

## GENERAL REMINDERS

- S/M is a consensual act between partners. A respect for each other's limits is essential.
- Know your own body and your partner's body. Be aware of any recent cuts that either of you may have and stay alert to any new skin-breaks, however slight, that might occur during a scene.
- Discuss the recommendations in this booklet with your partners or prospective partners. Make these guidelines an essential part of the conversations that occur prior to having sex.
- Be knowledgeable of and sensitive to the degree of experience both you and your partner have had with various scenes and equipment. If something is new to one or both of you, playing safely probably means going slowly.
- Avoid all drugs before and during sex, and keep alcohol intake very light.
- Be imaginative, caring and smart. The possibilities for exciting S/M sex—even within limits—are endless!
- Feel comfortable discussing safe sex within the S/M scene with others.

## ENDORSEMENT

The AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts has graciously accepted our offer to participate in the preparation of this publication. AIDS is a threat to our lives. Neither Master/Slave, nor Top/Bottom, has the right to place the life of a partner in jeopardy. We, therefore, wholeheartedly endorse the use of AIDS-SAFE SEX within the S/M scene.

**DREIZEHN: The Boston Gay S/M Fraternity**

For further information, please contact:

**AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts**  
661 Boylston Street  
Boston, MA 02116  
Information Line: 617 536-7733 or Toll-Free  
(Massachusetts) 1-800-235-2331

**DREIZEHN: The Boston Gay S/M Fraternity**  
P.O. Box 1486  
Boston, MA 02117

# AIDS-SAFE S/M:

AIDS PREVENTION  
FOR GAY MEN INTO  
S/M

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## AIDS PREVENTION FOR GAY MEN INTO S/M

Gay men who enjoy S/M sex have always relied to a high degree on their imagination, mutual trust, and an awareness of limits and possible dangers. In the face of the AIDS epidemic even more ingenuity and risk-assessment are called for if S/M sex is to be AIDS-safe and exciting.

But whatever your scene, whether light or heavy, as top or bottom or both, experienced or novice, you need only follow a few basic principles and take the specific precautions outlined below for safe and satisfying S/M sex in light of AIDS. These safeguards are based on the best medical knowledge about the transmission of AIDS currently available. You will find that common sense, when added to what is known with certainty about AIDS transmission, is the best and surest guide.

This booklet builds upon the guidelines of *general safe-sex practices* for gay men. Because these guidelines are readily available everywhere, they will not be summarized here. Please consult AAC brochures on safe sex for gay men and also "The Hot 'N Healthy Times" (on condoms) if you are in need of more general information.

Also, be aware that apart from the preventable risks of getting a sexually transmitted disease like AIDS, there are other possible dangers with S/M. For more information on how to avoid them, you should consult material like Larry Townsend's *The Leatherman's Handbook*. It is an excellent sourcebook on S/M that covers in depth many S/M activities and advanced specialties that are beyond the scope of this booklet.

## ABOUT AIDS TRANSMISSION

Current medical knowledge is not definitive in all respects, but one fundamental fact is unquestionably clear: The virus that causes AIDS is transmitted in bodily fluids passed from one person to another. In infected persons, blood and semen are bodily fluids that have been found to carry the virus in the highest concentrations. Pre-seminal fluid (pre-cum), piss and scat (shit) are believed to do so in lesser degrees; until definitive medical information is available, exchange of these fluids is best avoided. Saliva and tears have been found to contain the virus only rarely and in low concentrations among infected persons, and so present little, if any, risk. To date sweat has not been found to contain the virus.

In short, the virus that causes AIDS is most easily transmitted during sex by passing from an infected person's semen to his partner's blood, although other routes are also possible: e.g., blood to blood, piss to blood, etc.

## BONDAGE

Bondage is a very low-risk S/M activity. Even so, apart from non-AIDS-related dangers, such as reduced or blocked circulation, be alert to minor skin-breaks or abrasions that may inadvertently occur. Remember that whenever and whenever they are present, a potential window for viral transmission exists.

