



SAFER *Sex*



WHITMAN-WALKER HEALTH
Community. Caring. Quality.

This brochure will teach you how to reduce your risk of getting HIV and other STIs. Many people already have safer sex to protect themselves and their partners from unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

Safer sex is about what you do, not who you are. HIV is spread through blood, semen (cum), vaginal fluids and breast milk. Some STIs, like herpes, can spread through skin-to-skin contact, including areas not covered by a condom.

HOW TO LOWER YOUR RISKS

- › Use condoms, latex dams and gloves.
- › Choose safer sex acts instead of riskier ones.
- › Be open with your doctor about your risks.
- › Ask your doctor about STI vaccines.
- › Get tested for HIV and STIs regularly. Some STIs show few or no symptoms.

Having Safer Sex

DIFFERENT KINDS OF SEX HAVE DIFFERENT RISK LEVELS.

WHAT'S SAFE?

- › Kissing
- › Massaging
- › Caressing
- › Masturbating yourself or your partner

Why Have Safer Sex?

Sex is more fun when you're not afraid. Some people don't have sex with anyone because they worry about STIs, while others don't worry and take lots of risks. Most people find a good balance. You can find your own balance by figuring out your "risk limits," or which risks you are willing or not willing to take. Your limits can change over time as you change.

Most people don't want to put themselves at risk for STIs but, sometimes, mistakes happen. There are many resources you can use for help if this happens to you. Whitman-Walker Health has safer sex counselors available to talk with you. If you were sexually abused or assaulted, we can put you in touch with a rape crisis counselor.

Safer sex is very important for people who have HIV because it is possible to get infected with another strain of HIV. Some STIs can worsen HIV by causing it to progress quicker.



What are STIs?

STIs can be caused by bacteria, viruses, yeast or parasites. Many STIs can be treated or cured, but you can become re-infected with most STIs again. Some STIs like HIV, herpes and HPV cannot be cured but have treatments that can help the symptoms.

Herpes, HPV and syphilis can be spread through skin to skin contact. If you use sex toys, fingers or other objects with someone else's bodily fluids on them you can get STIs.



Sex with Fingers & Hands

("FINGERING," "FISTING") – WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Touching a partner's penis or vulva (some people use the word cunt or pussy) or putting your fingers inside someone are very low risk with a few exceptions:

Chapping, cuts or scabs on your hands can increase your risk for some STIs. If one person's bodily fluids get on or in the other partner, they could be at risk for an STI.

Risks with back-and-forth between partners' genitals:

POSSIBLE RISKS: HPV, bacterial vaginosis, trichomoniasis, gonorrhea, chlamydia, HIV and hepatitis B

UNKNOWN RISK: hepatitis C

SAFER SEX TIPS:

- ▶ Use a different hand or glove to touch or penetrate your partner than the one you use on yourself.
- ▶ Use lots of lube to make it feel good and prevent mini tearing.
- ▶ Use gloves! Certain gloves can help reduce the risk of spreading STIs.
- ▶ Trim and file your nails. Take off any jewelry.



Getting the Right Tests

If you have oral or anal sex without a condom and want to get tested for STIs, it's important to ask your doctor to swab your throat and/or anus for gonorrhea and chlamydia. Standard tests will not catch them in your throat or anus. It is also important to get tested for HIV as having an STI greatly increases your chances of getting HIV.

Oral Sex – What Are the Risks?

ORAL SEX ON A VAGINA (“CUNNILINGUS,” “EATING OUT”)

STIs that are passed skin-to-skin can be transmitted through oral sex. HIV can also be passed from vaginal fluids to any cuts or sores in the mouth. Using a latex dam is an easy way to reduce risks.

KNOWN RISKS: herpes I and II, syphilis

POSSIBLE RISKS: HIV and hepatitis B

UNKNOWN RISKS: HPV, chlamydia, gonorrhea

Oral Sex on an Anus

(“RIMMING,” “ANALINGUS,” “TOSSING SALAD”)

Rimming is very risky for hepatitis A and parasites. If the receiver has bumps or sores or is bleeding, the giver's risks for STIs is higher.

