

Sexual Health Dorset

Your guide to:

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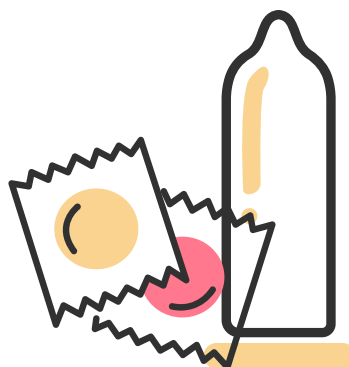
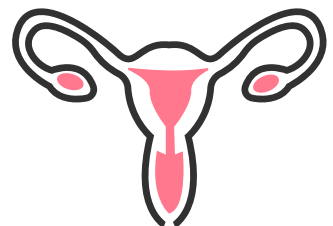
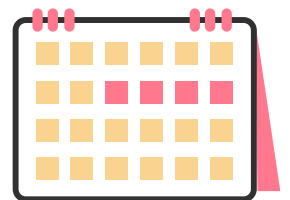
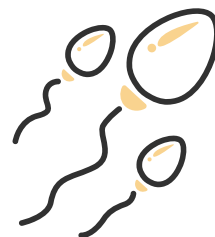
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Sexual health,
relationships, puberty
and everything in
between!



WHAT IS SEXUAL HEALTH?

The World Health Organisation define sexual health as...a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence.

For sexual health to be attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected and fulfilled, which is a bit of a mouthful.



BUT WHAT DOES IT ACTUALLY MEAN?

Health means different things to different people and we will all have our own opinion on whether we feel healthy or not.

It's your health, therefore it is your definition and opinion that matters. In general terms, for a person to feel sexually healthy their views and opinions regarding their body, feelings, and desires are listened to and respected, they enjoy the sexual activity they are experiencing, they can express themselves in a way that suits them without pressure or coercion and they are not suffering any physical or mental health issues as a result of sexual activity.

Thinking about this definition we can see that everyone has times when they do not feel healthy. Maybe you have just had an argument with a person you like and you are not feeling respected or listened to, or you have just kissed somebody and you didn't like it or you've had sex with someone and now you regret it. We can't promise you will never feel sexually unhealthy by reading this leaflet and following its advice, because just like in general health we can at times feel unwell, but the risk of feeling sexually unhealthy will be reduced.

We aim to support your knowledge and understanding of relationships, sex and your rights and responsibilities so that you can make informed choices which are right for you and therefore avoid finding yourself regretting things you have or haven't done or suffering any harm with regards to sexual relationships.

PUBERTY

Puberty is when you start to experience emotional and physical changes as your body is getting ready for adulthood.

Everybody has to go through these changes, adults already have.

Puberty can start between 8 and 16 yrs. It is different for everybody and can depend on your build, genetics, diet, and your own body clock. Messages start being sent from the brain to parts of the reproductive systems called ovaries or testicles to start producing sex hormones such as oestrogen, progesterone and testosterone. These hormones are responsible for the changes experienced during puberty.

When a baby is born they are born with male or female biological sex organs and are assigned male or female at birth. However how the child feels on the inside about their gender may not match the organs they have. This can mean someone who is transgender may feel that they are the opposite gender to the one they were assigned to at birth, or they do not identify as either and may identify as non-binary. A person who feels this way can get help and support via local services such as Space Youth Project. They may or may not choose to transition to the opposite gender. Some people may find that they feel differently each day about which gender they want to be seen as, this is known as gender fluid.

<https://www.spaceyouthproject.co.uk/>

Assigned Male at Birth

Boys and people who are assigned male at birth (AMAB) experience the following body changes during puberty:

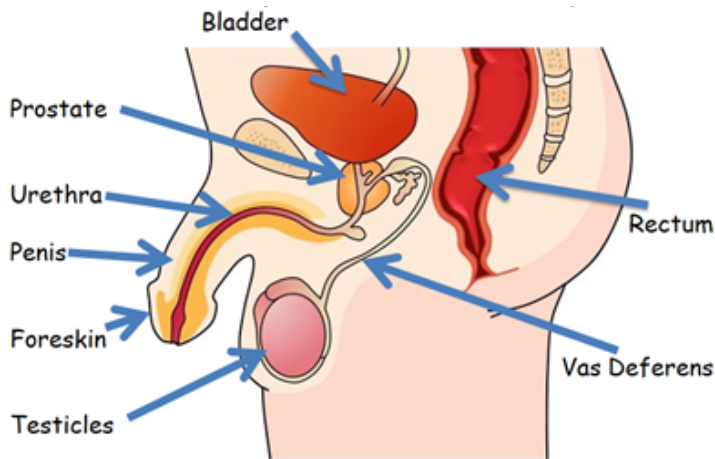
- Facial hair
- Adam's apple
- Voice breaks
- Penis and testicles get bigger and start to make sperm
- Body hair
- Sweat more
- Hair and skin get oily
- Attracted to others



These changes occur due to the production of the hormone Testosterone in the testes.

PUBERTY

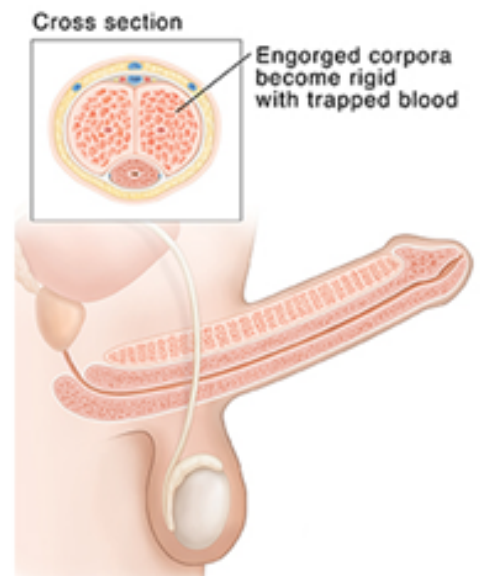
Male reproductive system



- Bladder: holds urine
- Prostate: this releases a fluid to protect sperm
- Urethra: tube to release urine and semen from body
- Penis: sex organ
- Foreskin: for some the foreskin is removed for cultural or medical reasons and it does not affect how the penis and reproductive system works.
- Testicles: once puberty starts, sperm is made in the testicles. This allows them to create a baby in the future, if they want to.
- Rectum: area where faecal matter (poo) is collected before it is released

Erections and wet dreams

- Erections: blood fills the penis to make it go hard. Don't worry this is normal, blood will not come out.
- Involuntary erections: an erection can happen at any time during puberty. It may not be linked to any sexual feelings and could happen when you are concentrating on something else, like a maths lesson. It is important to be considerate of others' feelings and if this happens to someone, you should be kind
- Wet dreams/ nocturnal emissions: it is quite normal for a penis to become erect during sleep, it is just the body practicing. Sometimes ejaculation (where sperm is released from the penis) occurs. Though people call it a wet dream it feels sticky rather than soaking wet so you will need to wash, put on clean clothes and put dirty clothes and bedding in the wash or ask your parents/ carer what you should do. This is all normal. It is also normal to not experience wet dreams.



PUBERTY

Assigned Female at Birth

Girls and people who are assigned female at birth (AFAB) puberty body changes;

- Breasts grow
- Hips get wider and waist gets narrower
- Body hair
- Periods
- Vaginal discharge
- Sweat more
- Hair and skin get oily
- Attracted to others

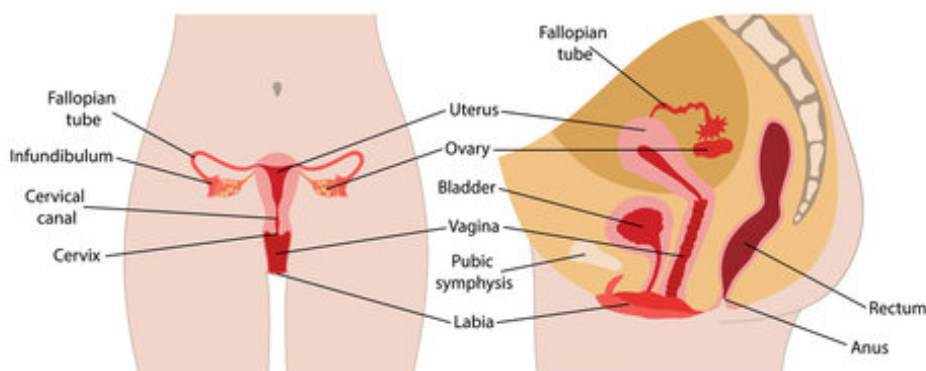


These changes occur due to the hormones, oestrogen and progesterone being produced in the ovaries.

