

Girls' sex stuff



Family Planning Tasmania
sexuality education & clinical services

SEX IS...

Many people think of sex as penetrative intercourse (putting a penis into another person's body), while others see sex as any kind of consensual physical intimacy. "Sex" means different things to different people depending on their experiences, culture, values and beliefs. Because people's ideas on sex can differ, it is really important to be able to talk about it with your partner. What do you both think? What do both of you want? What don't both of you want?

When you have both decided what you can both be happy and comfortable with, the next step is talk about how you will keep each other SAFE.

SAFER SEX

Safer sex is all about:

- looking after yourself and your partner emotionally
- prevention of Sexually Transmissible Infections (STIs)
- avoiding unplanned pregnancy
- knowing the law

In Tasmania the legal age for sex is 17 which means that if you are under 17 no-one is legally allowed to have sex with you.

It is a crime to force someone to have sex and it is a crime to take advantage of someone who has been drinking or taking drugs

ATTRACTION

We are all attracted to different people. While many people are attracted to the opposite sex, it is also normal and natural for people to be

attracted to the same sex or to both sexes.

It's also natural to be curious about other girls - it doesn't necessarily mean you are gay, but it's OK if you are. In fact, it is against the law to discriminate against people because of their sexual preference.

PLEASURE

Sex is meant to be pleasurable - for both partners. It's OK to go slow - rushing things can lead to regret.

Pain during sex can happen because the vagina does not produce enough lubrication - water-based lube can be a big help plus it reduces the risk of condoms breaking. See a doctor if you are worried about any pain.

Magazines often talk about the big 'O'. Don't stress, many girls find it hard to achieve orgasm and sex can be enjoyable without it!

Masturbation is a natural and healthy way to get to know your body and find out what feels good - just do it in private! It can involve touching the sex parts of the body (eg breasts, clitoris and vagina), but exactly what you do is completely up to you!

CHOICE

Some people choose to save sex for a long-term relationship or for marriage, others don't. What you choose will be based on your beliefs and values. Think about what you want, how far you want to go. Don't forget to tell you partner - they won't know unless you say something!

Respect goes both ways - you have the right to make choices about your body and you have a responsibility to listen to your partner's choices about their body.

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PREGNANCY?

Don't want to get pregnant? Then use contraception to prevent pregnancy. There are many different types of contraception. Talk to FPT or your doctor about the best options for you. Condoms are the only form of contraception that also protect against STIs.

Accidents do happen - if your regular form of contraception fails, Emergency Contraception (EC) is available at FPT and chemists. EC works best if taken within 24 hours, but can be used up to 5 days later. See our EC Fact Sheet at FPT centres or website.

The first sign of pregnancy is often a missed period. Other signs can include nausea, sore breasts and feeling tired. Pregnancy tests are most accurate one week after a missed period was due. An unplanned pregnancy can be difficult time. It's good to talk to someone you trust about what your choices are.

Women who wish to become pregnant should talk to their doctor about healthy lifestyle choices.

STIs

An STI is an infection that you can catch through sexual activity. Some STIs are caused by bacteria, some by viruses and others by organisms like lice or mites. They can be passed on during:

- vaginal, anal or oral sex.
- close sexual contact, skin to skin touching

Most STIs have no early symptoms - some STIs *never* have symptoms - so it's easy to have one and not know it. Symptoms can include:

- unusual vaginal discharge
- itchy genitals

- pain during intercourse or when peeing
- rash, sores, small lumps on/around the vagina or anus
- unusual bleeding from the vagina

Many STIs are easily treated but can have serious consequences if left untreated, from chronic pain to not being able to have children. If you have ever had unprotected sex or have noticed any symptoms, why not get a check up to make sure everything is ok? Its quick and painless and will give you peace of mind.

Most people carrying STIs don't even know it! If you **choose** to have sex, **choose** to use condoms, dams and water-based lube to reduce the risk of catching something. Condoms and dams stop the exchange of semen, blood and vaginal fluids, but only prevent skin to skin contact on the area they cover.

SEXUAL HEALTH

Vaginas - from puberty you may notice a slight discharge from the vagina. These secretions are from the cervix and glands at the entrance to the vagina and they help to keep the vagina clean and healthy. You may notice differences throughout your menstrual cycle. Fluid also passes through the vaginal walls in response to physical activity and sexual arousal.

Keep your vagina healthy by washing with plain water or a soap alternative (it's sensitive!!). If you notice your discharge looks or smells funny, or if it's itchy or painful down there, see a doctor. It could be an infection or, if you are sexually active, an STI.

Pap Smears - this simple test is used to detect changes in the cells of the cervix which can lead to

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cancer. Smoking and the Human Papilloma Virus (a common STI) can increase the risk of these cell changes. All women over 18 should start having Pap smears within two years of becoming sexually active and then have one every two years. There is no need to have Pap smears earlier than 18, even if you start having sex earlier.

Gardasil - this vaccination is against four types of Human Papilloma Virus that cause a high percentage of cervical cancers and genital warts. It works best if you are vaccinated before becoming sexually active.

Breasts - Breasts come in all shapes and sizes. They can even change size and shape at different times in your life - menstruation, pregnancy, getting older, putting on weight, losing weight. It's also common for a woman's breasts to be slightly different in size.

The most important thing is that you check your breasts for anything unusual, such as:

- lumps or thickening in the breast
- sudden changes in breast size or shape
- dimpling or a rash on the skin
- persistent or unusual pain
- discharge from the nipple

Disclaimer.

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