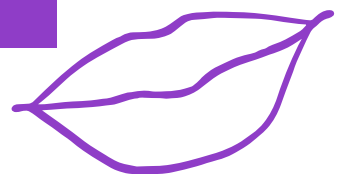




FACTSHEET

STAYING SAFE: VAGINAL, ORAL, AND ANAL SEX

Different types of sexual activities carry different risks, including sexually transmissible infections (STIs), HIV and unplanned pregnancy (for sex that can result in pregnancy). It's important to provide young people with accurate information to help them make informed decisions around how they can stay safe.



STAYING SAFE: VAGINAL, ORAL, AND ANAL SEX



VAGINAL SEX

What are the risks and how can young people stay safe?

Vaginal sex has a risk of STIs and unplanned pregnancy (for sex that can result in pregnancy)

Vaginal sex can lead to both STI transmission and unplanned pregnancies (for sex that can result in pregnancy).

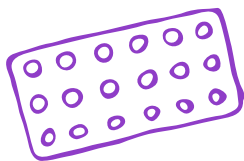
Using condoms and contraception reduces risk of STIs and unplanned pregnancy.

Only condoms protect against both STIs and unplanned pregnancy

Contraception protects against pregnancy, but only condoms protect against both STIs and unplanned pregnancy.

Condoms are 98% effective when used correctly, so make sure that young people you're working with understand [how to use them correctly](#).

Anyone who can get pregnant may want to consider contraception



There are many types of contraception available (sometimes referred to as birth control) including the barrier methods, hormonal and non-hormonal methods.

Anyone who is sexually active and can get pregnant may want to consider if they need contraception – it's a personal choice that provides people with autonomy over their body and their future. Health professionals, including GPs, are the best people to chat through contraception options with.

[Read more about contraception options.](#)

Emergency contraception can be accessed without a prescription

Emergency contraception, commonly referred to as the 'morning-after pill' or 'Plan B,' can be used after unprotected sex to lower the risk of pregnancy.

Emergency contraception can be accessed at pharmacies (\$15-\$50) without a prescription, and is most effective when taken 24 hours after unprotected sex might. Emergency contraception might still have some effect up to 5 days.

Emergency contraception does not protect against STIs. Anyone who has had condomless sex should also get tested for STIs and make STI testing part of their regular health routine.

Use condoms on sex toys (a new one each time)

Sharing sex toys poses a risk of STIs. Use a new condom each time to prevent transmission.

Getting tested regularly is important

Encourage young people to get tested regularly for STIs. It is recommended every 3-12 months, if they show any symptoms, if they change sexual partners, or if they have condomless sex. Early detection aids in treatment and helps prevent transmission of STIs.

Speaking to your partner about safer sex is important

Encourage discussions about contraception and boundaries with partners before engaging in sex. Consent is always needed for any type of sex.

STAYING SAFE: VAGINAL, ORAL, AND ANAL SEX



ORAL SEX

DEFINITION: Oral sex involves using the mouth to stimulate a partner's genitals or anus.

What are the risks and how can young people stay safe?

STIs can be transmitted via oral sex

Oral sex can transmit STIs including herpes, chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis. It's a common myth that they can't be.

Use a condom or dental dam for oral sex

Using condoms during oral sex (on a penis) or a dental dam (on a vagina or anus) reduces the risk of STI transmission.

What is a dental dam? They're thin, flexible latex sheets that create a barrier—and if young people can't find one, they can make their own by [cutting a condom into a square](#).

Getting tested regularly is important

Encourage young people to get regular STI checks. This involves a urine sample and/or self-collected swab and a blood test.

Regular STI testing (every 3-12 months depending on STI risk) is recommended, including if young people have any symptoms, and if they change sexual partners.

Speaking to your partner about safer oral sex is important



Try providing young people with conversation starters to make these discussions easier. For instance, they might say, "I know it's not as common, but I feel more comfortable using protection during oral sex," or "Let's get tested together so we can make sure we're healthy."

Read more ideas about [staying safe during oral sex](#).

STAYING SAFE: VAGINAL, ORAL, AND ANAL SEX



DEFINITION: Anal sex involves the insertion of the penis or object into a partner's anus. Anal sex can also include the use of sex toys.

ANAL SEX

What are the risks and how can young people stay safe?

Anal sex carries a risk of STIs, including HIV

Unprotected anal sex carries a risk of STIs, including HIV, chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, herpes and others.

Condom use and PrEP are the best ways to protect from STIs and HIV

Condoms are a barrier protection that can help prevent the transmission of HIV and other STIs.

PrEP is medication that significantly reduces the risk of HIV when taken correctly. It does not protect against other STIs though so it is important to use condoms too.

Condoms are 98% effective when used correctly, so make sure that the young people you're working with understand [how to use them correctly](#).

What is HIV PEP?

PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) is a medication used to prevent HIV after someone may have been exposed. If a person thinks they been exposed to HIV, it's important to start PEP as soon as possible, preferably within 24 hours but no later than 72 hours after exposure and to take the full course.

Call the PEP hotline on 1800 737 669 (1800 PEP NOW) for advice and information on PEP.

Find out more about [talking to young people about HIV](#).

Getting tested regularly is important

Encourage young people to get regular STI checks. This involves a urine sample and/or self-collected swab and a blood test.

Regular STI testing, every 3 months, is recommended in all men who have had any type of sex with another man in the previous 3 months.

Early detection aids in treatment and helps prevent transmission of STIs.

REMEMBER!



When discussing any type of sex, make sure that young people understand that:

- consent must be clear, enthusiastic, and ongoing
- consent can be revoked at any time
- open communication about comfort levels and desires is crucial for healthy sexual relationships.

STAYING SAFE: VAGINAL, ORAL, AND ANAL SEX



STAY UP TO DATE



Clinical information evolves. Many reliable sources, like the [Play Safe](#) and [Play Safe Pro](#) websites, offer current guidance for youth workers and young people. Subscribe to the [Play Safe Pro newsletter](#) to stay up to date with our free resources, factsheets, tools, and interactive activities.

If you can't answer a question, or need more support, advise the young people you work with to contact [Nurse Nettie](#) or the [NSW Sexual Health Infolink](#).