Female reproductive system

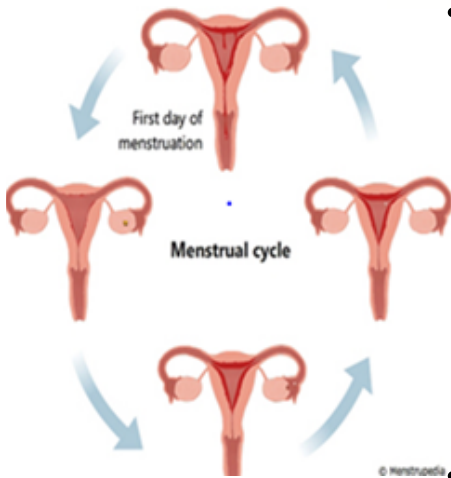
- Fallopian tubes: eggs released from the ovaries travel down the fallopian tube to the uterus.
- Uterus/Womb: the area where a fertilised egg develops into a foetus (baby)
- Vagina: this is a muscular tube linking the vaginal opening to the female reproductive system for sperm to travel through and babies to leave the uterus from
- The infundibulum catches and channels the released eggs; it is the wide distal (outermost) portion of each fallopian tube.
- Cervix: the muscle which holds a baby inside the uterus whilst it is developing.
- Ovaries: the organ that stores eggs. Babies born female already have eggs in their ovaries when they are born. At puberty, usually one egg at a time, will mature and be released from the ovary to travel down the fallopian tube to the uterus. This will occur approximately every 4 weeks.

Female reproductive system



PUBERTY

Menstrual cycle



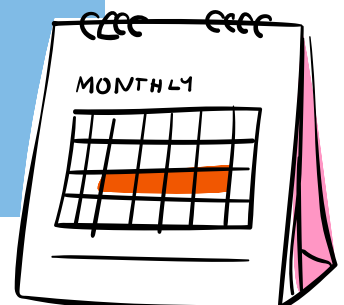
- The menstrual cycle starts during puberty. It is your body getting ready to have a baby one day, if you want to.
- During the menstrual cycle, an egg is released from one or both of the ovaries and starts to move along the fallopian tube to the uterus/womb. At the same time the lining of the womb fills with blood to make it softer. This is getting the uterus ready, in case the egg meets a sperm and it needs to attach to start a pregnancy. If the egg does not meet a sperm, the egg and the blood filled lining are not needed and so it all comes out of the body through the vagina as a period. The period generally lasts 3-7 days and then the cycle starts again, on average it lasts about 28 days, one month or 4 weeks. However, some people never develop a pattern to their periods.
- If you are struggling to cope with your period, you should speak with a trusted adult in private, a doctor may be able to help.

Premenstrual Tension (PMT): before a period starts a person may get cramps, sore breasts, clear white discharge from the vagina, spots, feel tired and, or irritable.

Keeping clean and comfortable: there are different products you can use to help keep yourself clean and comfortable during periods. Disposable pads, washable pads/pants, tampons and menstrual cups. It is a good idea to use pads at first until you are feeling more comfortable about managing your period. It is good to have a practice putting one in your pants before your periods start. Speak to your parent/carer about this. Also try to wash, particularly your groin area, daily, during a period to prevent soreness, discomfort and smells.

Bleeding: though the bleeding may be scary it is a normal healthy process. Different people will experience different amounts of period blood. Most people only lose an egg cupful of blood and you should only need to change your pad every 3-4 hours or less. If you are having to change your pad more frequently and this is causing you a problem, speak to a trusted adult for support.

Life: having periods is part of life. You can still swim, exercise, do sport, go to school, see friends and do all the normal activities that are important to you.



PUBERTY

Menstrual cycle

Start/frequency: periods can start at anytime from 8 to 18 years old. It is, however, recommended that if a person has not started their periods by the time they are 16 they should speak with a doctor to check that there is no medical reason. Usually every 4 weeks. They may be irregular at first. Frequency varies from every 2 weeks to every 6 or 7 weeks, which can be difficult for some young people to deal with. Free apps are available to help track and predict when your period is due to start. Speak to a trusted adult if you are struggling with frequent periods.

Cramps: these can occur during a period. stretching, exercise, hot pad/bottle/bath can all help. If these do not help over the counter pain medication can be used, however you should check with their parents/carers before taking these. If cramps can not be controlled by these methods you should speak with your GP.



Intersex

Most babies are born with male or female biological sex organs and are assigned male or female at birth. Approx. 1.3-1.7% of babies are born with some characteristics of both male and female reproductive organs or reproductive organs and/or genitals which look different from usual. This is known as Intersex or DSD (Differences in Sex Development) and is usually diagnosed at birth, though some conditions may not be identified until a child begins puberty. Following tests, most babies will be assigned as either male or female. There is lots of help available to support people who are intersex through the NHS and various specialist organisations.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/differences-in-sex-development/>

INFLUENCES ON SEXUAL HEALTH

Consent

THE LEGAL AGE YOU CAN CONSENT TO SEXUAL ACTIVITY IN THE UK IS 16, BUT WHAT DOES CONSENT MEAN?



To consent means to agree to something, and the word can be used in lots of different situations. When it comes to sex specifically, to consent means to agree to have sex or engage in sexual activity. This means actually wanting to do something not just saying yes out of fear of the consequences of saying no.

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 (England and Wales) defines consent as when a person 'agrees by choice and has the capacity to make that choice'.

In the eyes of the law, consent is the agreement between participants to engage in sexual activity. All those involved must have the freedom and full capacity at the time of making that decision, such as not being under the influence of drugs/alcohol, asleep or in emotional distress. Engaging in a sexual act without the person's consent is sexual violence, and is a criminal offence.

The law around consent makes consensual sex and sexual assault seem very black and white when, in reality, consent can be ambiguous and confusing.

Even though applying consent to your own life can feel complicated, there are some ways of thinking about it that are straightforward and always true:

- It doesn't matter what your relationship is with someone, how far into a sexual situation you get or how far you've gone with them before, you always have the right to change your mind and stop at any time. It's up to the other person to respect that.
- Any sort of sexual activity without consent is illegal whatever the age of the people involved and whatever their relationship.
- You can stop sexual activity at any time, and this doesn't just have to be by saying the words 'no' or 'stop'. Consent is more than just a 'yes' or 'no' in the moment, and requires verbal and physical communication before, during and after sexual activity.

If you are unsure on what is and isn't consent, speak to a trusted adult or text our Chat Sexual Health text line on 07312 263101

There are services available to support survivors of sexual assault or rape:



INFLUENCES ON SEXUAL HEALTH

Porn

18+

People watch or read pornographic content for various reasons, such as, sexual arousal, to aid masturbation, curiosity or to learn about sex, and with our smartphones at our fingertips 24/7, it has never been easier to access. But remember it is not a reliable source of information regarding sexual relationships and safety. It is illegal for a person under 18 to watch and/or be shown pornography.

