

About Safe Sex

What Is Safe Sex?

Safe Sex means conducting your sex life in a way that will minimize the possibility of exposure to a life-threatening, sexually transmitted disease such as AIDS. Safe Sex means enjoying sex fully without putting your life at risk.

Who Should Practice Safe Sex and Why?

Everyone. Always. Many college students think that the possibility of exposure to AIDS is too small to be concerned about. A recent study of blood tests conducted at college health services indicated that about one in fifty college students may carry the HIV AIDS virus. There is no cure for AIDS, so everyone must take reasonable precautions to avoid exposure.

How Does Safe Sex Work?

Most sexually transmitted diseases (including AIDS and hepatitis-B) are spread by bacteria and viruses in body fluids such as semen, blood, urine and feces. Safe sex techniques work by minimizing direct contact with the body fluids of your partner.

What Is Safe?

- Intercourse (vaginal or anal) while using a condom and lubricants is safe. The condom must be put on before there is any pre-ejaculatory fluid. It is not enough to put on the condom just in time to prevent contact with semen.
- Kissing is probably safe if neither person has cuts or sores. There may be some slight risk from saliva.
- Oral sex is probably safe as long as ejaculation does not take place in the mouth.
- Safety is relative. The above sex practices are safe in the sense that they involve relatively low risk of exposure to life-threatening disease

What Is Dangerous?

- Intercourse (vaginal or anal) without a condom is not safe.
- Oral sex which involves ejaculation without a condom is not safe.

- Any practice which involves contact with cuts, sores or raw areas is not safe. Remember, even small or microscopic cuts can be dangerous.
- Any practice which involves contact between any body fluids of the partners is not safe.
- Sex while high on alcohol or other drugs is not safe because it affects judgment and lowers inhibitions about engaging in dangerous practices.
- Sharing a needle is probably the single most dangerous thing that anyone can do.

Don't be afraid to talk about safe sex with your partner. Your partner is probably just as concerned about risks as you. Talking about safe sex is an expression of caring for your partner and yourself.

Be safe. Stay alive.

If you have questions about safe sex or about any sex practice not discussed here, call the confidential Public Health Service hotline (1-800-342-2437), talk with a personal counselor in 0203 James Hall, or visit the Health Clinic in 114 Roosevelt Hall.

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