A close-up photograph of a man's torso and arm, showing his skin texture and muscle definition. A solid blue horizontal band is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text "Sexual health for men".

Sexual health **for men**



p8 What's safer sex?

p10 STIs – check them out



p11 Has HIV gone away?

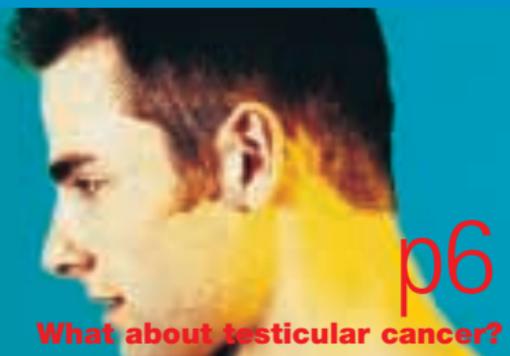
Stay healthy!



p22 More advice

In this booklet:

Your body	4
What about testicular cancer?	6
Prostate problems	7
What's safer sex?	8
Sexually transmitted infections – check them out	10
Has HIV gone away?	11
Where can I get help?	12
Are you protected?	13
Sexual problems	16
Helpful hints	18
Planning a baby?	20
What if I have sex with other men?	21
More advice	22
Contact numbers	23



We enjoy sex and feel good about our relationships most of the time, but at some point in our life we may find ourselves facing difficulties or problems about our sexual health. Most men do.

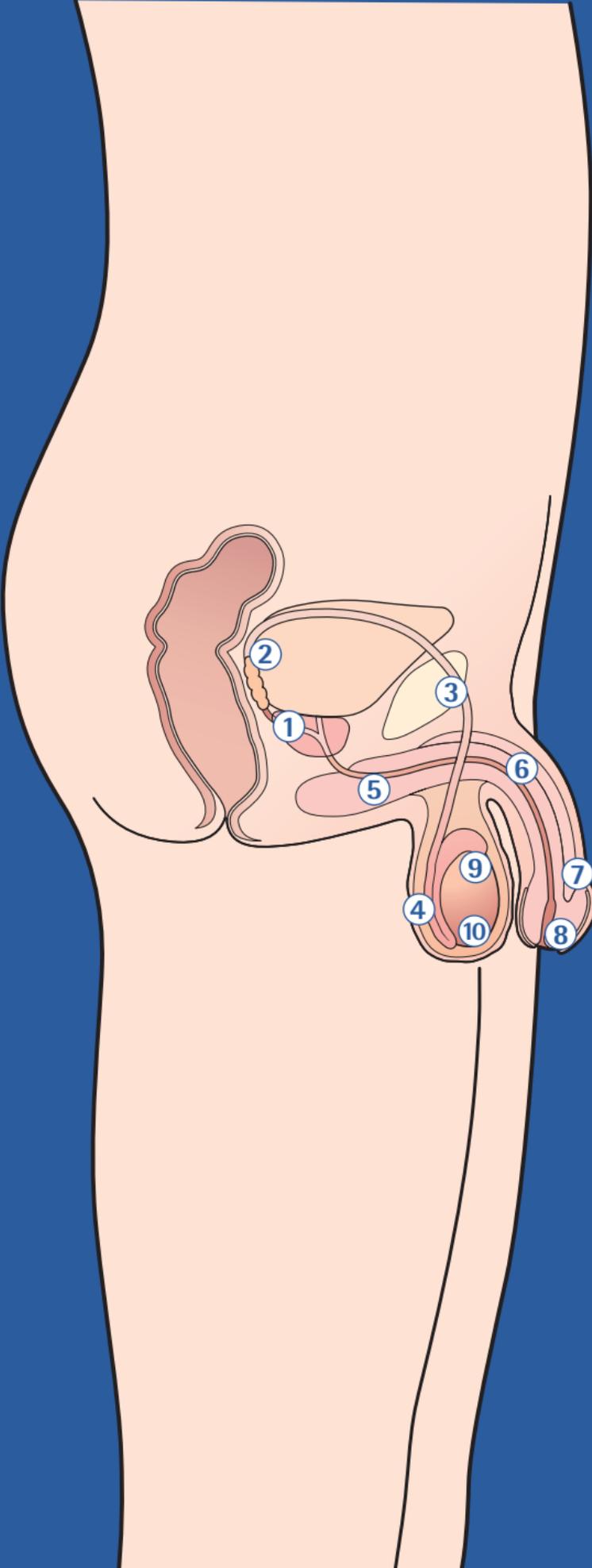
Staying sexually healthy is about dealing with sexual problems as they happen and avoiding problems in the first place.

