



# Sexual Health

## I will learn about:

- What sexuality is
- What sex is
- Making decisions about sex
- Safe sex



# What is Sexuality [sex-u-al-it-ee]?

Sexuality is not just sex.

It is also how you feel about your-self, how you feel about others, and how you feel about sex it-self.

Like every-one, you are a sexual [sex-u-al] person.

But that does not mean every-one has sex and you must too.

You can pick if or when you want to have sex.

You may be ready to have sex now or you may want to wait.

Sex can be good, but only if it is the right time for you.



## Sexual orientation [or-ee-en-ta-shun]

Your sexuality includes who you are sexually [sex-u-al-ee] attracted [a-track-ted] to.

This is your sexual orientation.

You may like people who are the opposite sex than you.

- This is called being "straight" or "hetero-sexual" [het-or-oh-sex-u-al].



You may like people who are the same sex as you.

- This is called being "gay" or "lesbian" or "homo-sexual" [homo-sex-u-al].

You may like people from both sexes.

- This is called being "bi-sexual" [by-sex-u-al].

There is no wrong sexual orientation.



## Sexuality is your right

Like every-body, you have a right to:

- have your sexual orientation respected.
- learn about sexuality.
- express your sexuality.
- have sexual feelings.
- have a boy-friend or girl-friend.
- live with your boy-friend or girl-friend.
- get married.



## What is Sex?

There are lots of different kinds of **sexual activity**.

**Sexual activity** is any sexual touching that you choose to have, with or with-out some-one.

Sexual activity can be:

- kissing.
- hand jobs.
- oral sex.
- vaginal [vag-in-ull] sex.
- anal sex.
- masturbation [ma-stir-bay-shun].



## What about sex and my disability?

Some people with disabilities may find it hard to have sex.

If you have this problem, talk to your doctor or call one of the places listed at the end of this brochure. They may be able to tell you ways to make it easier.

If you have a support staff, or live in a group home it may be hard to be alone with some-one.

Tell the people around you that you want to be alone. Ask them not to come into your room.



# Making Decisions About Sex

There are a lot of things to think about before you choose to have sex.

- Are you ready to have sex?
- Do you want to have sex?
- Do you want to have sex with this person?
- Do you have safe sex?
- Do you need to talk to some-one about safe sex?
- Do you know the health risks of having sex?



It is a big decision.

You should not feel scared to talk to your partner before you have sex.

You need to talk about things like:

- If you are both ready to have sex. Even if you love some-one it is ok to say no to sex if you are not ready.
- If you have a **sexually transmitted [trans-mitt-ed] infection [in-feck-shun]**.



We will use **STI** for sexually transmitted infection. STI is easier for some people to read.

- What kind of **protection** [pro-teck-shun] you will use.

When it comes to sex, **protection** is some-thing that you and your partner use so you do not get pregnant or an STI.

# Safe Sex

When you choose to have sex,  
you need to think about safe sex.

You can get pregnant or get an STI  
from having sex **only one time**.

It is important to be safe **every time**  
you have sex.

But there are ways to protect your-self when  
you do have sex.

There are different kinds  
of protection [pro-teck-shun].

You should talk to your partner  
about what you would like to use.

Be honest.

If either of you are not ok with a kind of protection, tell your partner.

Some will lower the chance that a woman will get pregnant,  
but will not lower the chance that some-one will get an STI.

Some are like medication and control a woman's hormones  
so that she can not get pregnant.

It is normal to talk to a doctor when you choose  
what kind of protection to use.



## What kind of protection can men use?

### Male condom

A male condom is a very thin rubber tube that fits over the erect penis.

Condoms can help protect against pregnancy and STIs.

They are good protection.

They work 97% of the time when used perfectly, and 85% of the time with typical use.

Even when used right condoms can break, slip or leak.

You should never re-use a condom.



### Vasectomy [va-sec-toe-me]

A vasectomy is an operation.

It will block the tubes that carry sperm.

It protects against pregnancy, but not STIs.

It works 99.9% of the time.

It is usually forever. You need to know that you never want to have kids before you have a vasectomy.

Vasectomy's can be reversed. But it may not work.

You still may not be able to have kids if you have it reversed.

## What kind of protection can women use?

### Female condom

A female condom is a soft rubber tube that is put inside the vagina.

It protects against pregnancy and STIs.

They work 95% of the time when used perfectly, and 79% of the time with average use.

They can be hard to use.

They can cost a lot of money.



## Birth control pill

The birth control pill is a small pill.

Most of them have two hormones, but some only have one.

