

Washing

To avoid passing sexual fluids - if you touch your partner's genitals with your hands, wash your hands with soap and water before touching your own genitals, mouth, or eyes. Also, if you're sharing sex toys, make sure to wash the toys with soap and water before they touch another person's body.



Medicines

Certain medicines can make sex safer.

If you have HIV, taking HIV medications, also known as antiretroviral treatment, or ART, as prescribed, can decrease the amount of HIV in your body so much that it is undetectable. When this happens the amount of HIV in your body is so low that you cannot give the virus to others.

If you don't have HIV, taking PrEP – a daily medication - can significantly reduce your risk of getting HIV.

Talking to your partner about safer sex

Some things to consider when preparing to talk to your partner about safer sex:

- **Safety first:** If you feel like there is any chance of violence, reconsider the conversation. If you need support, reach out to the StrongHearts Native Helpline at 1-844-762-8483. It's 24/7, safe, confidential, and anonymous.
- **The why:** Take some time to figure out why having safer sex is important to you.
- **Practice:** Consider role-playing the interaction with a friend or someone you trust.
- **Speak your truth:** Be honest about your needs.
- **Listen:** Hear your partner out. They may need time to process the conversation and your needs.
- **Be prepared to go it alone:** If your partner is not receptive, you may need to reassess the situation. Be prepared to take steps for your own mental, physical, and emotional health. If you need to, consider options like PrEP that don't require your partner to buy in.

Source: Parenthood, P. (n.d.). Safer sex ("safe sex"): Reduce your risk of getting stds. Planned Parenthood. Retrieved March 8, 2023, from <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/stds-hiv-safer-sex/safer-sex>

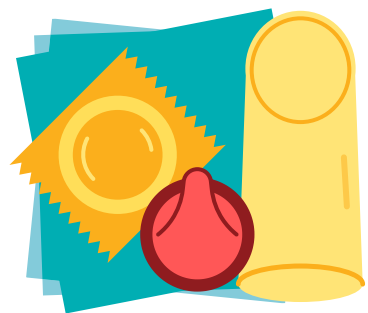
SAFER SEX

You can take steps to protect yourself and others



What is safer sex?

Safer sex is all about protecting yourself and your partners from STIs. It can even make sex better by taking away stress or worry.



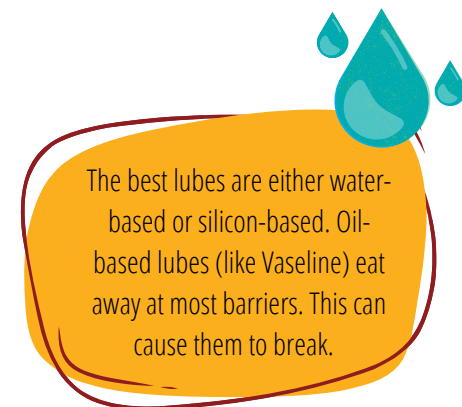
Using barriers

There are many ways to make oral, anal, and vaginal sex safer. One is by using a barrier, like condoms, dental dams, or latex or nitrile gloves when you have sex or do anything that can pass sexual fluids, like sharing sex toys.



Using lube

Lube is also a good way to make sex safer. Lube can prevent condoms and other barriers from breaking. It can also help your body's tissues stay smooth and resist tearing.



Regular STD Testing

Getting tested for STIs regularly is another part of safer sex, even if you use barriers and feel fine. Most people who get STIs don't know, and they can easily pass the infection to their partners. Testing is the only way to know for sure if you have an STI.



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