Please do not ignore any symptoms you may have and hope they will go away. You and your partner may be at risk if you avoid health checks.

This leaflet is full of useful tips on sexual health checks, warning signs to look out for, and where to get more information and advice.

Stay healthy!

Your **body**



Your **body**

- 1 Your **prostate gland** produces a fluid which is part of your semen (the liquid which appears when you ejaculate or 'come').
- 2 Your **seminal vesicles** are at the back of your prostate gland; they produce the thick milky fluid of your semen.
- 3 Your **vas deferens** is the tube that carries sperm from your testicles to your urethra.
- 4 Your **scrotum** is the sac that holds your testicles.
- 5 Your **urethra** is the tube that carries urine from your bladder, and semen (including sperm) through your penis.
- 6 Your **penis** is made up of spongy tissue that fills with blood when you have an erection.
- 7 Your **foreskin** covers your glans and can be pulled back for cleaning; this is removed if you are circumcised.
- 8 Your **glans** is the helmet-shaped head of your penis.
- 9 Your **epididymis** is the area where sperm are stored in your testicles.
- 10 Your **testicles** produce sperm and your sex hormone testosterone.

It's important to wash thoroughly around your genitals, your anus and pubic hair daily. Clean the area behind the foreskin, if you haven't been circumcised. This helps to prevent infection. Any itching or a smell under the foreskin could be a sign of infection.

What about **testicular cancer**?



Testicular cancer is the most common cancer for men under 35, though it is still rare. If it is found early, you can be treated successfully by surgery, radiation or chemotherapy.

Please carry out the following examination regularly, so that you can spot any slight changes. It's best to do this after a bath or shower, when the scrotum is soft.

- Hold your scrotum in the palm of your hand, and look for changes in the heaviness, shape or size of your testicles. It's normal for one testicle to hang lower than the other.
- Examine each of your testicles, using your hands to roll them between your thumbs and fingers. They should feel smooth.
- Look for any lumps, swellings or hard areas. One lump should be there – the epididymis. It is at the top and back of each of your testicles. You should still look for other lumps.
- Compare each of your testicles with the other. If you find something unusual, you are not likely to find it in both of your testicles, so check if there are any differences between the two.
- Other signs you can watch for are, a dull ache in your abdomen or groin, heaviness in your scrotum or a pain in your testicle.

Cancer isn't the only cause of lumps and bumps, they could be a sign of cysts. If you notice anything, please get it checked out straight away. You won't be wasting anybody's time.

Prostate problems



BPH

If you are young, prostate problems are rare. However, if you are over 50, the problem becomes more common.

