

Dear Zandile

It's hard when two people want different things from each other but, as the elders say: *ubude abuphangwa* (don't rush into doing something before you're ready). Many people decide to wait until they are older or married to have sex and there are many advantages to this decision. When you are older, you are emotionally more ready to have a relationship. Also, if you don't have sex, you are not at risk from STIs, HIV and unplanned pregnancies.

In the meantime, it's good that the two of you can hug and kiss and then stop. This is a wonderful way of showing how much you love each other. Don't worry, boys – and girls – can stop any time with no ill-effects.

However, many young people believe that once you start touching and kissing you end up having sex, so it's better to spend time together with friends, instead of alone cuddling and kissing.

In the end young people must decide what is right for them without pressure from anyone else. Talk to your boyfriend. If he truly loves you, he will understand.

If you decide to have sex later, be sure to use a condom. Talk about this before – it's harder if you leave it to the last minute. Remember, girls can also get and carry male or female condoms. Good luck.

Auntie Stella

ACTION POINTS

- Do you think it's possible to hug and kiss and then stop without going the whole way (having sex)? If not, what can you do? If you were Zandile, where would you draw the line so you can have fun but not get carried away and do more than you want?

QUIZ: Are we ready for sex?

Do this alone or with your partner. Answer YES, NO, or NOT REALLY.

- 1 Do we know each other well and trust each other?
- 2 Are we good friends?
- 3 Can we talk easily about sex and how far we want to go?
- 4 Have we talked about and agreed how we will protect each other from pregnancy, STIs and HIV?
- 5 Have we discussed having an HIV test before we start having sex?
- 6 Have we talked about what we will do if the girl gets pregnant?

ANSWERS: If you answered NO or NOT REALLY to any of these questions, maybe you and your partner aren't ready to have sex yet. It's a big decision.

- In your group, write down all the reasons some young people go ahead and have sex. Then write all the reasons why others wait until they are older. Which would you choose and why?