## TOYS/EQUIPMENT

When you were growing up, your mother probably told you to share your toys. Well, forget it! If you're a top, you should ask the bottom what items he owns, or, if you have sex with various bottoms, you should assign pieces of equipment to each, and mark their names on them. If you're a bottom, you should invest in your own special equipment and get the top to use them on you. Whatever your favorite items—tit clamps, rope, dildoes, whips, or needles—stock up on them! The surest, safest and easiest guide to follow, then, is simply not to share equipment at all.

If, however, it is not possible for you to supply your own, every precaution must be taken by you and your partner to ensure that equipment is properly cleaned prior to any sexual scene. Household bleach has proven to be effective in killing the AIDS virus, and is the simplest and most readily available cleansing agent. It can be used on latex or rubber toys (such as dildoes), leather goods (e.g., whips and cockrings), metal equipment (e.g., needles), and even on rope.

Simply follow these guidelines: (1) wash your equipment thoroughly, (2) soak it for several hours in a solution of one-part bleach to ten-parts water, and then (3) rinse it thoroughly several times to be sure that all the bleach has been removed. Using bleach on material such as leather will cause it to "whiten" or lose its color, dry out and crack. Proper care should be taken to "dress" the leather with solutions such as Lexol. Some pieces of equipment are "dishwasher safe" and can be cleaned in this manner to remove greasy matter which may contain the AIDS virus. Adding bleach to the wash is recommended—but *rinse thoroughly*.

## WHIPPING

If no breaks in the skin occur during whipping, it is a low-risk activity. Therefore, cat-o'-nine tails are low-risk, except in the unlikely event they cause a break in the skin. Bull whips and quirts are much more likely to cause skin breaks, and hence are higher risk. As with the use of other toys and equipment, the bottom should have his own whip used on him and should never share.

## ASS SCENES

Anything that goes into a person's ass can transmit the virus if it's shared. The ass is more delicate than many parts of the body and it should be taken care of. Sticking things up an ass—whether it's a finger, fist, dildo, or anything else—can tear the rectal lining. Even extremely tiny tears can provide the AIDS virus with a point of entry into the body. Whether you're into fucking, fisting, ass-stuffing, douching, just fingering asses or rimming, be mindful of this central fact!

Do not forget basic safe-sex guidelines for gay men here. For example, it's obvious that fucking, without precautions, is a high-risk activity, since a cock carries cum and pre-cum. *Always* use a condom. Sorry, there's no way around it—rimming is a high-risk activity, especially for other sexually transmitted diseases such as hepatitis, and hence should be avoided.

If you're into fingering asses, you should wear a disposable latex/rubber glove or a finger cot, which is sort of like a condom for the finger. You can get them at medical supply stores. It is very important that you not put your finger into your partner's mouth with the glove/finger cot still on. More importantly, remember that anything that first goes into any person's ass might transmit the virus if inserted into the mouth.

## ENEMAS

In an enema scene keep in mind that there are many useful and essential bacteria in the intestines that are necessary for continued good health. They should not all be casually flushed away!

Enema nozzles and/or hoses should be clean before use and inspected for cracks and abrasions, which can harbor harmful bacteria. The nozzle and/or hose should be well lubricated before insertion. Such items should be considered "personal equipment" and should not be used from one person to another.

Adding anything to the water used during an enema is not a good idea. Materials are absorbed by the body more readily through the intestines than if ingested.

## FISTING

If you get fisted, you're going to have to treat your ass with care. Since fists are considerably larger than cocks and dildoes, every precaution must be taken to avoid serious tears in the rectal lining, or even, in the case of deep fisting, a rupture of the intestinal wall. Actually, fisting is an activity that can place both partners at risk, since tears may occur on the skin of the person doing the fisting.

Relaxation is important in a fisting scene, and should not be camouflaged by using drugs.

To protect both partners, a veterinarian's calving glove should be used—it's a surgical glove that goes all the way up to the shoulder. You can buy them at veterinary supply stores or from a reliable distributor of S/M equipment, and you have to lubricate them (see below on lubricants). Again, do not share gloves with different partners. If your fingernails are long, you should cut and file them smooth because they can tear the fisting glove. If you have an open wound on the hand, you shouldn't fist even with the protection of the glove. Because there also exists the possibility of breaks in the glove, calving gloves aren't guaranteed to prevent AIDS transmission, and without this sort of protection, fisting is definitely a very high-risk activity and should be avoided.

