**Making good decisions**

**Take The Quiz**

Read each statement and check True or False.

1. Most Internet child molesters look for young children and preteens.

*True* *False*

1. Internet child molesters are often violent and abduct their victims.

*True* *False*

1. Internet predators looking for sex with teens usually pretend to be teenagers themselves.

*True* *False*

1. Adults who express feelings of love for the teens they meet online want sex, not romance.

*True* *False*

1. Predators don’t tell teens they are interested in sex until they get them into a face-to-face meeting.

*True* *False*

1. Teens who decide to meet their online acquaintances in person for sex often say they have feelings of closeness and romantic love.

*True* *False*

1. Posting private identity information online puts teens at risk of unwanted invitations for sex.

*True* *False*

1. Talking about sex to people only known online puts a teen at greater risk of invitations for face-to-face sex.

*True* *False*

1. Teens who post sexy photos online are more likely to receive sexual invitations from strangers.

*True* *False*

1. Sending sexy photos of yourself or other teens over the Internet may result in these photos being passed around the Internet.

*True* *False*

1. I t’s illegal for adults to use the Internet to seek sex with teens.

*True* *False*

# Making good decisions

**geT The FacTs**

**1. Most Internet child molesters look for young children and preteens.**

***False.*** Most online child molesters are *not* looking for children below the age of puberty. They are actually looking for relationships with teenage girls and boys.

**3. Internet predators looking for sex with teens usually pretend to be teenagers themselves.**

***False.*** Actually, most adults looking for sex with teens usually tell their real ages.

**5. Predators don’t tell teens they are interested in sex until they get them into a face-to-face meeting.**

***False.*** Actually, most teens who decide to meet face to face know that the encounter will include sex. So if teens are willing partners, what’s the problem? The problem is that sex between an adult and a teen below the age of consent (usually around 16) is a crime.

**7. Posting private identity information online puts teens at risk of unwanted invitations for offline sex.**

***False.*** Contrary to media hype, the typical online child predator does not carefully piece together identity information to locate and abduct unwilling teens. More typically, teens who go off with adult predators go willingly after a period of online romantic and sexual talk. It’s the *combination* of talking sexually to a stranger and providing private identity information that is risky.

**2. Internet child molesters are often violent and abduct their victims.**

***False.*** While this could happen, it is actually extremely rare. People who resort to violence often do so because they cannot relate well to other people. The Internet is not an easy environment for these violent kinds of people because they do not have the communication skills to establish close personal relationships.

**4. Adults who express feelings of love for the teens they meet online want sex, not romance.**

***True.*** Most online child molesters patiently develop romantic relationships and trust with their victims before moving the relationships offline for sex. The process may involve expressions of understanding about the teen’s problems, sending gifts or money, and offering job opportunities.

**6. Teens who decide to meet their online acquaintances in person for sex often say they have feelings of closeness and romantic love.**

***True.*** The adult may also have feelings of love for the teen. But because the adult is much older and more experienced, the teen may be unfairly convinced to get involved in sexual activity that they are not ready for. That is the reason the law says this is a crime—even if both people willingly agree to it.

**8. Talking about sex to people only known online puts a teen at greater risk of invitations for face-to-face sex.**

***True.*** Talking about sex online with strangers is risky. However, there does not seem to be a great risk in talking online with strangers about other topics. But you have to be careful because, in any conversation, one thing leads to another and if it starts turning to sex, then alarm bells should go off in your head.

**Making good decisions**

1. **Sending sexy photos of 9. Teens who post sexy photos online are yourself or other teens over more likely to receive sexual invitations the Internet may result in**

**from strangers. these photos being passed**

***True.*** If you post sexually provocative photos of yourself online, **around the Internet.**

you are probably going to get more contacts from strangers. ***True.*** Strangers who ask for sexual And some of those contacts may be aggressive and scary. photos of teens may end up passing

Some will be from adults and some will be from other teens. them along on the Internet, in violation

of child pornography laws. These laws say that the possession, distribution, or

1. **It’s illegal for adults to use the** production of sexual images of minors **Internet to seek sex with teens.** is a crime. There has been at least

***True.*** When older people use their greater experience to one case in which a boyfriend and take advantage of a younger person, it’s called “online girlfriend who e-mailed intimate photos solicitation of a minor.” There are laws in most states and of themselves back and forth were in the federal penal code to punish the offender, even if arrested for child pornography. the teen is a willing participant.

## Think abouT iT

**What’s Normal? What’s Wrong?**

When young people reach puberty and But there are enormous problems with teens getting their bodies begin to mature sexually, they involved in sexual relationships with adults. For one thing, cannot help but be interested in romance. it’s illegal. Why is this true even if the sex is something It’s natural. Both girls and boys think about the teen agrees to? how to make themselves attractive to The law recognizes that it is impossible for sex between potential partners. This is why it is also an adult and a minor to really be mutual because of the natural for flirting and sexualtalk to go on older person’s power over the younger person. The law in high schools. It can become offensive recognizes that, in our society, adults are often seen as sometimes, but most kids can handle it being in a position of power or authority. The law also because the students are all about the same recognizes that when a teen has sex with an adult there age, maturity, and experience level. It’s also can be a negative impact on the healthy sexual and normal for teens to flirt and talk with their emotional development for the younger person. So the law classmates about sexual matters online. tries to prevent this from happening to a younger person.

**What About Online?**

You might think it’s just having fun to behaviors. They can result in you test out your power to be sexy online. receiving crude comments you aren’t You might also think about talking prepared for and don’t want. Or it about sex to online acquaintances and might feel romantic at the time. But posting sexy photos of yourself for going further and meeting face to face strangers to see. But these are risky can harm you emotionally later.