If you do ever see pornographic material, it is important to recognise the following aspects:

- **Condom use, consent and communication are often not included in pornography. These are all crucial aspects of healthy sexual interactions.**
- **Editing tools are used in pornography, creating unrealistic standards of how adult bodies look.**
- **A lot of pornography includes aggression, abuse, and violence. This is never acceptable.**
- **The sex in pornography is not an accurate representation of sex in real life, as it is being performed by actors.**
- **Pornography can put undue pressure on viewers to engage in sexual activities that they are uncomfortable with or to look like the images in porn films.**
- **Pornography is an industry. It does not portray normal sexual experiences of normal people.**

Though you may be told that everyone is watching porn the research shows:

Most internet search requests are **NOT** related to sex

Most internet downloads are **NOT** pornographic

Most young Brits do **NOT** think sex in porn is depicted as loving and consensual

Most young Brits think porn focuses on male pleasure

Most young Brits say porn has **NOT** been their main source of sex education

Body issues and how they can interrupt sex:

Self-esteem is how you think and feel about yourself. It isn't just about how you look, but also how confident you feel in who you are. It is normal at times to feel less confident in our abilities and that everything is going wrong or is out of control. Low mood makes these worries feel even bigger and less able to deal with. If your feelings about yourself or your mood are affecting your everyday life and relationships speak to a trusted adult. There is also help online.

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/coping-with-life/self-esteem-and-believing-in-yourself/>

<https://camhsdorset.org/young-people/looking-after-yourself>

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/>

INFLUENCES ON SEXUAL HEALTH

We live in a society where we are constantly bombarded with people 'living their best lives', which can be difficult to manoeuvre around. Sexual insecurities may come from the gap between our expectations (the ideal) and the reality (the real deal). The way sex is portrayed in the media, including pornography and social media can create unrealistic sexual expectations and may make people question whether they are wet, excited enough, too loud, too quiet, not willing enough, or question their performance. Do you think a person should perform during sex or should they feel they can be their true self with their feelings and wishes?



A common comparison is our body. If you do worry about your body and what your partner/partners think, it's important to remember the following:

- 1. Everyone's body is different, and everyone finds different things attractive. A rose is beautiful, as are Christmas lights, yet neither of them looks the same. This doesn't take away either's beauty.**
- 2. You may find that you are both feeling the same way. Your partner may also have concerns about their body and what you may think. Opening this conversation together can help build trust and reduce tension.**
- 3. People are often more critical of themselves and don't see themselves as others see them. Your partner will probably have a very different view and love the small things that make you, you.**

You and your partner should be respectful of each other, which includes your body. Let them know if they are doing or saying things that make you feel uncomfortable and if they carry on, you need to consider whether they are the right person to be in a relationship with when they are not showing you the respect you deserve.

INFLUENCES ON SEXUAL HEALTH

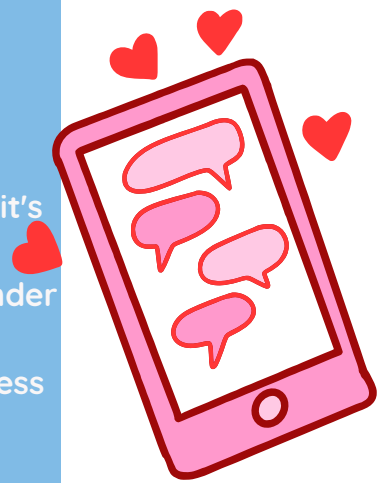
Sexting/Sending nudes

Many young people understand 'sexting' to mean, the sharing of sexual messages including nude or sexualised pictures and videos via phone, tablet or computer/laptop. Once an image or video is shared the control of it is lost. It can be shared again and again by others. Once an image has been sent, there is no way to get it back or prevent it from going anywhere else.

The law states creating or sharing sexual images or videos of a child under 18 is illegal, even if the person sharing is a child. This includes:

- sending sexual messages to anyone under 18 years old
- an under 18 taking an explicit photo or video of themselves or a friend
- sharing an explicit image or video of an under 18 year old, even if it's shared with own age group
- having, downloading or storing an explicit image or video of an under 18 year old, even if they have given permission
- 'Sharenting' - or adults sharing a photo of a child to raise awareness is also illegal.

Though it is illegal the law is there to protect young people. It is important that any sexting is reported to a trusted adult. It is unlikely that the young person will get into trouble with the police but will hopefully be offered support so that they don't make the same mistake again.



How you appear online should be up to you. Revenge porn is the sharing of private, sexual materials, either photos or videos, of another person, without their consent and with the purpose of causing distress. The offence applies both online and offline and to all images regardless of how they are shared. This includes the uploading of images on the internet, sharing by text and e-mail, or showing someone a physical or electronic image. If you have been a victim of revenge porn, you can:

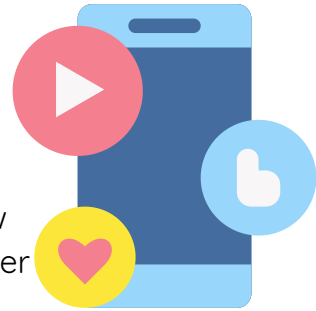
- **Screenshot the shared content and images as evidence but do not show or share with anyone else, especially if under 18s involved**
- **Report it to the social media platform (if it is on a social media platform)**
- **Report to CEOP or www.revengepornhelpline.org.uk**
- **Talk to someone you trust**

INFLUENCES ON SEXUAL HEALTH

Social Media

The internet can be a great source of information; however, remember it is not always correct, or true. In an increasingly digital world, our online safety is more important than ever. Due to the growth of the internet and the number of those using the internet, online safety is becoming more complex.

Internet dating and sharing images and videos online increases the risk of exposure to different types of abuse and personal information being “leaked”. Using social media increases the likelihood of you making comparisons with how other people look, behave and their lifestyle. However, it’s important to remember that people will rarely post “the bad days”. A lot of “influencers” will use filters, angles and professional equipment to ensure their environment, body and lifestyle look good. Some young people may find that they get into the mindset of “compare and despair”, think about the images you post and whether you only show the good bits, rather than the good, the messy and the unfiltered.



Social media provides a great opportunity for communicating with others. You can improve your safe use of social media if you:

- limit the amount of personal information on your social media profile e.g., do not share your schools, home town, and full date of birth etc.
- accept only people you know as your friends in real life, as unfortunately some people are not who they say they are. (Just because your friends are mutual friends with them, doesn't mean they actually KNOW them)
- chatting online, only speak with people you know in real life from school, clubs etc.
- do not let any photos be taken of you via webcam.
- experience any bullying while online, you can screenshot the evidence, avoid responding and block or report the person. If the messages are ever threatening, speak with a trusted adult
- struggling with your body image, explore and fill your feed with positive body movement pages.
- wanting to know answers about relationships/sexuality etc there are several local sexual health clinics who have an online presence and a number of sex positive influencers.
- struggle with your mental health, be careful who you talk to, not everyone has other's best intentions at heart, explore mental health forums and local groups such as Dorset Mind and Kooth.



INFLUENCES ON SEXUAL HEALTH

Female Genital Mutilations

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured or changed, which results in partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for no medical reason.

It's also known as female circumcision or cutting, and by other terms, such as Sunna, gudniin, halalays, tahur, megrez and khitan, among others.

FGM is usually carried out on young girls between infancy and the age of 15, most commonly before puberty starts.

It's illegal in the UK and is classed as child abuse.

It's very painful and can seriously harm the health of women and girls. It can also cause long-term problems with sex, childbirth and mental health.



EFFECTS OF FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATIONS

There are no health benefits to FGM and it can cause serious harm, including:

- constant pain
- pain and difficulty having sex
- repeated infections, which can lead to infertility
- bleeding, cysts and abscesses
- problems peeing or holding pee in (incontinence)
- problems during labour and childbirth, which can be life threatening for mother and baby
- Some girls die from blood loss or infection as a direct result of the procedure.

Female Genital Mutilations & Sex

FGM can make it difficult and painful to have sex. It can also result in reduced sexual desire and a lack of pleasurable sensation.

Talk to your GP or another healthcare professional if you have sexual problems that you feel may be caused by FGM, as they can refer you to a special therapist who can help.