## LUBRICANTS

Lubricants can be a lot of fun, even if they're not used for inserting something into someone's ass. If you use a lubricant externally only, you can use a scented or mentholated brand.

If a lubricant is to be used internally, you should use only water-based, unscented brands—like KY or Probe. Do not use mentholated brands, since they irritate the rectal

lining. Note that water-"soluble" lubricants *may or may not* be water-based; be sure you know which are which. Vaseline (whether lotion or jelly) and Crisco are not water-based and should be avoided for internal use. And because no studies have been done on the long-term effects of Nonoxynol-9 on the rectal lining, most gay health educators now recommend against its use.

Use lots of lubricant to protect against injury to the rectal lining and, in fisting, to lessen the chance of the glove tearing. Water-based lubricants tend to "dry" faster and should be applied liberally and often. A little plain water will rejuvenate the lubricant. Also, during a scene, you should not take your lubricant from a large container. A lubricating solution should be dispensed from a squeeze container or individual packet so that nobody with a "contaminated" hand (or cock or whatever) can pass the virus into your supply, or vice versa.

## PIERCING, SHAVING AND ABRASION SCENES

In a *piercing* scene, only full sterilization of needles will ensure their safety. Proper sterilization will require use *either* of a home pressure-cooker or an autoclave, i.e., a device normally found in medical laboratories that is capable of producing temperatures higher than the boiling point. (See "The Safety Valve" column in *DungeonMaster* 26 for a detailed account of the pressure-cooker method.)

If, as part of a scene, temporary piercing is going to take place, make sure you only use sterilized, disposable needles. Use needles once—only once—and throw them away. And use them only on one person. If the top is piercing more than one person at the time, don't re-use the needles. If you want to have permanent piercing done, be certain that the rings or bars used are new and sterile, and that the needles used are the type designed strictly for piercing flesh (hollow cored).

Before starting piercing, the area of skin should be prepared with an antiseptic (just like a medical procedure) such as alcohol or a provodine/iodine solution. Any drops of blood should be wiped away with disposable sterile cotton or gauze. The cotton or gauze should be thrown away immediately, into a garbage bag, not just on the floor, and preferably should be flushed down the toilet.

In a *shaving* scene, it is very easy to cause minor nicks and cuts. This is a source of possible exposure to various infectious agents. Use disposable razors and discard them safely at the end of the scene. A razor should not be used on more than one person. Always have an antiseptic solution available during a scene to care for any nicks or cuts.

In an *abrasion* scene, similar precautions should be taken. The use of a fingernail file on your nipples or those of your partner can be quite erotic. But there is also the likelihood of drawing blood. If a metal fingernail file is used, it should be autoclaved before being used again. Never use the same unclean file on another person. If autoclaving is not available, it is recommended that you use disposable emery boards. Again, do not use this equipment on more than one person. Dispose of it carefully, since it may have come in contact with your partner's blood or your own. Other equipment used within the abrasion scene, such as suction cups or tit-clamps, may also come in contact with blood drawn during the scene, and hence should be carefully cleaned.

## WATERSPORTS AND SCAT

In view of current medical knowledge, these two activities are "possibly safe," as long as neither piss nor scat (shit) gets into your system. In other words, they're okay if they're external only. Never take piss or scat in the mouth. Never let anyone piss up your ass. If there are any cuts externally, don't practice watersports or scat, since it is almost impossible to control the "flow" away from possible cuts or abrasions.

Care should also be directed to cleaning up yourself and your surroundings after a scene. Virally and bacterially infected matter should be carefully disposed of. (Refer to the "Toys/Equipment" section above on the use of bleach for laundering.)

## SEX AND DRUGS

If you enjoy S/M, you need to keep your wits about you. That's why drugs—such as hallucinogens, tranquilizers, uppers and alcohol—should never be used in a scene. One never knows how you or your partner will react to the use of such chemicals. Furthermore, drugs can depress your immune system, so using them before or during sex could make you more susceptible to AIDS infection.

As for poppers, there seems to be a correlation between the use of poppers and the development of Kaposi's sarcoma (the rare skin cancer that affects some people with AIDS). There is also some evidence to suggest that the use of poppers impairs the immune system and hence might play a significant role in developing AIDS, although the research to date in this area is not conclusive.

All drugs should be avoided.