

# Veronica's Story

Veronica is a good friend who pulls you aside at lunch to tell you the good news: her pregnancy test is negative! The bad news: she tested positive for chlamydia, a sexually transmitted infection.

Veronica's been through a lot. She is 16 years old and in a group home. She was removed from her family because her mother was addicted to cocaine. You've known Veronica since 7th grade when she fought with other girls a lot, but she has calmed down since then. Now she's in 11th grade, and she started in a cosmetology program this year that will allow her to graduate with her cosmetology license.

Before the cosmetology program, she considered herself "ugly." You and her other friends would tell her she was cute, but she never believed it. In the past six months, with the glamorous way she grooms herself, plus the clothes she can buy with the money she makes from doing other girls' hair, she has moved into a "faster," more popular clique, but you're still her best friend. She tells you everything and always comes to you for advice.

During that same time, she got involved with and broke up with her first serious boyfriend, and her grades dropped sharply. "I used to smoke weed with my boyfriend all the time," she says. "That's why my grades went down. But now I don't mess with anything during the week, just on weekends." She mostly goes to parties, or hangs out with friends and drinks alcohol. You don't like a lot of folks in that clique, so you don't go to hang with them, but you hear about it secondhand from Veronica.

As for birth control, she uses the pill. Now, however, she's worried about gaining weight from using the pill. Plus, she says, "I really should be using condoms."

In the past month, she has had a number of brief and casual sexual encounters with some new guys she's been meeting. "Mostly they use condoms," she says, "but this last guy didn't have any, and I guess I was a little too drunk to care. I probably shouldn't drink, but I like it ... what should I do?"

## Discussion Questions:

1. What might be some reasons that Veronica likes to drink?
2. What are some negative things that could happen if Veronica keeps mixing sex and alcohol?
3. If Veronica decides to keep mixing sex and alcohol, what can she do to protect herself from some of those negative things?