Dear Alice,

A few months ago, my boyfriend and I went to get the "morning after pill." I had two extra pills in case I vomited the ones I took. Stupidly, I kept them and recently, my mom found them. She has not confronted me about them yet but I'm freaked out!! My parents are pretty conservative, so I can't possibly tell them "Oh mom! I had sex behind your back and the condom broke!" They'd flip out! What should I tell them?

Answer

Dear Reader,

You weren't stupid to keep the backup pills. On the contrary, it was smart to hold onto them in case the first ones didn't stay down, or in case you needed them for another condom slip-up. However, it sounds like your mother finding the pills was an undesired consequence of your forethought, although one that can possibly be turned into something positive - an opportunity to be open with your parents about an important aspect of your life, your sexuality.

Talking about sex with parents is rarely fun for anyone, but it could be a great chance to show your parents how mature and responsible you are about your health and your relationships. The fact that you knew what to do after a condom broke, and that you were able to seek and receive the pills you needed, shows that you and your boyfriend are responsible and knowledgable. If you're certain your mom found the pills, then she likely already knows that you are having sex. The next step would be to choose how (or if) you'd like to broach the topic.

Here are some suggestions for how to talk with your parents about sex, or about any other potentially uncomfortable topic:

- Approach your parents at a time when you can all sit together calmly without interruption or set up a time where you can talk. You might say something like "Could we talk about something important after dinner tonight?"
- Make a list of what you'd like to say before you meet with them, so nervous jitters won't leave your mind blank. You might also want to think about how you'd like to respond to questions they might ask you or comments they might make, given your family and cultural values.
- Listen carefully to what they have to say and questions they ask. If they see you're really taking in their points, there's a better chance they'll listen to you.
- You may want one of your parents to go with you to a family planning clinic or a
women's health care provider to discuss methods of birth control, or for a check up.

- For more tips on talking to your parents about sex, check out Planned Parenthood's article *Talking about sex? with your parents* [2].
- Parents and other adults can visit the Parents' Sex Ed Center [3] from Advocates for Youth for more information on talking with young people about sexuality.

Parents are often just as nervous as their kids are when it comes to discussing sex. For this reason or many others, it's possible that your mom won't bring up her discovery at all. If you feel there is something to be gained by sharing this fact of your life with your parents, power to you! And if you feel you don't need to bring it up if they don't, carry on safely! Hopefully you feel better prepared to face the option of discussing the decisions you've made with your parents whether they bring it up now or later, or whether you choose to do so at some point along the road.

Alice!

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Published date:
Apr 23, 1999

Last reviewed on:
Mar 24, 2015
If you are in an urgent situation, please visit our Emergency page to view a list of 24 hour support services and hotlines.

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