In some cases, a surgical procedure called a deinfibulation may be recommended, which can alleviate and improve some symptoms.

INFLUENCES ON SEXUAL HEALTH

FGM & MENTAL HEALTH

FGM can be an extremely traumatic experience that can cause emotional difficulties throughout life, including;

- depression
- anxiety
- flashbacks to the time of the cutting
- nightmares and other sleep problems

In some cases, women may not remember having the FGM at all, especially if it was performed when they were an infant.

Talk to a GP or another healthcare professional if you're experiencing emotional or mental health problems that may be a result of FGM. Help and support is available.



Getting help and support

All women and girls have the right to control what happens to their bodies and the right to say no to FGM.

Help is available if you have had FGM or you're worried that you or someone you know is at risk.

- If someone is in immediate danger, contact the police immediately by dialling 999.
- If you're concerned that someone may be at risk, contact the NSPCC helpline on 0800 028 3550 or email fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk.
- If you're under pressure to have FGM performed on your daughter, ask a GP, your health visitor or another healthcare professional for help, or contact the NSPCC helpline.
- If you have had FGM, you can get help from a specialist NHS gynaecologist or FGM service – ask a GP, your midwife or any other healthcare professional about services in your area.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/female-genital-mutilation-fgm/>

RELATIONSHIPS

How many times have you heard the phrase ‘in a relationship’? Most people use this phrase to describe a romantic partner but in fact we are all having relationships from the minute we’re born.

The need for human connection appears to be a natural part of being human. The ability to form a loving relationship is learnt. It is widely recognised that the ability to form healthy relationships is learnt from birth when a baby develops trust in their care giver to provide food, warmth, stimulation, social contact and comfort.

Source: Psychology Today <https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/basics/relationships>

This first relationship will affect the rest of our relationships in life with parents/carers, siblings, other family members, friends, teachers, youth workers, the list goes on. The type of relationship will be different with each person which means that the behaviour we display with each person will be different.



RELATIONSHIPS

HEALTHY VS. UNHEALTHY

The most important and consistent relationship is with yourself and it impacts all relationships with other people. To be able to recognise whether relationships with others are having a negative effect on your well-being we have to be able to understand ourselves and be able to listen to and act upon our feelings and emotions, in short we need to have a healthy relationship with ourselves. We all have a different opinion as to what would make a healthy relationship for us but relationships which make you happy and allow you to be yourself can be described as healthy, the key criteria are trust, good communication and respect. The following acronyms can be useful:



FAST-for self-reflecting

FAST

Fair: be fair to yourself and to others

Apologies: apologise if you are wrong but no apologies for making a request, having an opinion or saying no

Stick to your values: Be clear with your beliefs and behave according to those beliefs

Truthful: don't lie, exaggerate or make excuses

DEAR MAN: for expressing yourself

Describe the current situation

Express your feelings and opinions about what is going on, use statements such as I feel

Assert yourself by saying what you want or clearly saying no

Reinforce reward the other person if they respond well to you, a simple thank you is often enough

Mindfully keep your focus on your objectives and don't be distracted.

Appear confident and effective with good eye contact, no stammering, even if you don't feel it, stand or sit straight and upright and give eye contact

Negotiate be willing to discuss and come to an agreement (not so much that it goes against your own morals and beliefs)

GIVE: for developing effective relationships

Gentle: be polite no attacks, threats or judgements

Interested: Listen to the other person, take an interest in them

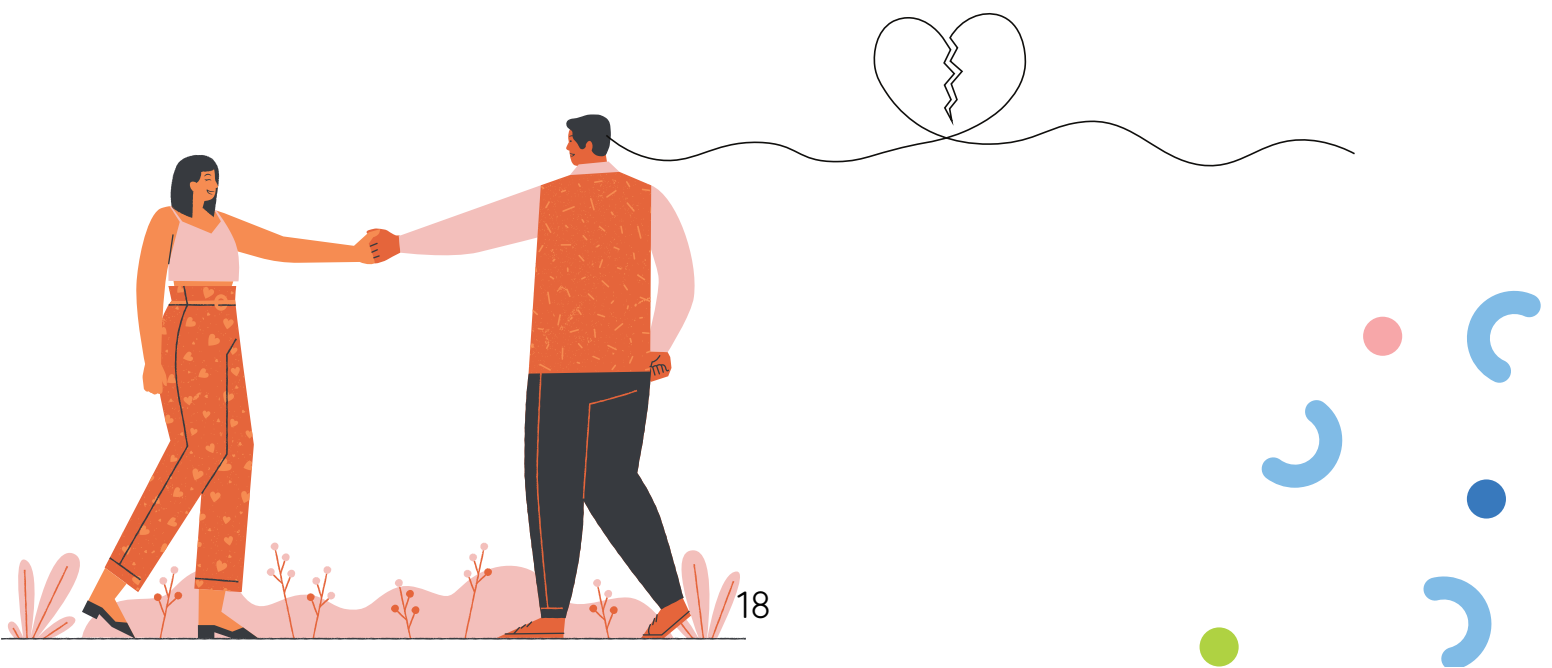
Validate: check your understanding of the other persons wishes and feelings

Easy: show an easy going manner, smile and be approachable

RELATIONSHIPS

You may not have experienced a healthy romantic relationship, which you can relate to, in your own life, maybe your parents are separated or don't treat each other with respect, you may have been a child in care or identify as LGBT+ or have a disability. Lack of positive role models can make it more difficult to recognise the signs of healthy and unhealthy relationships. But remember it doesn't matter who you are, how you identify, your strengths, weakness, values or beliefs, if a relationship is regularly and consistently having a negative impact on your mood you need to be questioning whether it is right for you.

It can be upsetting and confusing if you do experience an unhealthy relationship or a relationship which you felt was healthy but your partner didn't. These feelings are normal and can affect your self-esteem. Remember everybody has a different opinion about what they want from a relationship so try not to take it personally, they just wanted something different. You will eventually learn to deal with the experience and the pain will go. You can use the FAST acronym to reflect on what went well and what you may change in the future.



