

# MTV 16 and Pregnant

Season 3 - Episode 6  
"Kayla"

## EPISODE SUMMARY

Kayla's anorexia comes back full-force when she gets pregnant and starts gaining baby weight. While struggling to put her looks aside for the health of her child, Kayla realizes that the person she has always relied on, her mother, refuses to support her.



## STUFF TO THINK ABOUT AND DISCUSS

- ✦ Kayla puts herself and her baby at risk by not eating properly during her pregnancy. The average woman gains between 25-35 pounds during a healthy pregnancy—which can be very frightening to someone with an eating disorder. Some people with a history of anorexia are able to cope with the weight gain during pregnancy because they see it as a sacrifice for their developing child, but others, like Kayla, have a more difficult time. Without proper nutrition during pregnancy a baby can suffer from poor development, premature birth, low birth weight and feeding problems. Health risks for the mother include severe depression, dehydration, heart problems, and labor complications. Experts recommend that women with eating disorders resolve their weight and behavior issues before trying to get pregnant, but even then it's important to get the proper medical and psychological care.
  - ✓ Some people wrongly think of being anorexic as a sort of birth control because oftentimes women with anorexia don't have regular periods. Just because a girl or woman doesn't get her period regularly, doesn't mean she isn't at risk for pregnancy—in fact, a recent study found that women with anorexia are actually more likely to have unplanned pregnancies.
  - ✓ For more about eating disorders, including how to get help, go to [www.nationaleatingdisorders.org](http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org) or call 1-800-931-2237.
- ✦ Kayla says she wishes she and Mike were "more careful" about preventing pregnancy. But she wasn't on any sort of birth control when she got pregnant. Even though most teen moms really, truly love their kids, nearly all of them say the same thing—that they wish would have waited before starting a family. You can learn from their mistakes and their experience—and make pregnancy prevention a priority in your life. Some tips: 1) Have a plan. Know what you will do and say in the heat of the moment before that moment arrives. If you don't want to have sex, practice how you will say "no." 2) If you are going to have sex, know what your options are and how to use them properly. 3) Talk to your partner about protection. After all, it takes two people to get pregnant.
  - ✓ Check out [www.itsyoursexlife.com/gyt/protect/what-works-what-doesnt](http://www.itsyoursexlife.com/gyt/protect/what-works-what-doesnt) or [www.StayTeen.org/birth-control-101](http://www.StayTeen.org/birth-control-101) to learn more about various birth control methods and how to protect yourself. Want to find out how much it costs, and where you can get it? Go to [www.Bedsider.org](http://www.Bedsider.org).
- ✦ Kayla's mom basically checked out while her daughter was pregnant, despite the fact that she knew Kayla needed her to be around and supportive. Mike tried to help out with everything—meals, bills, getting ready for the baby—but it wasn't the same as having a mom around. Kayla's friends were the ones who took her to

the hospital after an anorexia-related health scare, and they were the ones who took care of her afterwards too. Then Mike drove Kayla to the hospital when she went into labor because her mom couldn't be bothered to get out of bed. Even when Kayla told her mom directly how she felt and what she needed, her mom still stayed away. How did that make you feel? How do you think things would have been different for Kayla if her mom had been by her side throughout the pregnancy? Do you think the way her mom treated her will affect the way Kayla treats her own child?

✓ It's really important for pregnant teens (all teens, really) to have a trusted adult they can talk to and depend on. Ideally, their own parents fill that role, but if that's not possible they should look to other family members, faith leaders, teachers, or friends. There are also parenting classes available for teens that can be helpful.

✦ Money is a big problem for Kayla and Mike. Even with Mike working fulltime they can't afford all the things they need. When the heat at the house goes out they end up spending money they don't have on a hotel in order to keep themselves and the baby warm, and when they go shopping for diapers and formula they have to choose very carefully and watch every penny. Without financial help from their parents it's hard to see how they'll survive. Can you imagine having to pay for everything for yourself and baby? How would you make ends meet?

✓ Kayla isn't alone in her financial predicament. One of our four teen mothers go on welfare by their child's third birthday, and two-thirds of families headed up by a young unmarried mother are poor.

✓ Teen mothers are less likely to complete the education necessary for a well-paying job—only 38% of mothers who have children before age 18 graduate from high school and less than 2% graduate from college by age 30. This makes it even harder to break the cycle of poverty.

## STUFF TO KEEP IN MIND

✦ Most teen girls who get pregnant never thought it would happen to them.

✦ Thinking it won't happen doesn't count—or work—as birth control.

✦ The majority of girls who have babies before age 18 don't graduate from high school. Fewer than 2% graduate from college by age 30.

✦ Teen pregnancy is hard on teens—but much harder on their babies.

✦ A baby won't make him stay. Eight out of 10 fathers don't marry the teen mother of their child. Most couples don't stay together at all.

✦ Once there is a pregnancy, every road ahead is hard—whether the choice is to become a teen parent, make an adoption plan, or have an abortion. In comparison to any of those, preventing a pregnancy is easy.

✦ It takes two people to get pregnant, but only one to prevent it. Be that one!

## RESOURCES

Have questions or need to know where to go? Check out these trusted sites and hotlines:

✦ Think you might be pregnant or need to find a health clinic? Call Planned Parenthood at 1-800-230 PLAN (7526) or visit [www.PlannedParenthood.org](http://www.PlannedParenthood.org).

✦ Questions about sexual health, STDs, or getting tested? Check out MTV's [www.ItsYourSexLife.com](http://www.ItsYourSexLife.com).

✦ Looking for information about all the available birth control methods and where you can go to get them? Go to [www.Bedsider.org](http://www.Bedsider.org).

✦ Want more facts and tips on teen pregnancy and how to prevent it (waiting, contraception, talking with parents and peers, etc.)? Go to [www.StayTeen.org](http://www.StayTeen.org) and [www.TheNationalCampaign.org](http://www.TheNationalCampaign.org).