

HIV/AIDS - Reducing your sexual risk



HIV can be spread by having unprotected sexual contact (sex without barrier protection, like a condom) with an HIV-positive person. Some of the ways to reduce your risk of getting HIV through sexual contact include:

Abstinence: Abstaining from sexual behavior of any kind (vaginal, anal, or oral sex) is the only 100% sure way to prevent HIV infection.

Be Faithful: Being faithful means: 1) You are in a sexual relationship with only one person; 2) Both of you are having sex only with each other; and 3) You have both been tested and know each other's HIV status.

Get tested and know your partner's status:

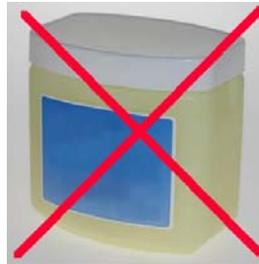
Knowing your own status is important for both your health *and* the health of your partner. You also need to ask your sexual partner(s) if they have been tested, when they were last tested, and what the results were. Talking about your HIV status can be a difficult or uncomfortable—but it's important to start the discussion early and **BEFORE** you have sex. If you and your partner decide to have sexual partners outside of your relationship, you need to talk about this and you both need to be tested for HIV and other *STD's* every 3-6 months.



Correct and consistent use of the male latex or polyurethane condom: If you use a condom incorrectly, it can slip or break, and will not protect you. And if you don't use a fresh condom with **every** act of oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse, you can get STDs, including HIV. **Female polyurethane condoms** are also effective in preventing HIV and certain STDs.



You should always use a water-based **lubricant** when you use a condom for vaginal or anal sex. Lubricants reduce friction and help prevent condom breakage. Do **NOT** use an oil-based



lubricant (like petroleum jelly, hand lotion, or cooking oil). These damage condoms and make them less effective.

Condoms do not provide 100% protection against all sexually transmitted diseases. Latex condoms can only protect against transmission when the ulcers or infections are in genital areas that are covered or protected by the condom. Condoms with the spermicide Nonoxynol-9 are **NOT** recommended..

Risky Business



All sexual practices can be made "safer" (meaning less risk of transmitting/contracting STDs and HIV), but some activities are regarded as much safer than others.

Anal Intercourse

Anal intercourse without a condom is a high risk sexual behavior for HIV infection for BOTH partners.

Vaginal Intercourse

During sex, HIV is transmitted from men to women much more easily than from women to men. Unprotected vaginal sex without a condom is



considered a high-risk behavior for HIV infection. The risk for transmission is increased if you currently have another STD or vaginal infection. Many STDs or infections may be “silent”—meaning you may not be aware that you are infected because you have no symptoms. Many barrier methods that are used to prevent pregnancy (diaphragm, cervical cap, etc.) DO NOT protect against STDs or HIV infection. Birth control pills DO NOT protect against STDs or HIV infection.



Oral sex

HIV transmission is a risk, though not as great as with anal or vaginal sex. There is a risk of contracting other STDs, like chlamydia and gonorrhea.

Safer Sex Activities

These activities carry no risk of HIV transmission.

- Non-sexual massage
- Casual or dry kissing



- Masturbation
- Frottage—also known as “dry humping” or body-to-body rubbing

Be sure to get answers to any questions you have about HIV/AIDS. Your public health department and health care provider can help.



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