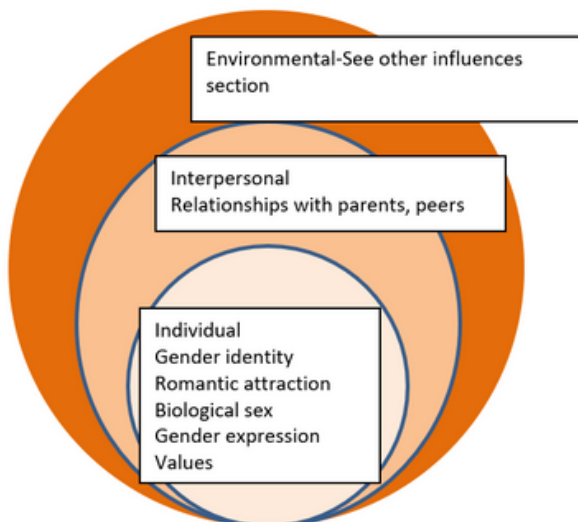
RELATIONSHIPS

TIMELINE

There is no standard timeline for meeting somebody you may be romantically interested in. You may meet somebody and there is an instant attraction or it may develop over time. You may meet somebody who you feel romantically interested in but they don't have the same feelings towards you or vice versa. It can feel hard at times, especially if your friends are in romantic relationships and you feel left out. It is important to be true to yourself and follow your own beliefs and opinions. Don't feel pressurised into starting a romantic relationship with somebody just so you can fit in. Your relationship status now is no indication of the types of relationships you will have in the future. The most important thing now is to develop your relationship with yourself and work out what does and doesn't make you feel good. Don't go against your standards and beliefs just because you haven't meant anybody who meets them yet.

SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

Sexuality is a fundamental part of being you. It is more than sex and sexual activity and describes your sexual feelings. It is often used to describe who you are attracted to. It is what drives us to develop relationships where we can be sensual, loving and intimate. It influences our thoughts and behaviours and emotions and is an important influence on our sexual health. There are a number of factors that influence your sexuality



RELATIONSHIPS

When a person rushes into sexual activity they can often feel confusion, hurt and regret. Not thinking and discussing sex and sexual activity increases the risk of unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs)



WHY DO SOME PEOPLE HAVE SEX?

"To be popular"- social pressures to have sex are real but remember the most consistent and important relationship you have is with yourself and therefore the need to maintain your own self-esteem is more important than making yourself popular with others.

"Because everyone's doing it"- believe us they are not. It is easy to think that you're the only one not having sex. The BBC report that about 70% of young people under the age of 16 are NOT sexually active so the majority of young people are not doing it.

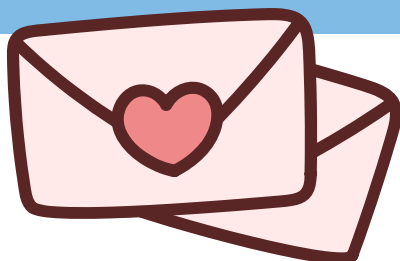
Curiosity is the main reason for doing anything new. Some just want to know what it is all about. Some may feel anxious about it, those assigned female at birth may have heard that it is painful the first time and feel they just want to get it over with. Having sex should be enjoyable, the first time included, if you are feeling relaxed and comfortable it is much more likely to be an enjoyable experience. **And so although curiosity is an understandable reason make sure it is not the reason.**



RELATIONSHIPS

Sometimes it is easy to go along with an activity because it is familiar or we feel we can't say no in case it upsets another person. In our culture, children are taught that they should share, allow everyone to join in and be nice to others. This can discourage children from saying No to others. How many times have you been told to give a family member a kiss when they arrive or leave even though you didn't want to? Though it is right to be kind and respectful of others when it comes to sexual activity it is important to listen to and act on our own feelings.

If the idea of having sex makes you feel uncomfortable, worried or anxious then say 'No'. There are lots of ways you can let a person know that you care about them without sexual activity. The other person may feel upset for a while, but if you are in a healthy relationship they will understand and respect your wishes when you explain your reasons. This in turn will make your relationship stronger and healthier as you learn to trust and respect each other.



PLEASURE

What was the first thing that came into your head when you read pleasure? Some may think of the little pleasures of life, such as finding money you didn't think you had, or when there isn't a queue at your favourite shop. How often do you think of sexual pleasure and your definition of it? You can find sexual pleasure alone, with a partner or multiple partners. When you decide to have sex for the first time, there's no right or wrong way to do it. The most important thing is for you to feel comfortable and do what makes you feel good.



MASTURBATION

SEX IS MUCH MORE THAN SEXUAL INTERCOURSE! While there is no set pattern to good sexual relationships, you can have fun, be safe and learn useful skills by not rushing into physical sexual activity. Flirting, dating, touching, holding hands, kissing, talking, fondling outside/under clothes, stimulation of genitals etc. are all part of developing sexual relationships.

It is also important to remember that sexual activity is an experience, not a performance! It can be a lovely, fun, and exciting experience to share with someone, and you do not ever need to 'act' as though you are enjoying it. If you would prefer to stop or just go slow, say so.

Masturbation refers to stimulating your own genitals, usually with your hands or a sex toy. It is perfectly normal and safe.

Knowing how your own body gets turned on can really help, if and when you do have sex. If you know what you like, then you can show the other person what works for you.

There is no correct way to masturbate but here are some tips if you are thinking about trying it or have already tried it and are interested in learning more.

Remember, everyone is different and finds different touch enjoyable. People with a penis and testicles may stimulate the shaft or head of the penis, and may explore touching their scrotum, anus or rectum, this may be done with their hand or a sex toy. People with a vulva and vagina may enjoy using their fingers or a vibrator to stimulate the area around the clitoris and/or inside the vagina.

PLEASURE



Frottage masturbation could work as an alternative to hand-based stimulation for those with a penis. This is typically achieved by the individual rubbing themselves naked on their bed until the point of ejaculation. Some may find kneeling at the side of their bed and wedging their penis in between the mattress and a pillow with some pressure can help, which can also be achieved through use of a sex toy which synthetically replicates the vagina or rectum.

HOW TO MASTURBATE (SAFELY)

Most people, will experience their first orgasm through masturbation, however it is unlikely to happen straight away. Go at your own pace, take time, and focus on how your body responds to touch, rather than masturbating just to achieve an orgasm.

When masturbating, make sure it is somewhere private, comfortable and with no chance that someone could walk in, masturbating is a very intimate and personal activity. It is not a shameful act, but can be embarrassing if someone walks in.

It is never appropriate to masturbate in a public space. Other people have not given consent to witness sexual touch. Masturbation should be a fun experience, and there is no evidence that it is bad for you. Sometimes individuals may end up masturbating compulsively or for the sake of it, or may feel they need to do it more than they want to.

If you feel masturbating is impacting on other aspects of your life, such as your relationship, learning etc speak to a trusted adult or text Chat Sexual Health to access appropriate support. See sexting and pornography section above to remind yourself of the law and consequences with regards to sharing photos, films and using porn.

PLEASURE

SEX TOYS

There are a wide range of sex toys available from sex shops or online, however it is illegal for under 18s to buy. They are inclusive and can be useful for those with a disability, enabling you to explore what brings pleasure. To stop the spread of infection, it is important to make sure they are cleaned after use with the correct cleaning solution. If using toys with your partner, make sure they are cleaned before and after use, a condom can be used to offer an extra barrier.

For people with a penis:

Masturbation sleeves are widely available from sex shops and can help if dexterity is the issue. Sleeves would help to ergonomically support grip around the penile shaft.

For people with a vulva/vagina:

Vibrators or G-Spot stimulators can help. There are products available which are quieter and produce a less vigorous sensation. Make sure you do your research before you make any purchases.

With regards to anal stimulation, it is important to remember that anything being inserted into the rectum should have a wider base to stop it being vacuumed in.



PLEASURE

What is foreplay and why is it important?

The definition of foreplay is sexual activity such as kissing, and/or touching each other before having sex. However, foreplay does not always have to lead to sex. Foreplay can be mutual masturbation, oral sex, kissing passionately or caressing parts of the body that stimulates arousal. Foreplay is important as it aids sexual desire and allows our bodies to “get in the mood” and ready for sex.