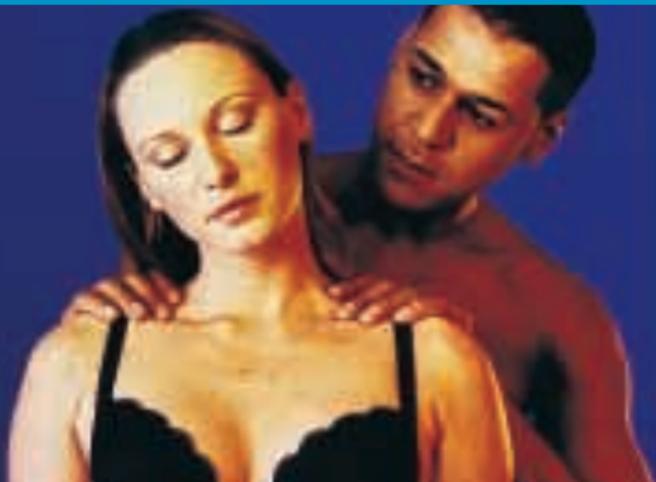
The gland grows around the base of your bladder, and can cause problems when you urinate. In many cases this is caused by Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH). Sometimes the swelling can be a sign of prostate cancer. If you are worried, please ask your doctor or nurse for advice.

Watch out for:

- problems when you pass urine;
- wanting to urinate more often; and
- blood in your urine, or pain when you pass urine.

If you notice anything, please get it checked out straight away

What's **safer sex**?



enjoy sex

Having safer sex means that you and your partner can enjoy sex and reduce the risk of sexually transmitted infections (including HIV) or unplanned pregnancy.

Safer sex doesn't allow an infected partner's blood, semen or fluid from the vagina to get inside the other partner's body.

You should plan ahead. In the heat of the moment, it can be very difficult to talk to your partner about safer sex.



To have safer sex, remember the following.

- Always use a condom when you have vaginal or anal sex and consider using one for oral sex.
- Get used to putting on a condom. They can be a part of your foreplay. Please read the instructions on the packet carefully.
- There's a female condom, which fits inside the vagina. You can get it from most chemists.
- You can enjoy foreplay, and sex without penetration, such as kissing, masturbation, stroking or massage.
- Consider using a condom for oral sex so that you have a barrier between the penis and the mouth. You could try a flavoured or non-lubricated condom.
- When you have oral sex with a woman you can use a dental dam (a thin latex square). If you hold this in place over the genital area, there will be a barrier between the genitals and the mouth. You can get dental dams from some sexual health clinics, chemists and some mail-order agencies. If you want more information, please call the National AIDS Helpline free on 0800 567 123.
- If you are having anal sex, use plenty of water-based lubricant.
- If you are going to share a sex toy such as a dildo or vibrator, put a condom over it. You must wash the sex toy between your activities and put on a new condom for each partner and activity. Please don't use the same condom for vaginal sex after you have used it in the anal area, as you could pass on bacteria that could cause an infection.

Sexually transmitted infections

– check them out



Anyone can get a sexually transmitted infection if they have unprotected sex with someone who is infected. These infections happen frequently in men and women. You can have uncomfortable and painful symptoms. They disrupt your sex life and your partner's.

If you are sexually active, protect yourself and your partner by using a condom. You may risk getting and passing on sexual infections if you don't.

Warning signs you can look out for

- Discharge from your penis.
- Pain or a burning feeling when you urinate.
- Feeling that you need to urinate more often than usual.
- Sore testicles, itching, rashes, lumps, blisters or pain in your genital area.

Often you can't see the infection. You and your partner could have an infection without knowing it.

If you think you've been at risk, or you have symptoms of an infection, please get yourself checked out by a doctor or nurse.

Don't wait for the symptoms to clear up. Some symptoms do go away without you having treatment, but this doesn't mean your infection has gone away.

If your infection isn't treated, serious damage can happen. If you get help early on, most infections can be treated simply.

If you see anything or think you've been at risk, please get checked out straight away. You won't be wasting anybody's time.

Has **HIV** gone away?



HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is the most serious sexually transmitted infection. It damages the body's defence system so that it cannot fight off some infections.

