

## Devices used to avoid contact with blood, vaginal fluid, and semen during sexual activity:

**Condoms** cover the penis during sexual activity. They are most frequently made of latex, but can also be made out of polyurethane. Polyurethane is thought to be a safe material for use in condoms, since it is nonporous and viruses cannot pass through it. However, there is less research on its effectiveness than there is on latex.

**Female condoms** are inserted into the vagina prior to intercourse. They may also be used for anal sex, although they are less effective.

A **dental dam** is a sheet of latex used for protection when engaging in oral sex. It is typically used as a barrier between the mouth and the vagina during cunnilingus or between the mouth and the anus during anilingus. Latex condoms can also be cut to form an improvised dental dam.

**Medical gloves** made out of latex, vinyl, nitrile, or polyurethane may be used as an ersatz dental dam during oral sex or to protect the hands during mutual masturbation. Hands may have invisible cuts on them that may admit pathogens that are found in the semen or the vaginal fluids of STD infectees. Although the risk of infection in this manner is thought to be low, gloves can be used as an extra precaution.

Another way to avoid contact with blood and semen is “outercourse” (non-penetrative sex) or forms of penetration that do not involve a penis, such as the use of dildos (when cleaned or covered with condoms).

## Saying No

Being in a sexual relationship can be very enjoyable and rewarding when that relationship is negotiated and agreed to by both people. Sometimes people think they can demand that someone be sexual with them or force them to have sex against their will.

Remember no-one has the right to force you into sexual contact with them, you have the right to say "No". Don't let yourself be intimidated into having sex with anyone.

**You have the right to make your own choices and to have people respect them**



# Thinking About Sex



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## Deciding when to be sexual with someone else

Being sexual is a very personal way of communicating with someone else. It is a physical way of expressing love and affection. Being sexual is a personal choice and it is not uncommon to take time to make that decision.

### Remember :

Love doesn't equal sex.

Relationships can be happy without being sexual.

Talking about sex with the person you are sexually attracted to, whether they are a friend, acquaintance or even your partner, may help you both work out if you want to begin a sexual relationship with them. Try to talk about your expectations, and what you expect from them. If it is relevant don't forget to talk about contraception. Do not assume that your partner knows as much about sex as you do. Communication is key.

### If you decide to have sex remember:

- Sex must be consensual, that means both of you want to engage in sex
- Do it safely

## Suggestions for Safe Sex

It is always a good idea to engage in 'safe sex'. This involves making sure you do not risk an unexpected pregnancy or catching a sexually transmitted infection (STIs/STDs - like HIV/AIDS, Herpes, Chlamydia, gonorrhoea).

It is a good idea to find out about safe sex and how different STI's are passed on. Using condoms with water-based lubricants and dental dams is one way to protect yourself from some STIs. You may like to be informed about how to prevent unwanted pregnancy or STI's before you take any risks. You can do this by:

- Talking with health workers at your local community health centre
- Visit your doctor or someone from Family Planning
- Doing your own research on the internet.

Discuss STIs/STDs before you have sex with someone. Even though a sexual partner doesn't have symptoms of an STI/STD, he or she may still be infected.

## Questions to ask someone before having sex include:

- How many people have you had sex with?
- Have you had sex without a condom?
- Have you ever had anal sex?
- Have you ever had unprotected oral sex?
- Do you have many sex partners?
- Do you inject illegal drugs or have you had sex with someone who injects drugs?
- Have you ever had an STI/STD, including hepatitis B or hepatitis C? Was it treated and cured?