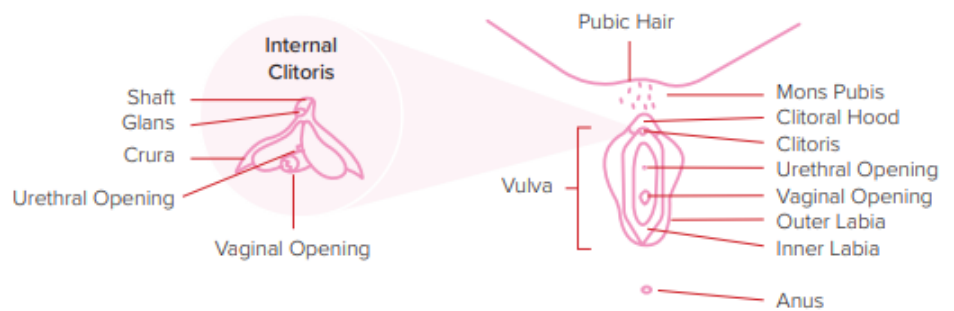
To fully enjoy sexual activity, we need to be engaged in the moment with no distractions; these distractions could be thoughts or feelings. How we feel about our bodies, worrying about homework or an exam can stop us from being fully invested in the moment and therefore reduce sexual desire. It was reported that women are primarily distracted by how their bodies look and the main distraction for men is performance. These distractions prevent us from responding and recognising sexual stimuli and therefore preventing desire and may lead to painful sex or problems with having or maintaining an erection.



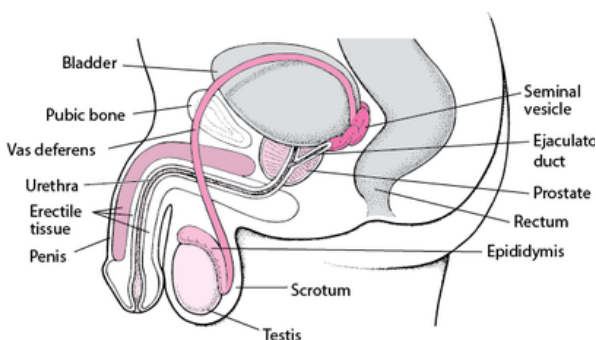
Think of foreplay as a step ladder to build desire and connection as a sexual couple. What foreplay looks like, may be different between each couple. Having exchanges of “sexual currency” can help with this, sexual currency can be passionate kissing, flirty comments, offering compliments, subtle touches whilst getting on with day-to-day tasks, all these exchanges will offer excitement and desire. Different things will excite different people, take time to talk to your partner and discuss things that you enjoy. Communication is the biggest key to having a happy healthy relationships and is the usual cause of mismatched desire rather than lack of passion or excitement.

PLEASURE

The clitoris (from the Greek word for key) is the most sensitive part of the vulva. The clitoris' only job is sexual arousal. It gets bigger during sexual arousal and helps produce an orgasm. The clitoris is a little bundle of nerve endings and is there purely for pleasure. Clitoris stimulation using hands, mouth, or sex toys will often provide the most pleasure and arousal.



The head is the most sensitive part of the penis. Stimulation using hands, mouth, sex toys etc to this area will generally provide most pleasure and arousal. This is the same for a circumcised and non-circumcised penis.



The G-spot is a term used to describe a particular sensitive area that everybody has. This is either the prostate, which can be located just inside the rectum for those with a penis or inside the vulva, but the exact point can be different depending on the person.

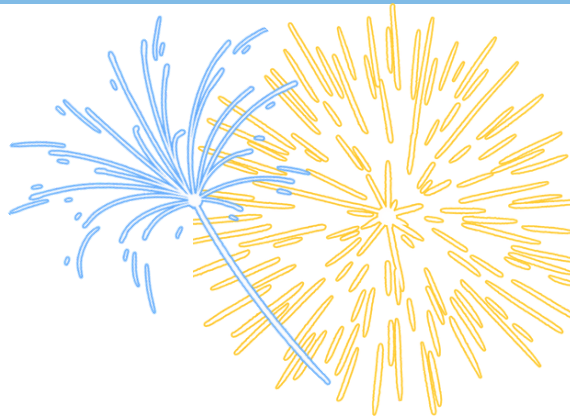
PLEASURE



Orgasms

Orgasms are the release of built up sexual tension and arousal. Orgasming is also known as ‘coming’ or ‘climaxing’.

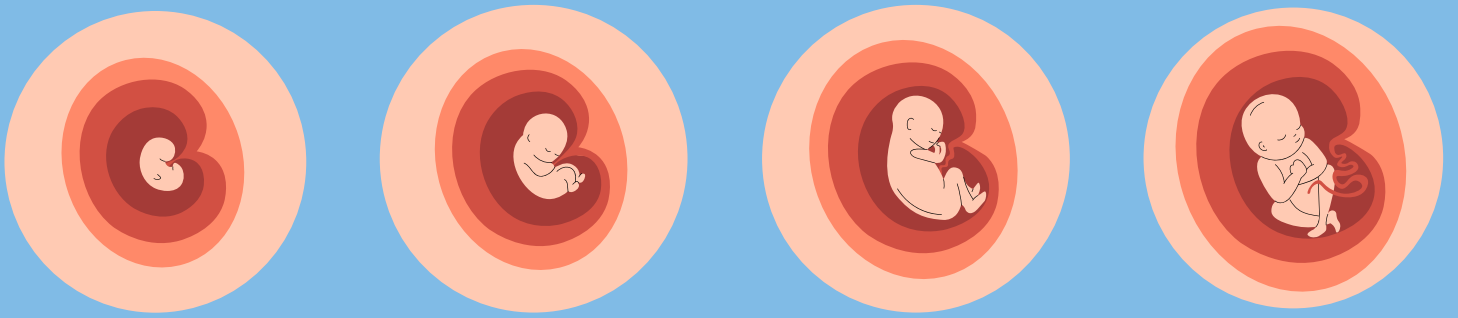
Orgasms are a very personal experience and people have different ways of describing how it feels. Generally, however, an orgasm is a powerful feeling of physical pleasure and sensation and can bring feelings of happiness or wellbeing. Not everyone can reach climax through sexual penetration alone and this is normal. Sex research shows that gay and straight men climax during 85-95% of their sexual encounters, women having sex with women orgasm about 75-90% of the time and women having sex with men about 63%. On a first-time hook-up, the gap widens further, with 80% of men reaching orgasm compared with only 40% of women. Through masturbation alone, those with a penis and those with a vagina, are likely to orgasm 90% of the time.



This can be hard to accept, however these statistics show it is not a biological issue, but a communication issue with many people not understanding what may help satisfy their partner. It essentially can feel like listening to your favourite song and then somebody singing over the top of it out of key, using the wrong words. However, this can change, and having clear communication about what helps “get you off” can lead to feeling fulfilled within a sexual relationship. We can still enjoy sexual experiences without orgasming by enjoying the closeness of a relationship. Do not put pressure on yourself to get there. If at any point you want to stop, stop, if your partner doesn’t want to stop until they have climaxed, tell them to DIY! 😊

Pregnancy

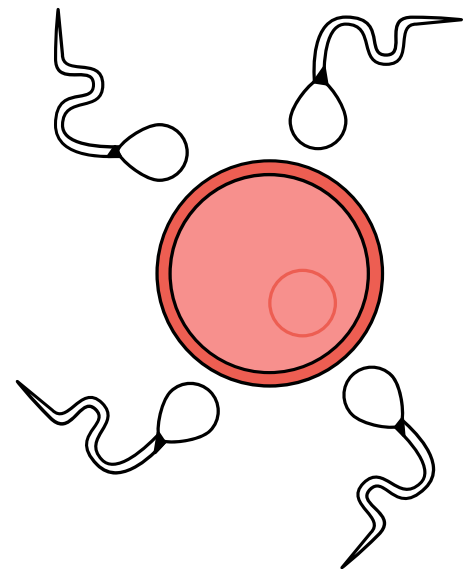
We all come from one egg and one sperm.
The baby slowly develops over approx. 36-42 weeks which is about 9 or 10 months.



