

Get the facts about sex from FPQ

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you decide



... whether to have it
... when to start
... to practice it safely
each time

Sex you decide

Having a relationship does not mean you have to have sex. Whatever you do, whether it's kissing, touching, oral sex or sexual intercourse, it should always be something that you both want to do.

Being able to make your own decision about having sex is important.

Sex is meant to be

- something you decide to do when you are ready
- something that makes you both feel good
- something you can slow down, interrupt or stop at any time
- safe because you are both prepared to protect yourselves from sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unintended pregnancy
- a positive experience, not something to feel bad or guilty about

You can decide

- when to start having sex
- if you want to have sex
- if you want to have sex every time
- what kind of sex you want to have
- with whom you want to have sex

Sex and trust

The most important thing in a sexual relationship is that you trust the other person and you feel like you can communicate honestly with them about:

- whether you want to have sex
- where and how you like to be touched
- what your limits are
- using effective methods of preventing STIs and unintended pregnancy
- past and present experiences which may put you or your sexual partner at risk
- your own and your sexual partner's personal, cultural and/or religious beliefs

What if I decide I don't want to have sex?

Not having sex is OK! You always have the right to decide if you want to have sex or not...it is **your decision**. There are other ways to be close, like kissing, cuddling, talking and holding each other. Sexual activity is about choice, intimacy and feeling good.

If you don't feel OK or safe, then it's probably not the right time for you to have sex.

Remember: no one has the right to pressure you into it. Even if you've had sex once, it doesn't mean you have to again. Some people might start off being sexual and then change their mind. This is OK too.

Forcing someone to have sex or take part in any type of sexual activity that they don't want to, is a crime called rape or sexual assault.

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What is safer sex?

Safer sex means:

- protecting your emotional and physical health
- feeling good about yourself and your relationships
- preventing STIs like chlamydia, genital herpes, genital warts, gonorrhoea, hepatitis B, syphilis and HIV
- avoiding unintended pregnancy

Preventing STIs

STIs can be passed from one person to another through:

- vaginal, anal or oral sex
- close sexual contact (skin to skin)

How will I know if I have an STI?

You can't tell if someone has an STI by looking at them. Some STIs have symptoms like genital pain, sores or discharges from the penis or vagina, however, many STIs have NO symptoms. You might have an STI and not even know it, which means it can be passed on to someone else.

Every time you have unsafe sex with someone you are at risk of STIs. If you're sexually active, get tested regularly, and at least once a year. If you think you might have an STI, get tested! Early diagnosis and treatment of an STI can help avoid complications and stop you passing it on to others.

Chlamydia is one of the most common STIs affecting young people. It's easy to test for and easy to treat.

Infection can have serious consequences including infertility.

What is contraception?

Contraception means preventing pregnancy. It is the responsibility of both people in a sexual relationship.

There are lots of different types of contraception, including condoms, pills, implants, IUDs and injections. Only condoms offer protection from both unintended pregnancy and STIs.

Contraception is essential any time you have sex and wish to avoid pregnancy. Another contraception option is to use one of the long acting reversible methods of contraception (LARCs), such as an implant or IUD which, once fitted, is effective for years.

If you're worried about pregnancy, arrange a pregnancy test and talk to someone you trust as soon as possible.

You can get advice from Family Planning Queensland (FPQ) or other health professionals to choose the contraceptive method most suited to you; to discuss safer sex; get a pregnancy test or explore options if you have an unintended pregnancy.

Emergency contraception

Emergency contraception (commonly called the morning-after pill) is available to women who are at risk of unintended pregnancy after sexual intercourse. For example, if:

- contraception wasn't used
- contraception didn't work (condom broke or fell off, diaphragm problem)
- regular contraceptive pill was missed or forgotten

Emergency contraception pills are most effective if taken within 24 hours but can be used up to 5 days after unprotected sex. Remember, the sooner the better.

You can get emergency contraception from a chemist, doctor or a Family Planning clinic.

Enjoy safer sex

- every time you have vaginal or anal intercourse, use a condom with a water-based lubricant (eg KY Jelly, Muko, Wet Stuff). Oil or petroleum-based products (eg Vaseline or baby oil) can weaken latex condoms and cause them to break
- use dams or condoms during oral sex
- use condoms to cover sex aids such as vibrators and dildos
- never RE-USE condoms, dams or gloves

To learn about using condoms and other contraception methods, see FPQ's factsheets at www.fpq.com.au



Get help and advice about safer sex issues from:

- Family Planning Queensland clinics
- Sexual health clinics
- Doctors
- Women's health centres
- Hospital outpatient clinics
- Youth health centres
- Gay and lesbian counselling services
- www.fpq.com.au
- www.health.qld.gov.au/istaysafe

www.fpq.com.au