



Youth Health & Relationships Guidebook

Family
Planning
Tasmania.

What is sex?

'Sex' means different things to different people depending on their experiences, culture, values and beliefs.

Many people think of sex as putting a penis into a vagina (also called heterosexual intercourse). However, the term 'sex' can also include all sorts of things like oral or anal sex, penetration with fingers or other objects, or simply physical intimacy like kissing and touching.

Because people's ideas on sex can differ, it is really important to be able to talk about it with your partner using really clear language that you both understand.

Sex is the word used to describe the act of intimacy between people, but it is also used to describe the physical body. For example, people will either have male sex parts such as a penis, female sex parts such as a uterus or vagina, or sometimes both (intersex). Sex is different to both sexuality and gender.

Sexuality and Gender

Sexuality

Sexuality is used to describe attraction, for example someone might be:

- attracted to the same sex (homosexual/gay/lesbian),
- attracted to the opposite sex (heterosexual/straight),
- attracted to people of both male and female sexes (bisexual),
- attracted to people of any sex or gender (pansexual), or
- not attracted to anyone at all (asexual).



Gender

Gender describes how people identify. For example, cisgendered describes a person who identifies as the same gender as the body they were born with (born with male sex parts identifying as male, born with female sex parts identifying as female).

A transgendered/trans person is someone who identifies as a gender different to the sex parts they were born with (e.g. born with male sex parts, identifies as female).

Non-binary is a term used to describe people who do not identify specifically as one gender or another.

Attraction

We are all attracted to different people. Some people are attracted to the opposite sex or gender, but it is also normal and natural for people to be attracted to the same sex, to both sexes, or to people of all genders. Some people are what is known as 'asexual' which means they aren't actually sexually attracted to anyone.

Being curious or attracted to other sexes and genders is natural and doesn't necessarily mean you are gay, bi, or pansexual - but it's ok if you are. Not being interested in sex right now also doesn't mean you are asexual - although you might find that you are, and that is ok too.

Masturbation

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

Sex with others - rights and responsibilities

Everyone has the right to feel safe in their sexual relationships and experiences. Everyone has the responsibility to treat others with dignity, and respect their choices.

The law

In Tasmania if you are under 17 no-one is legally allowed to have sex with you, although you might have a defence if you are both around the same age and the sex is consensual (you both agree).

It is against the law to discriminate against people because of their sex, gender, or sexual preference. 'Hate speech' laws in Tasmania say that any conduct which offends, humiliates, intimidates, insults or ridicules another person because of sexual orientation and gender identity is also illegal.


Find out more about sex and the law at

www.legalaid.tas.gov.au/factsheets/age-of-consent-for-sex/

Choice and consent

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 your partner - they won't know unless you say something!

Having sex is a personal decision. It's important not to judge other people's choices or shame them for their decisions. Everyone has a right to decide what they do with their own bodies, including you.



To consent is to agree to something. Consent to sex is essential both legally and ethically. To consent to sex, a person need to freely agree to the sexual activity, and be within the legal age of consent.

It is a crime to force someone to have sex, trick them into having sex, or have sex with them if they are drunk, drugged, unconscious or asleep.

The best thing to do is assume that the answer is 'No' until you know for sure the answer is 'Yes'.

People won't always say 'No' if they don't want to do something. Sometimes they'll let you know in other ways, like moving their bodies away from yours, pushing you away, or 'freezing' their body. Keep checking in with your partner to make sure they are OK to keep going.

Remember, people can withdraw consent at any time, even during a sexual activity they previously agreed to. As soon as they don't want to do it anymore, you must stop - even if you are having a really good time.

Pleasure and orgasms

Sex is meant to be pleasurable for all parties. Pleasurable sex happens when all parties feel safe, are pain free, and are enjoying themselves.

Taking time to make your partner feel good, not rushing touch or penetration, and using a water-based lubricant (lube) can really help.

All genders and sexes can experience orgasm. Many people find it hard to reach orgasm at all, but sex can still be fun and feel good even without an orgasm. An orgasm is a strong release of feelings in your body at the peak of a sexual experience - it often feels like an explosion of pleasure.

If you have a penis and testes, an orgasm usually results in 'ejaculation'. 'Ejaculation' is the sudden release of a fluid called 'ejaculate' from the urethra.

If you don't have a penis and testes, you might still ejaculate when you orgasm. This is often called 'squirting' and although it is perfectly normal, it is rare. It is very common to orgasm without ejaculating, especially in people without a penis and testes.

It is normal to not achieve orgasm every time you have sex. It is also normal to find it difficult to get and hold onto an erection (called erectile dysfunction), or even to orgasm really fast (premature ejaculation).

If you think you are having problems, talk them through with your partner and make an appointment with one of our friendly doctors.

