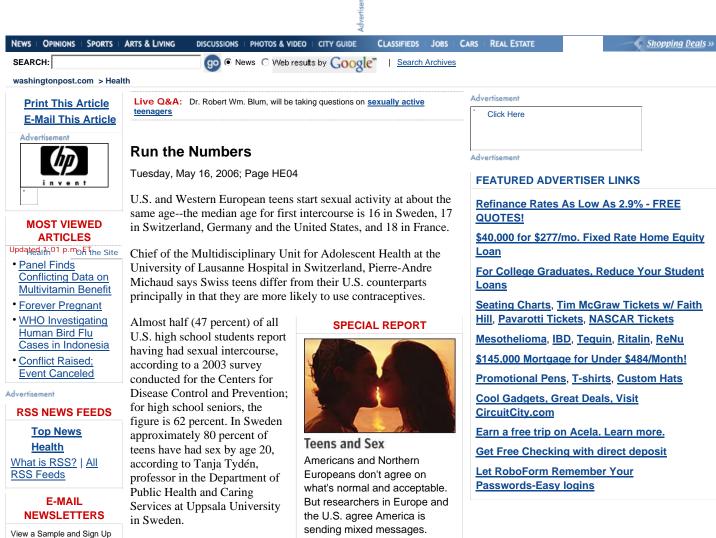
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in Sweden.

U.S. teens are more likely to have sexual intercourse before

the U.S. agree America is sending mixed messages.

• Europe: Not About Risk
• U.S.: Conflicted Messages

Virginity Pledge-Takers Tell
 All

By The Numbers

- What Can Parents Do?
- <u>Birth, Abortion, Pregnancy</u> <u>Rates</u>
- Compare Five Developed
 Countries
- Programs in Developed
 Countries
- Graphic: Teenage Sex, Pregnancy
- » Q & A Transcript: Teenage Sexuality

The U.S. teen pregnancy rate (84 out of every 1,000 girls age 15 to 19 become pregnant each year) is higher than that that of Denmark (23), Finland (21), Germany (16) and Sweden (25),

age 15 and to become pregnant

according to a 2000 report from

than teens in England and

Wales, France and Sweden,

the Guttmacher Institute, a

nonprofit group that studies

teens are likelier to be in a committed relationship when

U.S. teens also have a higher

rate of infection and STDs --

due to lower condom use, according to the report.

they have sex.

sexual health. The study also found that Western European

WASHINGTONPOST.COM QUIZ

Run the Numbers: Take the Quiz
1) What is the median age for first intercourse for U.S. teens?

○ 17

€ 16

○ 15

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found a 2000 report in Family Planning Perspectives. (Differences in birth rates are also striking: Roughly six out of every 1,000 teen girls have babies every year in Switzerland, eight per 1,000 in Sweden, 10 per 1,000 in France, and 28 per 1,000 in England and Wales, according to the report, compared to about 54 per 1,000 in the United States. The U.S. abortion rate (then 29 per 1,000) was higher than that in Sweden (17), France (10), Finland (10) and the Netherlands (4), found the report.

According to the Guttmacher Institute, a third of all U.S. girls become pregnant before they turn 20; 80 percent of them are unmarried.

In the U.S., rates of teen sex, pregnancy, abortion and birth have all declined since 1991, as a result, most experts agree, of a combination of teens' postponing sex and increased contraception. But the rates are still higher than those in virtually all Western European countries.

-- Elizabeth Agnvall

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