Solange Knowles Says “Yes, Yes, Yes to Safe Sex”

April 29, 2009 By LaToya Johnson

Singer/songwriter Solange Knowles is partnering with MTV’s Staying Alive Foundation and The Body Shop on the multiplatform “Yes, Yes, Yes to Safe Sex” campaign, which launched April 14 in New York City. Targeting youth under the age of 25, it aims to promote responsible sexual behavior while at the same time raising funds for HIV awareness programs around the world.

Knowles shared that growing up she heard two kinds of safe-sex campaigns: Some promoted condoms as the best way to prevent HIV/AIDS, and others preached abstinence. “I think my parents did a great job at giving us what I call the ‘Real Deal Holyfield’ and then letting us be in a position to make decisions on our own,” said Knowles, whose parents are about as well-known as her big sis Beyoncé.

The 22-year-old mother said that she’ll have the sex talk with her own child, Daniel Julez Smith Jr., one day. “I think you can feel when they’re not ready. Sometimes by talking to them too early you’re introducing something and creating a curiosity for something that’s not there,” Knowles explained. “You’re like, ‘This is sex!’ You’re talking about it extra early, and kids are like, ‘I just want to watch Dora [*the Explorer*]!’”

Knowles told *Real Health* that she realizes how awkward and uncomfortable it is for young people to even discuss safe sex and HIV. However, she said, “ I feel like you have to be more afraid of [HIV] then afraid to talk about it.” Globally, more than 3,000 new HIV infections occur daily among young adults ages 15 to 24, according to 2006 data from the World Health Organization and UNICEF.

The songstress’s drive to become a part of this campaign also stemmed from personal experience. Her uncle died of AIDS-related illness when she was only 9 years old. “We were really close, and of course at that age I didn’t really understand the facts about the disease. And so this is an issue that’s very close to me,” Knowles said.

The entertainer clarifies she does not consider herself a “spokesmodel” or a “poster child” for the campaign and that through it, she is learning more about HIV alongside everyone else. “The good thing about this campaign is that it doesn’t come from a preachy standpoint because that turns a lot of people off. People don’t want to feel like this is not a choice and that it’s been shoved down their throats,” Knowles said. “This campaign does a good job of providing the information and still

standing strong in it, but not coming from a preachy ‘principal’s office’ point of view.

The central message that MTV and The Body Shop hope to convey to young people is “if they’re saying yes to having sex, then they must also be saying yes to using condoms,” said Sari Locker, PhD, author of *The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Sex*. “This campaign is also raising money to add to AIDS education worldwide, and that’s important too,” she added.

“Yes, Yes, Yes to Safe Sex” hinges on the sale of The Body Shop’s Limited Edition Tantalizing Lip Butter ($8), which is sold in more than 50 countries. Proceeds from the lip balm will go toward MTV’s Staying Alive Foundation, which supports grassroots-level HIV/AIDS education campaigns worldwide.

Television and online promotion for the safe-sex campaign will air on MTV Networks. “Our goal for this campaign is to bring awareness and break down the barriers and stigma around talking about sex,” said Paul Dean, director of strategic planning for MTV. Its website, yestosafesex.com, where users can pledge to say yes to safe sex, will be a major part of the campaign. All pledgers will be automatically entered into a contest to win prizes from MTV and The Body Shop.

“It’s a very powerful collaboration, and we’re delighted to be working with MTV,” said Shelley Simmons, director of values for The Body Shop. This is MTV’s third year working with The Body Shop to raise HIV/AIDS awareness. Even though the alliance is still fairly new, MTV’s Staying Alive, a multimedia global HIV/AIDS prevention initiative, is more than a decade old. Since it launched in 1998, it has commissioned millions of youth to guard themselves against diseases.

As part of its Staying Alive campaign, MTV also created the Staying Alive Foundation in 2005 to award grants to young individuals who are engaged in grassroots HIV/AIDS prevention groups. The foundation has given out 130 grants to 101 distinct projects in 48 countries. Together, MTV and The Body Shop have raised more than $2 million for the Staying Alive Foundation.

Knowles said she is honored to join other celebrities, like fellow singers Estelle and Kelly Rowland, in getting the word out about safe sex through Staying Alive. “I’ve seen the work Kelly has done, and I really admired her for going to Africa and getting her hands in this,” said Knowles, reflecting on the far-reaching HIV advocacy of her sister’s former Destiny’s Child groupmate. “From that angle, I really hope to do the same.”

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/solange-knowles-says-yes-yes-yes-safe-sex