Conception

During sexual intercourse, a penis enters the vagina and ejaculates millions of sperm inside. They swim up through the cervix and uterus to the fallopian tube to meet with a released egg. Fertilisation may then occur.

The fertilised egg travels down into the uterus, implants itself into the lining of the uterus and develops into a foetus. Sperm will go in search of an egg and can reach the fallopian tubes in approximately 30/60 mins following ejaculation. They can swim a distance of around a thousand times their own length, the equivalent of a person swimming a distance of 178 km at nearly 2000 miles per hour (Source: The Naked Scientist).



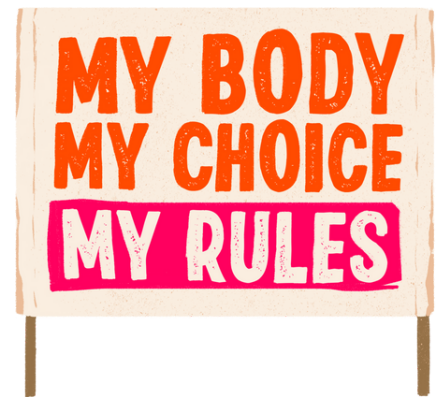
Pregnancy choices

There are three choices when a pregnancy occurs



Continue with the pregnancy. Regular check ups and advice from medical professionals will support a healthy pregnancy and birth

End the pregnancy. This is known as a termination or abortion. Depending on how many weeks the pregnancy is will determine the procedure.



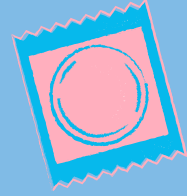
Adoption. This is when another adult becomes the child's legal parent. This is done with the support of social care to make sure the child is kept safe.

UK law states that the person who is pregnant gets to decide what happens to a pregnancy. So if your partner is pregnant, legally, you do not have a choice as to whether you become a parent or not. If your partner has the baby the other parent is liable to support the child financially until they are 18. That's a loooong time!!

CONTRACEPTION IT'S FREE!

Contraception helps prevent pregnancy when a person with a penis and a person with a vagina have sex. Different contraception works in different ways:

The Barrier Method-This stops the sperm meeting the egg



Condoms

A condom is fitted over an erect penis. They collect the sperm as it comes out so it can't swim to the egg and fertilise it.



Femidom

A femidom is inserted into a vagina. If a penis is inserted into the vagina the Femidom would form a barrier between it and the vaginal wall. They are larger than condoms and have a ring at the top to help guide it in. The outer end sits outside the vagina so that the penis, or sex toy can be guided into it. This will also collect any sperm from the penis and prevent them from swimming to the egg.



Condoms and Femidoms are also a really good way of preventing STIs (see STI section for more information)

Hormonal Contraception-this either stops the egg being released, thins the lining of the uterus or thickens the mucus across the cervix to stop the sperm and egg meeting

The pill, implant, injection, ring and hormonal coil release special chemicals called hormones into your body, they can only be used by people who have a vagina. During pregnancy hormones are produced to help the baby grow and to stop another pregnancy occurring at the same time. Hormonal contraception works by tricking your body into thinking its already pregnant so it can't get pregnant again!

Copper coil-sperm and eggs don't like copper. They can't survive and swim properly when copper is there so they can't meet

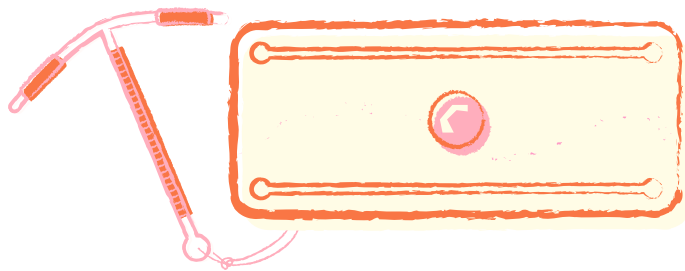
Emergency Contraception

If you do use a condom as contraception and it goes wrong or if you have sexual intercourse with no condom or other contraception. You can either take a tablet or have a copper coil inserted within 120 hours.

If done within 24 hours it is 98% effective.

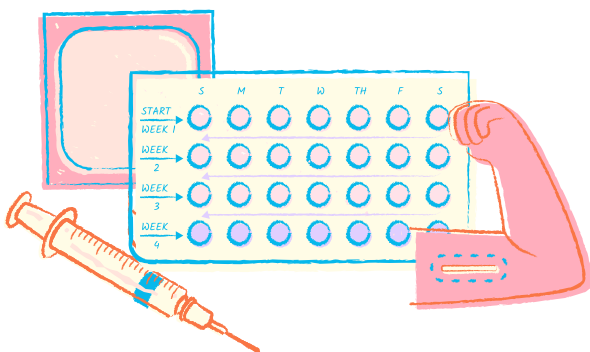
48-72 hours is 50-60% effective.

It is free from your local sexual health clinic.



Which contraception is best

Contraception is a personal choice, though it may be affected by your medical history. If you or a close member of your family has certain medical conditions or are on certain medication you may not be able to have a particular form of contraception. The best thing to do is to make an appointment at your local sexual health clinic. The clinician will be able to discuss all your options and help you decide which contraception is best for you. It is best to do this before you have sex to prevent any unwanted pregnancy.



SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

What are they?

Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) is a term used to describe infections which are passed from one person to another through unprotected sexual contact. An infection is when a bacteria, virus or parasite enters and grows in or on your body. You can have a STI without knowing it and infect your partner during sex. The best way to avoid them is to know about them, and how to protect yourself.

Types of STI include (though there is more):

- **Chlamydia**
- **Gonorrhoea**
- **Trichomoniasis**
- **Genital warts**
- **Genital herpes**
- **Pubic lice**
- **HIV**
- **Scabies**
- **Syphilis**
- **Human papillomavirus (HPV)**



How are they transmitted?

Anyone who is sexually active is at risk of transmission if they don't take precautions as advised. Transmission could happen from:

- unprotected vaginal, anal or oral sex
- sharing sex toys that are not washed or covered with a new condom each time they're used
- contact between partners genitals – this means you can get an STI from someone even if there's no penetration, orgasm or ejaculation
- infected semen or vaginal fluid getting into your eye, mouth, anus, vagina or penis

How to prevent contracting/transmitting STIs:

- Condoms help protect against most STIs, so use them correctly every time you have sex.
- Avoid oral sex if you or your partner(s) has sores on the mouth, gums or genitals.
- Use condoms to make oral sex safer – flavoured condoms and dams are available
- Anal sex is a high risk activity for STI transmission.
- You must always use a good quality condom and lubricant. Have regular check-ups for STIs. We recommend that sexually active people get tested at least once a year or after every new partner.
- You and your partner have STI screenings before starting a new relationship.

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

Symptoms

The most common symptom of an STI is **no symptoms!** Many people don't realise they have a STI, or may misdiagnose themselves with other issues such as period cramps or urine infections – which is why it's important to get tested.