Sexual safety


Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Infections (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 and
- close sexual contact, like skin to skin touching

If you do notice any of the following symptoms, you may have an STI and it's best to visit a Family Planning Clinic to get tested:

- unusual fluids coming from your penis or vagina, including mucus and blood
- itchy genitals (penis, testicles, vagina, vulva, anus or surrounding areas)
- pain during intercourse or when peeing
- rash, sores, small lumps on/around the genitals



Most STIs have no early symptoms and some STIs never have symptoms, so it's easy to have one and not know it.

Many STIs are easily treated but can have serious consequences if left untreated, from chronic pain to not being able to have children. Getting tested at a Family Planning clinic is quick and painless, so if you have been sexually active and/or have symptoms, you should get it checked out.

If you choose to have sex, choose to use barrier protection. Condoms and dams reduce the risk of catching something or passing something on, especially when they are used with a water-based lube. Condoms and dams stop sharing of semen, blood and vaginal fluids. They only prevent skin to skin contact on the area they cover, so there's a chance you could still get an STI. That's why it's important to get tested regularly.

Condoms also reduce the risk of unplanned pregnancy.

Prevention of pregnancy

Unplanned pregnancy is a risk any time people of the opposite sex have vaginal intercourse - including the first time.

Contraception is a word that describes something that is used to prevent pregnancy, and is sometimes called 'protection'.

Types of contraception include:

- devices like condoms and diaphragms, tablets like the contraceptive pill
- permanent surgical options like vasectomies
- Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) like an injection, or a device that gets inserted into your uterus

The only contraceptive that also reduces the risk of an STI is condoms. If you choose to use condoms, use a lubrication (lube) too. Both partners should know how to put a condom on safely. If you don't know how, ask us how.

There is no 100% safe time to have sex without protection, and pulling the penis out before ejaculation does not protect against pregnancy or STIs. Neither does 'douching' or washing the vagina out after sex - in fact that can be really unhealthy and cause infections!


There are many different types of contraception, all with different benefits and risks. It is best to chat to one of the doctors at Family Planning to find out what might be the best one for you and your partner. Remember - both partners are affected by an unplanned pregnancy, so both of you should do what you can to prevent it.

Sometimes you might forget to take your pill, or a condom might break (although that is very rare). For times like that, emergency contraception is available at chemists and pharmacies. You don't need a script, but you might need to answer a few easy questions.

Some people call the emergency contraceptive pill 'the Morning After Pill'. It's important to know that even though it works best if you take it within 24 hours of having sex, it can still be used up to five days later. It shouldn't be used as regular contraception - only as a backup plan.

Pregnancy choices

Don't want a baby? The best thing to do is to prevent pregnancy by using contraception. If you do become pregnant, you may find that you start missing your period, or it is noticeably lighter than normal. Other signs of pregnancy include feeling sick, sore breasts, or feeling very tired. You might notice all of those things, or none of them. They can also come and go throughout pregnancy.



You can buy pregnancy tests from a chemist, or a doctor can do one for you. They are usually very accurate, but sometimes give an incorrect result, especially if you take one earlier than a week after your missed period is due. If you think you might be pregnant, the first thing to do is to talk to a Family Planning Doctor.

Often, finding out you have an unplanned pregnancy can be confusing and overwhelming. Family Planning is here to help you understand all of the options you have available, including parenting, adoption, or ending the pregnancy (also known as termination or abortion). Our doctors care about you, and they will work with you to make sure you know everything you need to know to make the best decision for you.

For more information you can read our Pregnancy Choices Factsheet, available at www.fpt.org.au

If you do want to try to get pregnant, you should talk to a Family Planning Doctor. They can talk to you about pregnancy, birth, raising children, and choices you can make to help you and your baby be as healthy as possible.

Sexual Health

Vaginas

The vagina is the tube or canal leading from the outside of a female to the cervix. The cervix sits at the base of the uterus.

The area around the vagina on the outside of a female body is not called the vagina - although people often get that wrong! The external bits are called the vulva, and include lots of different genital parts, including the labia and clitoris. It's important to know that everyone's genitals look different, and that's OK!

The vulva will grow public hair during puberty. Some people remove their public hair, but it is natural and healthy, and what you do with your own body hair is totally your choice.

Penises

People often get stressed about the size, shape, or appearance of their penis. The truth is, they are all very different and that's OK. Most penises end up about the same size when they are erect. Even if you have a small or large penis when not erect, it won't usually affect your ability to have pleasurable sex or make a baby when you are ready.

If you have a penis or testes, you will notice them start to change and grow during puberty. You will also notice that you will start to grow pubic hair. Some people remove their public hair, but it is a very natural part of the body and what you do with your own body is up to you.

