

# Cohabitation

Cohabitation is a growing pattern among young adults. In the U.S., it has increased eleven-fold since 1960. Many young people say they live together in order to find out whether they are “sexually compatible.”

A point to stress: Part of the thrill of beginning a married life together is learning about sex together, discovering how to make each other happy, just as you do in other areas of your relationship.

Research cites these facts about cohabitation:

1. Cohabiting relationships are unstable. Nine of 10 cohabiting relationships break up in less than five years.
2. The rate of divorce among those who cohabit before marrying is nearly double that of couples who marry without having lived together.
3. Men in cohabiting relationships are four times more likely to be unfaithful than husbands.
4. The rate of STDs for cohabiting women is six times higher than for married women.
5. Women in cohabiting relationships end up contributing more than 70% of the relationship's income. The poverty rate for children of cohabiting couples is five times greater than for children of married couples.
6. Depression is three times more likely in cohabiting couples. Marriages preceded by cohabiting are more prone to drug and alcohol problems.
7. Child abuse is 20 times higher in families where the couple has had children without being married.

Source: A. Patrick Sneider, M.D. Cohabitation. *New Oxford Review* (September, 2007).