

Cosby: Teen behaviors increase STD risk

Take lead

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Cosby acknowledged that some would say he is "preaching to the choir" by talking to the Spelman graduates about those who fail to place an emphasis on parenting and education.

"I smiled and I say every Sunday so does the preacher," Cosby said.

"The message is clear. What's not clear is why black scholars, who ought to be saying what's on their minds, are not putting it into the African-American community the way it ought to be. They ought to be challenging the issues of high dropout rates of African-American males."

Cosby, 68, said he realized parts of his speech would be unsettling to many in the audience.

"I'm going to speak to these young women about taking charge and I know it's going to be fearful and it's going to tweak a lot of things," he said. "They have to because it's in their lives and it's real. It is there. They are going to be needed to protect the legacy that is good."

Cosby told the graduates that the same male students who are dropping out of high school "have memorized the lyrics of very difficult rap songs."

Added Cosby, "And they know how to send their sperm cells out and then walk away from the responsibility of something called fatherhood."

Cosby said he acknowledged that his criticisms are not meant for all black males, but he said 70 percent of black graduates this year are female.

"Who's running the show?" Cosby asked. "It appears that the male is, but I have news for you. It's your turn."

"We want you to lead in business. We want you to lead in medicine. We want you to lead in everything."

Cosby, who has enjoyed great success as a comedian, actor and author, has been accused of being out of touch and unsympathetic with the poor.

Cosby made a reference to his critics, who he called "all those liberals" and in his response he told the graduates "I'll be darned."

He reminded the audience of his youth in the projects of Philadelphia.

"I had three Christmases with no tree, no presents," Cosby said, adding he was too embarrassed to invite friends into his home during the holiday "because I didn't want them to see I had no tree, no presents."

"Don't tell me I don't know, don't tell me I'm out of touch," he said. "I'm telling you I am in touch."

Asthma

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power, but it is what you do with it that makes all the difference!

Contribution by Jennifer Stanislaus, MD

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A look at Mecklenburg County's reported cases of syphilis, gonorrhea and chlamydia from 1999 to 2003, reports of gonorrhea and chlamydia rose each year among the 13-19 age group.

Between 2001 and 2002, reported cases of chlamydia roses by 362. During that same time period, cases of gonorrhea increased from 591 cases to 629.

"There may be a general feeling out there that oral sex is safer than intercourse," Erbeling said, "and it probably is for some diseases."

There is a lower risk of contracting a sexually transmitted disease from oral sex, but according to the Palo Alto Medical Foundation in California, the risk is still there.

"You can still get a bacterial infection of chlamydia,

syphilis or gonorrhea in your mouth and/or throat," the foundation's web site states. "And in some rarer occasions, can develop genital warts in the mouth. Herpes is commonly passed through genitals and the mouth and HIV can be passed through cuts in the mouth or small abrasions."

Anal sex, however, is often considered a conduit to sexually transmitted diseases.

According to TeenHealthFx.com, anal sex can cause some tearing inside the anus. If a partner has an STD, then it is spread easier though this behavior.

According to a study by professors at Yale and Columbia universities, even teens who take virginity pledges don't have a lower risk of STDs.

According to the report, the pledges may have sex later and with fewer people, but

they were less likely to use a condom their first time and were more likely to have oral or anal sex.

"Clinicians need to routinely ask their adolescent and young adult patients about the full range of sexual behaviors and educate young people about what the relative risk are for different types of STDs for various sexual behaviors," Erbeling said.

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