These hormones can make it harder for the sperm to reach the egg.

Or they can stop a woman's body from **ovulating** [ah-view-late-ing].

**Ovulating** is when an egg is released from a woman's ovary. If sperm gets to the egg and the egg is fertilized, the woman will get pregnant.



The birth control pill protects against pregnancy, but not STIs.

It works 99.7% of the time when used perfectly, and 92% of the time with typical use.

## Birth control patch

The birth control patch looks like a band-aid.

The patch also has two hormones.

It is put on the skin and the hormones enter a woman's body through her skin.

A woman wears it for 3 weeks, and then does not wear it for 1 week.

It protects against pregnancy, but not STIs.

It works 99.7% of the time when used perfectly, and 92% of the time with typical use.



## **Birth control shot**

The birth control shot is a needle that is given by a doctor every 8 to 12 weeks.

It has one hormone.

Half of the women who get the shot will stop having their period.

It protects against pregnancy, but not STIs.

It works 99.7% of the time when used perfectly, and 97% of the time with typical use.



## **Birth control ring**

The birth control ring is a flexible ring that goes in the vagina.

When it is used it stays in for 3 weeks, and then is out for one.

Some women have trouble using the ring. A doctor can help and show you how it is done.

It has two hormones.

It protects against pregnancy, but not STIs.

It works 99.7% of the time when used perfectly, and 92% of the time with typical use.



## The cap or diaphragm [die-ah-fram]

The cap is rubber and dome-shaped.

It fits inside the vagina and covers the **cervix** [sir-vicks]

The **cervix** is the neck of the womb [woom-buh] that leads into the vagina.

It needs to be fitted by your doctor or at a clinic.

You need to use it with **spermicide** [sperm-ee-side]

**Spermicide** is a cream or gel that kills sperm.

It can be hard to use.

It needs to be cleaned well or there is a risk of infection.

It protects against pregnancy, but not STIs.

It works 94% of the time when used perfectly, and 84% of the time with typical use.

## Intra-uterine [in-tra-you-ter-in] device (IUD)

An IUD can be:

- a small plastic item that has one hormone
- a copper item that does not have any hormones. The copper is what protects against pregnancy.

An IUD is put inside a woman's womb by a doctor.

It can last for 5-10 years.

The IUD protects against pregnancy, but not STIs.

It works 99% of the time.



## **Tubal [Tube-all] ligation [lie-gay-shun]**

This is an operation that blocks the fallopian [fah-lope-e-an] tubes. The fallopian tubes carry the egg from the ovary to the womb.

This means a woman can not get pregnant.

It is usually for-ever.  
You need to know that you never want to have kids before you choose to have this operation.

Tubal ligation's can be reversed.  
But it may not work.  
You still may not be able to have kids if you get it reversed.

It protects against pregnancy, but not STIs.

It works 99.5% of the time.

## **Emergency contraception [con-tra-sep-shun]**

Emergency contraception is also called the morning after pill.

It uses hormones to stop a woman's body from getting pregnant.  
It does not protect against STIs.

A woman can take it to try to stop getting pregnant if she had sex with-out a condom or had sex with a condom and it broke.

You can get it at a drug store,  
it is kept behind the counter so you will have to ask for it.

You must take it with-in 5 days of having sex with no protection.  
The sooner it is taken, the better it will work.

Most kinds of protection are for women to use,  
but both men and women need to make sure that they have safe sex.



## Oral and anal sex protection

Even if you can not get pregnant from oral or anal sex it is still important to be safe from STIs.

Always use a condom if you have anal sex.

Always use a condom, a dental dam, or a cut-open condom if you have oral sex.

### Dental dam

A dental dam is a square piece of latex.

It can be put over the woman's vagina to stop body fluids from being passed to another person while having oral sex.