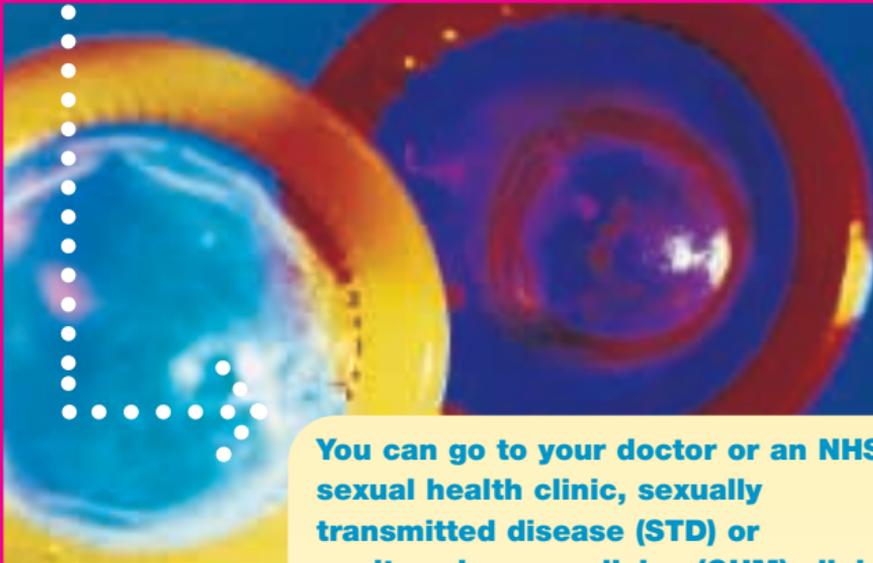
Most people who have HIV look and feel healthy for a long time, sometimes for 10 years or more. They may not know they have the virus. But they can pass it on to other people through semen, blood and vaginal fluids.

When someone with HIV goes on to get certain illnesses, this condition is called AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). New treatments have been developed which mean that most people can stay well for longer, although these do not suit everybody.

HIV can be passed on:

- if you have vaginal or anal sex without a condom with someone who has HIV, and unprotected oral sex also carries some risk;
- by a mother with HIV to her baby during pregnancy, at birth or through breastfeeding; and
- by injecting drugs using needles, syringes or other equipment that is infected with HIV.

Where can I get **help**?



You can go to your doctor or an NHS sexual health clinic, sexually transmitted disease (STD) or genito-urinary medicine (GUM) clinic. These clinics give you free checks and treatment for sexual infections. Their service is strictly confidential, and nobody will know about your visit without your say so.

You can go to any NHS sexual health clinic without seeing your doctor first. If it is urgent, you don't usually need an appointment. But, please phone first.

You can find information about your nearest NHS sexual health clinic by phoning the National AIDS Helpline free on 0800 567 123, or phone your local hospital and ask for the GUM clinic. Clinics will be listed in the phone book under genito-urinary medicine (GUM), sexually transmitted diseases (STD) or the old term, venereal diseases (VD). You can find information about clinics on our website: www.lovelife.uk.com

NHS sexual health (GUM) clinics offer free HIV testing, and screening for other infections.

Any information you give at the clinic is confidential.

Are you **protected**?



To protect against pregnancy, use a reliable method of contraception every time you have sex. If you are not using contraception, check that your partner is.

Choose a method of contraception that suits you and your partner

You and your partner can get contraceptives free from:

- your doctor's surgery; or
- a family planning clinic.