Vaginal and Vulval Health

People with vulvas and vaginas may notice many changes during puberty. It is not unusual for fluids to come from the vagina. This can happen for many reasons, and helps to keep the vagina clean and healthy. The texture of the fluid can change depending on the time of the month or whether the person is sexually aroused or not. Changes to this fluid, or 'discharge' can also indicate that something is wrong. If the discharge is unusually thick and lumpy, changes colour, or has an unusually strong smell, you should make an appointment at Family Planning to get it checked out. It could be a sign of illness or an STI.

You should also make an appointment with a doctor or Family Planning if the vulva or vagina are sore, itchy, or have a rash or lumps.



Penis and Testical Health

It's a good idea to check your testes each month for lumps or changes in size or shape. Also note if they're aching or feeling heavy. If you feel any changes don't panic—see a doctor for a check up. Most lumps are not cancers, but it's best to be sure.

If you notice any unusual rashes, itching, or fluid coming out of your penis, make an appointment to see one of our doctors - you could have an illness or an STI.

Periods

During puberty the ovaries start to release an egg every month (ovulation). Each egg (ovum) travels down the fallopian tubes to the uterus. The lining of the uterus thickens with blood and fluid to prepare for a possible pregnancy. If the egg is not fertilised by a sperm, this bloody lining breaks down and passes out of the body through the vagina. This bleeding is called 'a period' or 'menstruation' and usually lasts for 3-7 days.

When a person first gets their period, they may not happen regularly. Usually, periods will regulate over time and the person will have their period about once a month, although this can vary. This time between one period and the next is called the menstrual cycle.

If you are bleeding a lot (needing to change your pad or tampon every hour or so) or are in a lot of pain, you should make an appointment with one of our doctors.

For more information about periods, check out our Periods booklet, available at www.fpt.org.au

Cervical Screening

A cervix is part of the female body, located at the top of the vaginal canal. To reduce the risk of cervical cancer, people with a cervix in Australia who have ever had sex with a man or a woman should have a Cervical Screening Test (CST) every five years once they turn 25 years old. The test takes a sample of cells from the cervix and tests for HPV, which causes most cervical cancers.

Older people may refer to the CST as a 'Pap Smear'. A 'Pap smear' is an older version of cervical testing. It has recently been replaced by the CST which is more accurate and can detect potential problems earlier.

Breasts

Breasts come in all shapes and sizes. They can even change size and shape at different times, like if you have a period coming, if you are pregnant, or if you lose or gain weight. It's also common for them to be slightly different in size.

Breast Health

To look after your health, you should get to know your breasts, and check them for anything that is unusual for you, like:

- lumps or a feeling of the breast getting 'thicker' in places
- sudden changes in breast size or shape
- dimples or a rash on the skin
- ongoing or unusual pain
- fluid coming from the nipple (if you aren't breastfeeding)

If you do notice anything strange, don't panic. Book an appointment with Family planning or a GP for a breast check as soon as possible.



Pain

Pain during sex can sometimes be fixed by simply using more lube, or taking it more slowly. But pain can also be a sign of health problems, so it's important to get it checked out. If you are experiencing pain, during sex or at other times, you should see a doctor.

Vaccinations

Gardasil is a vaccination against four types of Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). HPV can cause genital warts and/or different types of cancer, so getting a vaccination is a great idea. Gardasil is given by injection, usually into your arm. Both males and females can have the vaccine.

Contacting us, or making an appointment

To discuss anything to do with your sexual and reproductive health, make an appointment with one of our friendly doctors:

Glenorchy

421 Main Road, Glenorchy TAS 7010

Phone: (03) 6273 9117

Opening Hours: Monday – Friday 9:00 – 5:00. Closed during lunch.

Launceston

269 Wellington Street, Launceston, 7250

Phone: (03) 6343 4566

Opening Hours: Monday – Friday 9:00 – 5:00. Closed during lunch.

Burnie

199 Mount St, Upper Burnie, 7320

Phone: (03) 6431 7692

Opening Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 9:00 – 5:00. Closed during lunch.

When you book an appointment

When you call to make an appointment, our receptionist will ask you a few questions to make sure we book the right appointment for you. Please make sure you have the privacy you need to answer these questions when you call.

Our reception staff will be able to tell you whether your appointment is with a doctor or a nurse and whether there will be any fees.

Confirming your appointment

You will receive an SMS two days before your appointment asking you to confirm you're able to attend. Please reply Yes to this SMS to avoid your appointment being cancelled.

Cancellations

Our appointments are in high demand. Should you no longer need yours or if you are unable to attend due to illness or another reason, please phone us as soon as possible to let us know.



When you come for your appointment

Please bring your Medicare, Healthcare or other Concession Card (if you have any of these).

If you are a new patient, please arrive 10 minutes early to complete our new patient forms.

Support person

To help us minimise the risk of infection during COVID-19, please only bring a support person such as a friend, partner or relative if absolutely necessary. Your support person may be asked to wait outside if they aren't coming in to the consultation with you.

We often need to see clients on their own during a consultation, and your support person may be asked to leave the consult room for a short period of time.

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