### Cut-open condom

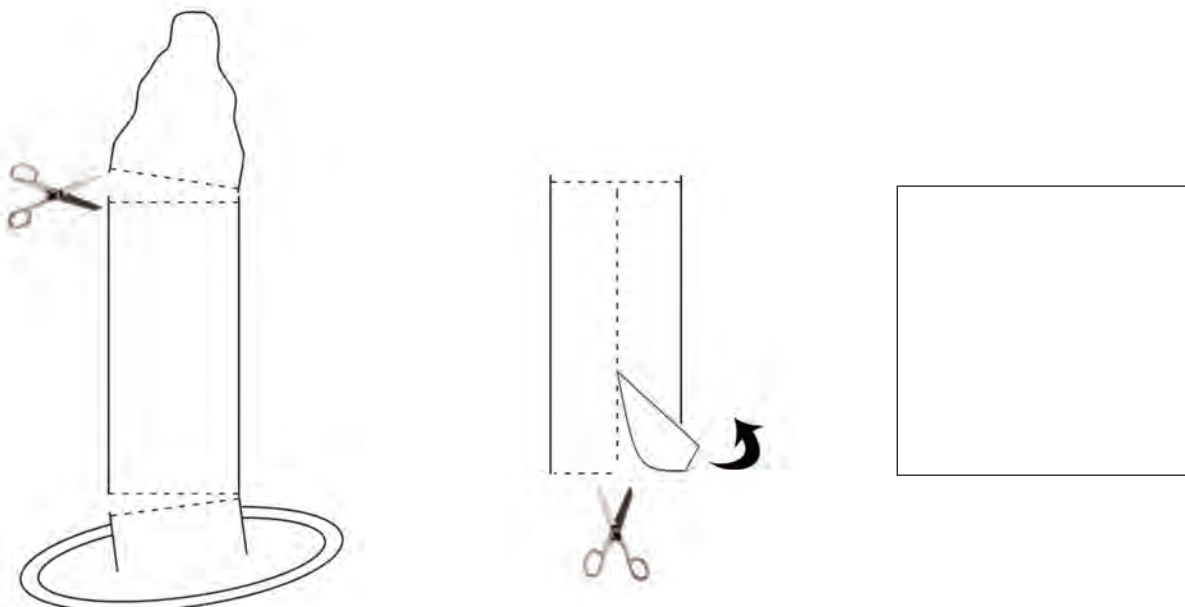
If the oral sex is on a man a normal condom can be used for protection.

If the oral sex is on a woman you can use a cut open condom for protection.

To do this:

1. Cut the ends off the condom.
2. Cut the condom up one side so that it opens into a square.

This square can be put over the woman's vagina to stop body fluids from being passed to the other person during oral sex.



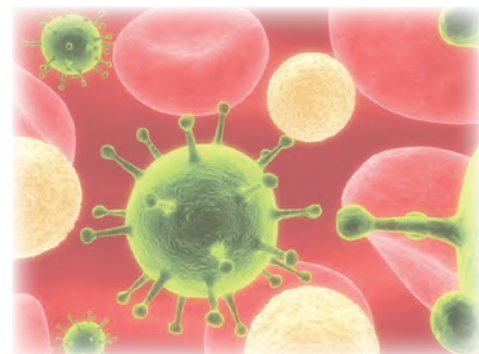
# Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

STIs are infections that you can get through sexual contact.

## How do you get STIs?

You can get STIs from 3 kinds of sex.

1. Vaginal sex
2. Anal sex
3. Oral sex



If you know what STIs are and you make good choices about sex, you will be less likely to get an STI.

You can get STIs from 2 kinds of contact.

1. Body fluids
2. Skin contact

## Body fluids

You can get STIs from 3 kinds of body fluids.

1. Semen [see-men].
2. Vaginal fluid (the wetness in the vagina).
3. Blood.

If your partner has an STI and you are exposed to their body fluids, you can get their STI.



Some STIs you can get from body fluids are:

- Gonorrhea
- Chlamydia
- Syphilis
- Trichomoniasis
- HIV
- Hepatitis



### **Skin to skin contact**

You can get STIs from skin to skin contact.

These STIs can not be passed by hugging or shaking some-one's hand. They usually only occur around the genitals.

This means that even if you use a condom you could still get the STI!

Some STIs you can get from skin to skin contact are:

- Genital warts
- HPV or Human Papillomavirus [Papi-low-mah-virus]
- Herpes
- Scabies
- Pubic lice

The best ways to not get an STI are to:

- not have sex.
- make sure that the person you have sex with does not have an STI. You will know you both do not have an STI if you get tested before you have sex. People can lie, but medical tests do not.
- have safe sex and always use protection.



## What happens if you get an STI?

Different things can happen with different kinds of STIs.

Some STIs:

- are easy to treat if you get tested and catch it early, like Chlamydia.
- you have for life, like Herpes. There is no cure.
- can cause cancer, like HPV.
- can make you very sick or kill you, like HIV.

## How can you protect your-self from getting an STI?

If you use protection, like a condom, it can lower your chances of getting an STI.

If you are having sex you should go to the doctor and get tested for STIs at least once a year.

Some STIs have no **symptoms** [simp-toms] but you can still pass it to some-one else.

**Symptoms** are signs that you have an infection.

You need to know if you have an STI so that you do not infect some-one else.