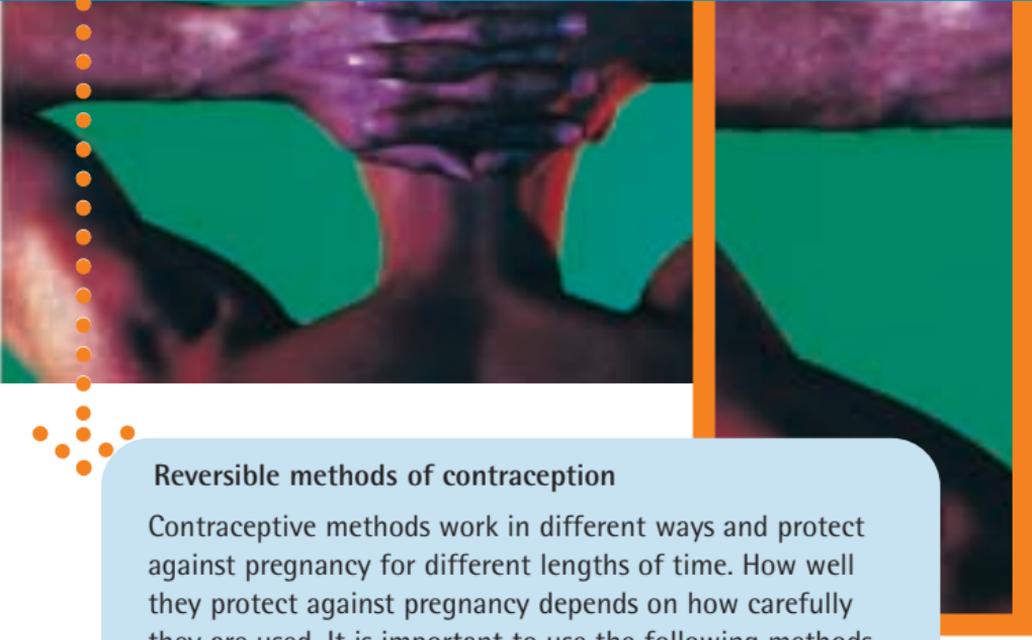
Different methods of contraception suit different people at different times. It is important to choose a method of contraception that suits you and your partner.

No contraception will give 100% protection against pregnancy. However, all the methods you can get in the UK are very effective, when you use them correctly and consistently.

Protection against sexually transmitted infections.

If you use male or female condoms, on their own or with other contraceptive methods every time you have sex, they can also help protect you against sexually transmitted infections.

Are you **protected**?



Reversible methods of contraception

Contraceptive methods work in different ways and protect against pregnancy for different lengths of time. How well they protect against pregnancy depends on how carefully they are used. It is important to use the following methods correctly and consistently, according to instructions.

- **Combined pill or progestogen-only pill**
- **Male condom or female condom**
- **Diaphragm or cap with spermicide**
- **Natural family planning**

With other contraceptives, how well they protect against pregnancy doesn't depend on the person using them. These methods protect against pregnancy until it is time for them to be renewed or replaced by a doctor or nurse.

- **Contraceptive injection**
- **Contraceptive implants**
- **Intrauterine system (IUS)**
- **Intrauterine device (IUD), or the 'coil'**

Emergency contraception

If you think your contraceptive method has not worked, or you have had sex without using contraception, there are two types of emergency contraception women can use.

- Emergency contraceptive pills must be started within three days (72 hours) of sex. They work best if they are started within 24 hours of sex.
- An IUD must be fitted within five days

These are available free from your GP or a family planning clinic. You may also be able to get them from doctors in NHS sexual health (GUM) clinics or hospital accident and emergency departments. You can also buy emergency contraception from most pharmacies if the woman is 16 years or over.

Are you **protected**?

Permanent methods of contraception

Sterilisation is different from other contraceptive methods because it is permanent. You should only choose sterilisation if you are sure you will never want a baby in the future.

Free information and advice

Make sure you have all the information you need to decide which is the best method for you and your partner. Please see a doctor or nurse at your doctor's surgery or family planning clinic.

You can also get free information and advice from the Contraceptive Education Service helpline: 0845 310 1334.

Whichever method you and your partner choose, make sure you understand how to use it, and what to do if you have any difficulties. Make sure that you know where to get advice if you think your partner may be pregnant.

