life. However, I should have especially given the fact that my mother is old fashioned about this sort of topic, so it was not like my sister could confine in her. Therefore, I encourage you to be upfront and talk to your younger sibling, cousin, or friend and simply tell them to be aware and be careful because, as a teenager, would they be ready to take on a child and all the responsibilities of parenthood?
Teenage Pregnancy

Topic: Teenage Pregnancy

General Purpose: To inform

Specific Purpose: To inform my audience about the health risks and consequences that come along with teenage pregnancies.

Central Idea: My audience will leave knowing that teen pregnancy is an important issue and it occurs more often than they may think.

Sources:

1. Boston Globe:
   http://www.boston.com/yourlife/health/women/articles/2006/05/22/is_pregnancy_riskier_for_teenagers_than_for_adults/

2. Medline Plus: