

Sexuality and Personality

Sexuality is not just about sexual intercourse. A person's sexuality is a major part of who he or she is. Sexuality includes our appearance, attitudes, thoughts, feelings, and actions. The way we express ourselves, the amount of attention and affection we give and need, and much more, are parts of our sexuality too.

What's At Stake?

The sex drive is one of our main instincts, and healthy sexuality can be a source of great satisfaction. So when people take their sexual health for granted, they risk a lot. They put their physical health in danger, and they put their emotional health at risk, too.

People often think of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), like AIDS or herpes, and of unwanted pregnancies when they think of irresponsible sex choices. What gets overlooked is the deep damage to well-being, self-worth, and hope when someone makes poor choices about sex. People have different ideas about the importance and meaning of sex, and two peoples' ideas may not fit together well.



Before you choose to be sexually active, think about all of the facts and options out there. STDs and unwanted pregnancies are real risks. Holding off from sex, either completely — abstinence — or mostly — safer sex practices — might be the choice for you. If you decide to become, or continue to be, sexually active, understand all of the steps for keeping yourself as safe as possible.

Sexuality Resources

www.intheknowzone.com/stds/resources

The Physical Risks of Sex

Over the centuries, sexually transmitted diseases have injured, disabled, or killed millions of people. Today, diseases spread more quickly than ever before, making the risks higher.

There are many different STDs. Some are curable; others are not. The only way to know if someone has an STD is through medical testing.



For More Information

Go to www.intheknowzone.com for an extension of this pamphlet.

Increase your knowledge using the information, statistics, images, and links.

Test your understanding with a quick quiz.



National STD Hotline:
(800) 227-8922

**Don't stay in
the dark.
Get In the Know!**

Sense and Sexuality

healthy choices



in the know

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Bad Timing

Many people want the joy of having children. But if a baby comes from a casual relationship, or at the wrong time, it can lead to years of hardship for the parents and the baby. Without effective birth control 60% of sexually active women will get pregnant within six months, and 80% will get pregnant within one year.



The Emotional Risks of Sex

In a loving relationship, sex can bring couples closer together. If a relationship is casual or weak, sex can make both people feel lonely, used, and cheap.

In movies and TV shows, sex is often treated casually. The characters jump from bed to bed, and nothing bad ever happens to them. They don't even get hurt feelings! In case you haven't noticed, real life is not like the movies and TV.

Through sexual contact you open your body to attack by diseases and open your spirit to attack by bad feelings. Choosing not to have sex can help us stay healthy in body and mind.

hardship

Common STDs

Chlamydia

The most common STD, it usually has no symptoms until late in the disease. It can cause infertility and other complications.

Gonorrhea ("The clap")

Gonorrhea may also have no symptoms until late in the disease. It can also cause infertility and other complications.

Genital Herpes

Genital herpes affects millions. It has no cure. Herpes can flare up many times over a person's lifetime and can be passed to others for life.

Genital Warts (HPV)

People with genital warts may have no symptoms, but can spread the disease to others. This disease is closely linked to cervical cancer in women. There is a vaccine that can protect you from getting HPV.

common STDs

Hepatitis A, B, and C

Hepatitis A, B, and C cause an inflammation (irritation) of the liver. Hepatitis B and C can become lifelong infections and can kill. Hepatitis is not curable, but vaccine shots are available for A and B.

Syphilis ("Bad blood")

A person could have syphilis without knowing it. Untreated, syphilis can cause major organ damage and death.

Trichomoniasis ("Trick")

Trichomoniasis can lead to other infections in women and can put them at higher risk of other STDs.

HIV & AIDS

HIV causes AIDS. AIDS makes people get sick and die from diseases that are not harmful to people without AIDS. HIV/AIDS is not curable, but special drugs can slow its progress.

A Sure Thing

Abstaining from sex (not having sex) until you are in a committed, lifetime relationship is the safest choice.

"Saving it" for Mr. or Ms. Right shows your respect for yourself.

It's never too late to decide to be a virgin! You can decide not to have sex again until that special relationship comes along, regardless of your past.

If Mr. or Ms. Right has been sexually active in the past, he or she needs to be tested for STDs before you are intimate together.

Choosing Abstinence

www.intheknowzone.com/stds/abstinence

We All Have Needs

Sexual desire is a real and powerful feeling. Everyone has a need to be loved and to feel affection. But affection and sex are not one and the same.

Expressing and receiving love and affection happens through words and kind actions. Hugging, holding hands, and kissing can fill that human need for touch. Cuddling or sharing massages can also be enjoyable and safe. Sometimes, though, these options can stir up physical feelings that may be hard to control.

Sex Practices and STDs

www.intheknowzone.com/stds/facts



Just Can't Wait

If you decide to be sexually active, protect yourself. Unless you and your partner get tested for STDs at least once a year, you do not know if you both are clear of disease.

The only way to limit risk of STDs in sexually active people is using protective barriers. This means using a latex condom or other latex barrier between two individuals' mouths, genitals, and anuses. Using a spermicide in addition to a condom may increase the protection.

- Birth control pills and other forms of birth control do not protect against STDs.
- Only abstinence (not having sex) provides 100% protection against STDs.
- Anyone who is sexually active should be tested for STDs at least once a year.

STD Prevention and Testing

www.intheknowzone.com/stds/prevention



love X sex