KNOWN RISKS: hepatitis A, parasites, bacterial infections, herpes I and II, syphilis

UNKNOWN RISKS: HPV, gonorrhea, chlamydia

SAFER SEX TIPS FOR ORAL-VAGINAL & ORAL-ANAL

- › Place a latex dam over the vulva or anus or use plastic food wrap or a cut-open condom.
- › Put some lube on the inside of the dam and some flavored lube on the outside.
- › Dropped the dam? Get a new one!

Oral Sex on a Penis

(“GIVING HEAD,” “FELLATIO,” “SUCKING OFF”)

HIV risk with oral sex is low, but the risk of other STIs is still high.

KNOWN RISKS: herpes I and II, HPV, syphilis, gonorrhea and chlamydia

POSSIBLE RISKS: HIV and hepatitis B

SAFER SEX TIPS

- › Use a condom!
- › Not into condoms? Don't take cum into your mouth, and if you do, spit or swallow as fast as possible. Don't let it sit in your mouth.
- › Avoid giving oral sex if you have bleeding gums or sores in your mouth. Wait at least an hour if you've brushed or flossed your teeth.
- › Try not to “deep throat,” because this irritates the lining of the throat, making it easier to get an STI.
- › If the penis and balls have any bumps, sores or strange fluid coming out, avoid oral sex until they get checked out.

Sex with Penetration

VAGINAL & ANAL SEX (“FUCKING,” “HAVING SEX,” “INTERCOURSE”)

The risk of getting HIV is higher for the person being penetrated (in anal sex, the “bottom”) than for the person penetrating (in anal sex, the “top”). Both people are at risk for getting STIs. Sharing sex toys can also put people at risk for HIV and STIs.

KNOWN RISKS: HIV, gonorrhea, chlamydia, syphilis, herpes I and II, HPV, hepatitis B, trichomoniasis (vaginal sex only)

UNKNOWN RISK: hepatitis C

SAFER SEX TIPS:

- › Use a condom and some lube! Lube helps condoms not break and makes sex feel better.
- › Don’t use the condom if it’s old. Check the expiration date on the wrapper.
- › Add a drop of lube inside the condom to make it feel good.
- › Pinch the tip of the condom as you put it on. This will leave room for cum so the condom won’t break during ejaculation.
- › When you put on the condom, make sure the side is up that will roll down smoothly. If you put it on wrong side up, try again with a new condom.
- › Hold onto the base of the condom as you pull the penis out so the cum doesn’t spill and the condom doesn’t come off inside the partner.
- › Use a new condom with each sex act and each partner.
- › If you insert toys for sex, use condoms on them, clean them with bleach and water or don’t share them. Leather toys can’t be cleaned this way, so don’t share them.

Sex without Penetration

(“RUBBING,” “DRY HUMPING,” “OUTERCOURSE”)

Some STIs can be passed this way, particularly those that are transmitted skin-to-skin.

KNOWN RISKS: herpes I and II, HPV, syphilis, trichomoniasis, yeast infections (between vulvas), bacterial vaginosis

POSSIBLE RISKS: yeast infections (penis to vulva), gonorrhea, chlamydia

UNKNOWN RISKS: hepatitis B and C, HIV

SAFER SEX TIPS:

- › For vulva to vulva rubbing: put a latex dam or long piece of plastic wrap in between the two of you.
- › For vulva-penis or penis-anus rubbing, use a condom with lots of lube.

Condoms

Condoms used right can protect you from many STIs and can prevent pregnancy.

Condoms WON’T completely protect you from STIs that are spread skin-to-skin and can be spread by contact with the genital area not covered by a condom.

What do you do if you've been exposed to HIV?

Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is a kind of antiretroviral medicine you could take if you've been exposed to HIV to lower your risk of getting it. It **WON'T** protect you if you get exposed to HIV a lot.

You must start the medicine within **72 hours** of being exposed. The sooner you start on the medicine the better the chances are for preventing HIV infection, so get medical help right away! Many emergency rooms and Whitman-Walker offer PEP.

Know the Tools

CONDOMS

Condoms greatly reduce the risk of getting or passing on many STIs, including HIV. Condoms come in many shapes and sizes, so try out different kinds to see which ones feel best to you. The condom package will say if it is lubricated or contains a spermicide. Most condoms are made of latex. People with a latex allergy should use other kinds, such as polyurethane condoms. Avoid lambskin condoms because they do not stop HIV.

“Female” condoms are polyurethane condoms that can be placed in the vagina or anus before sex. Although they are called “female” condoms, they can be used by men for anal sex and are sometimes called the “Insertive Condom.”

Avoid spermicides like Nonoxynol-9. They can cause irritation of the vagina, anus and penis which can increase the chance of getting an STI, including HIV.

LATEX BARRIERS & PLASTIC WRAP

You can use latex barriers or plastic food wrap for oral sex on a vagina, vulva or anus. These barriers prevent the spread of many STIs. Latex barriers, sometimes called “dental dams,” are square pieces of stretchy plastic. You can also use a large piece of plastic food wrap or cut a condom or glove into a flat square. Do not use microwavable food wrap because it has small holes that HIV and other STIs can pass through.

LUBE

When putting a penis, fingers or a sex toy inside a vagina or anus, lots of water-based lubricant can make sex more pleasurable and help keep a condom from breaking. Use only water-based or silicon-based lubricants. Oil-based lubricants like Vaseline or massage oils can break down the latex in the condom.

GLOVES

When putting fingers inside an anus or vagina (fingering or fisting), you can wear latex, polyurethane or nitrile gloves to reduce the risk of getting STIs through tiny cuts on your hands.

KEEP YOUR TOOLS NEARBY

If you have condoms, latex dams, gloves, lube and other safer sex supplies nearby, they're easier to grab and use during sex. Bring your supplies along anywhere you might have sex.

Talking About Sex

People who talk with their partner(s) about safer sex find it easier to have it. Many of us were taught at a young age that sex is something you shouldn't talk about. However, not talking about it only makes the problem of STIs worse.

Talking with a partner is a chance to learn what they do to be safer, what turns them on and what things you might enjoy doing together. It also allows you to build honesty and trust in your relationship.

Sometimes it is harder to have safer sex. Using alcohol or drugs can make it harder. So can certain places, events or partners. If you sometimes have sexual experiences that are out of control, Whitman-Walker can help you.

Just as seat belts cannot guarantee your safety in a car accident, using condoms, gloves, latex dams and other barriers is not a 100 percent guarantee. Some people also choose to lower their risks through abstinence, or having very few or only one sexual partner.

Many STIs are treatable and even curable. Cures cannot reverse physical harm, so it's important to find out early and get treated. There are also vaccinations available for hepatitis A and B and HPV. Whitman-Walker can help you with testing, vaccinations and any questions you may have. Remember, sex is fun! Part of feeling good about safer sex is feeling good about sex and ourselves.



MAX ROBINSON CENTER

2301 Martin Luther King Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20020

HIV TESTING HOURS*

Mon. – Thurs.	9:00 am – 4:30 pm
Fri.	closed

**ELIZABETH TAYLOR
MEDICAL CENTER**

1701 14th St., NW
Washington, DC 20009

HIV TESTING HOURS*

Mon., Wed.	9:00 am – 6:00 pm
Tues., Thurs., Fri.	9:00 am – 5:00 pm

GAY MEN'S HEALTH & WELLNESS CLINIC

Tues., Thurs.	6:00 pm
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*Testing hours may change. Please check our website for current hours.