Some people may display the following symptoms:

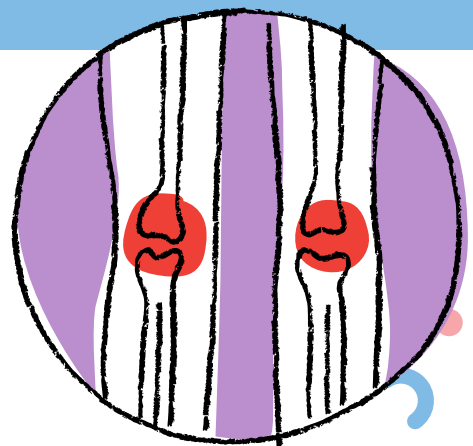
- an unusual discharge from the vagina, penis or anus
- pain when peeing
- lumps, skin growths, blisters or sores around the genitals or bottom (anus)
- a rash
- unusual vaginal bleeding
- itchy genitals or anus
- crampy pain, often but not always during sex



Long term side effects

If an STI is left untreated, in some cases, irreversible side effects can occur, including but not limited to:

- Infertility
- Sexually Acquired Reactive Arthritis (SARA)
- Damage to the brain, eyes, heart, nerves, bones joints and liver
- Weaken immune systems
- Complications in babies and pregnancy
- Pelvic inflammatory disease

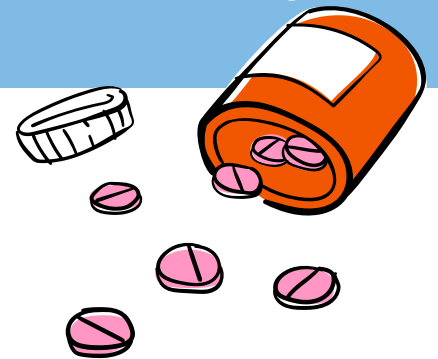


SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

Treatment

Treatment will vary depending on the type of STI you have tested positive for; primarily they are treated using a course of antibiotics or antiviral drugs. Not all STIs can be cured, however the symptoms can be managed:

- **Antibiotics.** Can clear many sexually transmitted bacterial and parasitic infections, including gonorrhoea, syphilis, chlamydia and trichomoniasis. Once antibiotic treatment is started, it's important to finish the prescription. If you experience any vomiting/diarrhoea or any side effects contact the service who provided them as soon as possible. Some antibiotics don't react well with alcohol, so check with a medical professional. In addition, it's important to abstain from any form of sexual contact as advised by the medical professional providing the treatment, otherwise reinfection can occur.
- **Antiviral drugs.** These are used for herpes and HIV. Antiviral drugs can keep HIV infection under control for many years. The sooner you start HIV treatment, the more effective it is. If you take your medications exactly as directed, it's possible to reduce the viral load (amount of virus in your blood) so that it can hardly be detected which reduces the risk of transmission to any partners.



Things to remember:

Getting regularly screened for STIs does not mean:

- **Your partner is unfaithful,**
- **You have been overly promiscuous**
- **That you are dirty or unhygienic**

What it does mean:

- **You care about yourself and your partner(s) sexual health**

Get tested

If you are worried that you may have an STI, get tested. Check the end of this booklet for contact details.



SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

PrEP and PEP

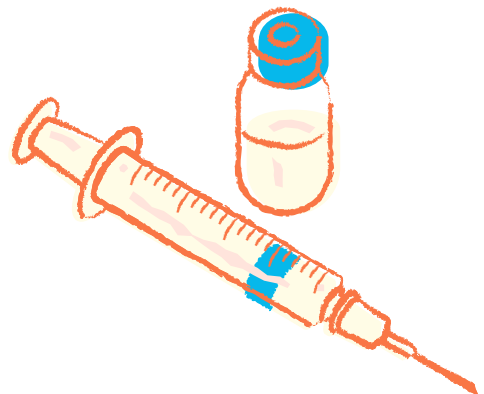
PrEP is an oral pill that you can take before having sex to help reduce the chances of a HIV transmission. How regularly you take PrEP depends on your gender, the type of sex you have and how frequently. PrEP is available on the NHS for patients who fulfil the eligibility criteria. This is something that can be discussed in an appointment at your local sexual health service.

If you have had unprotected sex and are concerned about the risk of HIV you can contact your local sexual health service to enquire about Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP). PEP is a tablet that can be prescribed to reduce the likelihood of a HIV transmission. The tablet is taken every day for 28 days but must be started within 72 hours of any risk of exposure. If your local sexual health service is closed, then A&E departments can give advice and prescribe it.



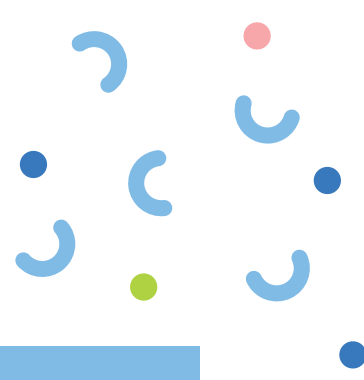
Vaccines

If both partners having sex have a penis, they are advised to have some additional vaccinations, these can be given at your local sexual health clinics. These will prevent a person catching Hepatitis B, a virus that effects the liver which can be transmitted through oral and anal sex, and Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) which can lead to warts, rectal and throat cancers. The number of vaccines a person would need depends on their age and risk. The important thing to remember is if you have a penis and are having sex with a person with a penis get in touch with your local sexual health clinic for advice on how to keep yourself safer.





FAQS



- Where can I get further support?

Our website have a wealth of information on local services which may be able to offer support -

<https://sexualhealthdorset.org/information/links-other-local-services/>

- What does circumcised mean?

The loose skin covering the end of the penis is called the foreskin. A circumcised penis is a penis that has had the foreskin removed. This is usually done soon after birth by a doctor or trained religious person. Some penises are circumcised and others are not. Either way is normal. A circumcised penis looks different from an uncircumcised penis, both work the same and equally well.

- What does 'safer sex' mean?

The term 'safer sex' is used because there is always a risk of pregnancy and STIs following sex, however with the right precautions the risk can be reduced and therefore it is 'safer'. Using a condom or femidom and a hormonal method of contraception when having sex all make it 'safer' Hormonal methods of contraception do not protect against STIs which is why a condom or Femidom should also be used, known as double Dutch. Having sex with someone you trust also makes it safer, as you can be sure they will listen to you and not do anything which would purposely harm you

- Does having a period hurt?
- Menstruation itself doesn't hurt, but some people get cramps or other symptoms during their periods that may be uncomfortable. This is typically due to the hormones in the body released during menstruation that cause the uterus to contract so it can shed its lining.
- Can I get pregnant the first time I have sex?

Yes, if you have female reproductive organs and have sexual intercourse with someone with a penis, with no contraception there will always be a risk of pregnancy

- Can you get pregnant from swallowing sperm?

No, as the sperm will be killed by stomach acid. However you can get a sexually transmitted infection from oral sex in your mouth and throat.

- How do I know if my relationship is healthy?

When a relationship is healthy, both people involved feel good about the relationship most of the time and also feel good about themselves.

- Will I always know if I have an STI?

No. Most people will not have symptoms, with chlamydia about 70%-80% of infected women and about 50%-60% of infected men have no symptoms. Men are more likely to notice symptoms than women. The only way to know for sure is to get tested for STIs.

- What can I do to reduce my risk of getting an STI?

First, talk with your partners. It is important that you know how many other partners they have had or currently have and if they have been tested recently for STIs, including HIV. Secondly, wear a condom/femidom (use a dam for oral sex) each and every time you have sex. Finally, get checked regularly.

- Are cold sores really herpes?

Yes, cold sores on your mouth are part of the Herpes Simplex Virus-1. They are generally caught from kissing. Many people who suffer from cold sores are infected at a young age, when a relative kissed them a brief hello or goodbye whilst they were developing cold sore. Cold sores can infect someone's genitals with Herpes during oral sex.

- Are all STIs curable?

Unfortunately, not all STIs are curable. Viral infections, such as HIV and herpes, can be managed and treated, but not cured.

- Can I get an STI from toilet seats?

No. STIs are spread through unprotected vaginal, oral or anal sex and occasionally through skin-to-skin sexual contact. You may be at risk of getting an STI if you share sex toys.



0300 303 1948
www.sexualhealthdorset.org

13-24 years old?

Let's Chat Sexual Health!

We help young people with all kinds of things, such as:

- ✓ contraception
- ✓ pregnancy
- ✓ STI screening
- ✓ relationships
- ✓ consent
- ✓ where to get help.

Talk to one of our Health Advisors



**SH
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