Sexual problems

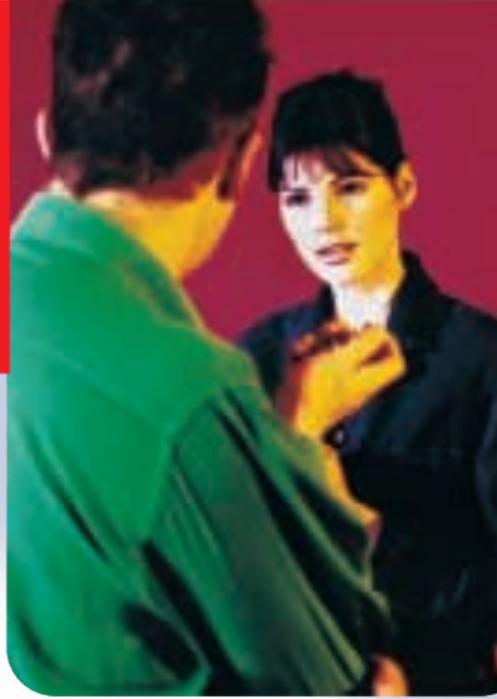


You may find that sex sometimes becomes difficult. Either you cannot get an erection or you come too quickly for your partner. You may lose interest in sex. This can be upsetting for you and your partner, but it's not unusual and often it will not last.

If you both talk about it, check for possible causes, and change your lifestyle slightly, this may help. If the problem continues, see your doctor. This could be caused by you or your partner being ill, having an injury or being on medication. You can phone a helpline for advice, or get special counselling (see page 23).

Possible cause:

- stress;
- being tired;
- drinking too much alcohol;
- using recreational drugs; or
- anxiety.



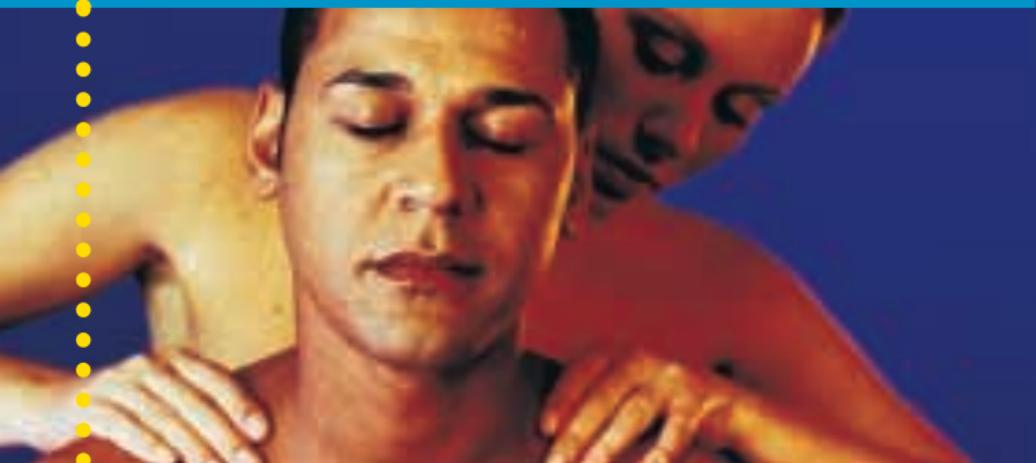
Alcohol and drugs

If you or your partner drink alcohol, this can make sex seem better. You become less shy and you feel more relaxed. However, it can also affect the decisions you make about what is safe. You could do something you regret later. The same goes for drugs such as ecstasy or amphetamines. If you drink heavily regularly, your ability to have sex could be damaged. Some prescription drugs, such as tranquillisers, can also cause you problems, as can some body-building steroids.

You can watch for:

- problems in getting or maintaining an erection;
- coming too quickly or not at all;
- having no interest in sex; and
- shrinking of your testicles (caused by using steroids).