There is another option too. **Abstinence** [Ab-stin-en-ss].

**Abstinence** means that you choose not to have sex.

Abstinence is the only way to be 100% safe against STIs.



# Pregnancy [preg-nan-see]

One thing to think about when you have sex is pregnancy.

Only women can get pregnant [preg-nant], but men are also responsible [ree-spawn-sa-bull] if a woman he has sex with gets pregnant.

If you want to have a child then you and your partner need to make that decision together.

If you do not want to have a child you need to use protection every time you have sex.

Abstinence is the only way to be 100% safe against pregnancy.

You can only get pregnant from vaginal sex.

That does not mean that there is no risk with the other types of sexual activity.

For more **info** on pregnancy, read the brochure [bro-shur] **Having a Baby**.

You can get the brochure at:

<http://www.vrri.org/Plain-Language/Plain-Language/Resources/html>.

We will use **info** for information [in-for-may-shun].  
Info is easier for some people to read.



## Get Tested

If you are sexually active,  
you should get tested by your doctor for STIs.

Some STIs do not have any symptoms.

You and your partner should get tested  
once a year.

This will help you stay healthy.

It will also make sure your partner stays healthy.

If an STI is not treated it can cause permanent [perm-ma-nent] damage.



## Places Where You Can Get Help

### Calgary Sexual Health Centre

You can find it in Calgary at:

- 304, 301 14 Street NW  
Phone: 403-283-5580  
[www.calgarysexualhealth.ca](http://www.calgarysexualhealth.ca)  
Email: [generalmail@calgarysexualhealth.ca](mailto:generalmail@calgarysexualhealth.ca)

You can go to The Calgary Sexual Health Centre  
for free and private STI counseling [cown-sell-ing].

They can give you support if you choose to have sex.  
The web-site has a lot of info on sexual health.

### Calgary Sexually Transmitted Disease Clinic

You can find it in Calgary at:

- **Sheldon M. Chumir Health Centre**  
5th Floor, 1213 4th Street SW  
Phone: 403-955-6700

This place will test you for STIs. The clinic will keep your test private.  
You do not need an Alberta Health Care number.

## Alberta Health Services: Sexual and Reproductive Health Clinics

You can find them in Calgary at:

- **Downtown Clinic**  
5th Floor, 1213 4th st SW  
Phone: 403-955-6500
- **Sunridge Clinic**  
406, 2675 36th Street NE  
Sunridge Professional Building  
Phone: 403-944-7666
- **South Calgary Health Centre**  
31 Sunpark Plaza SE  
Phone: 403-943-9510

These places can test for STIs.

You can also get tested at your doctor's office or at any walk-in clinic.

## AIDS Calgary

You can find it in Calgary at:

- 110, 1603 - 10 Ave. SW.  
Phone: 403-508-2500  
[www.aidscalgary.org](http://www.aidscalgary.org)  
Email: [info@aidscalgary.org](mailto:info@aidscalgary.org)

They can help you if you have HIV or AIDS and would like a support group.

## Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse

You can find it in Calgary at:

- 7th Floor, 320-5th Avenue SE  
YWCA Mary Dover Building

24 Hour Support and Info Line: 403-237-5888

Toll-Free Support and Info Line: 1-877-237-5888

If you have been sexually abused [ah-bu-sed] they can help you.  
You can get free counseling here if you are older than 11  
and have been abused.

You can get counseling if you are a support person  
for some-one who has been abused.

**Check out these web-sites for more info on every-thing we talked about in this brochure:**

**Canadian Federation for Sexual Health**

[www.cfsh.ca](http://www.cfsh.ca)

**Sexuality and U.ca**

[www.sexualityandu.ca](http://www.sexualityandu.ca)

**Options for Sexual Health**

[www.optionsforsexualhealth.org](http://www.optionsforsexualhealth.org)

**Sex, etc.**

[www.sexetc.org](http://www.sexetc.org)

**The Planned Parenthood Federation of America**

[www.teenwire.com](http://www.teenwire.com)

**The Emergency Contraception Website**

[www.not-2-late.com](http://www.not-2-late.com)

**Like it is.org**

[www.likeitis.org](http://www.likeitis.org)

**Sex Info Beta**

[www.soc.ucsb.edu/sexinfo](http://www.soc.ucsb.edu/sexinfo)

These web-sites have lots of different kinds of info on sexual health.

# Thank You!

We wanted to thank our plain language translators [trans-lay-tors] for their help to make this brochure.

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Funded in part by

**Calgary Region Community Board**  
Persons with Developmental Disabilities

**Strengthening the Community**