Helpful **hints**



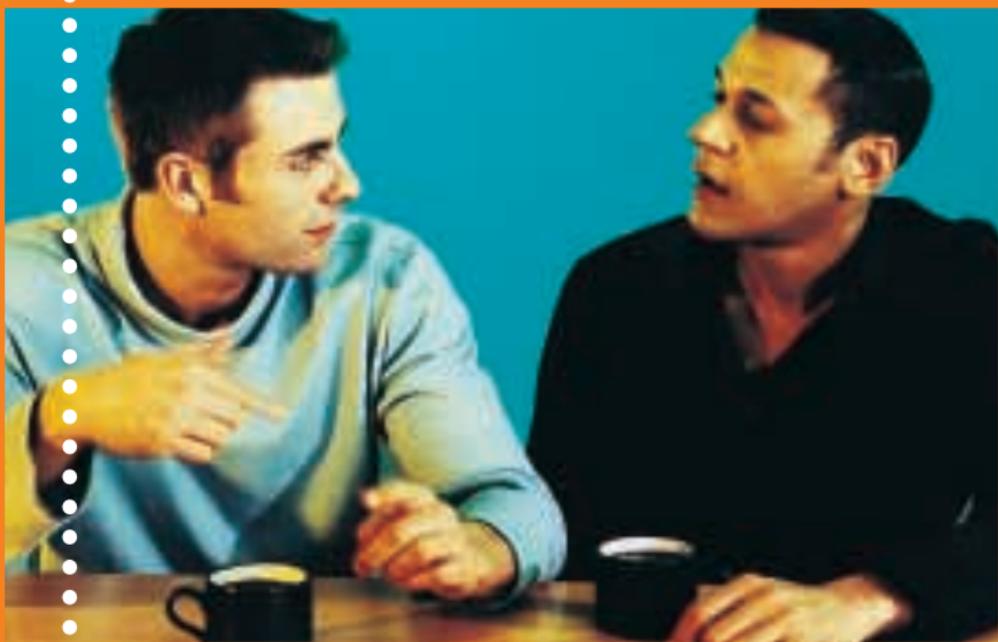
To help you keep your sex life in good shape, try the following steps.

Relax

- If you and your partner relax, sex will be more enjoyable for you both.
- Try to find out how you can relax. This is different for everyone.
- When you notice the pressure piling on, stop and think what sex is like when it goes well.
- Don't get upset about your sexual failures. It happens to most people at some time.
- There are many ways you can have sex which don't involve penetration, such as kissing, stroking and touching.

Get some help if your problem continues.
Please don't try and struggle with it on your own.

Helpful **hints**



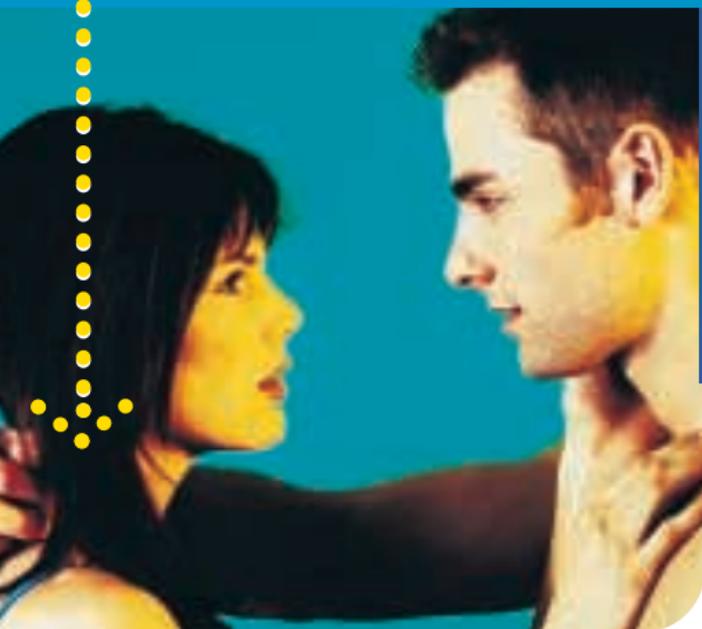
Talk

- Talking about your problems can help you find some answers.
- Talk to your partner or someone you can trust. You may feel embarrassed to begin with, but if it helps your sexual relationships, it will be worth a try.
- If you don't feel comfortable talking to someone face to face, you could call a helpline that deals with sexual matters. The service is confidential and you don't need to give them your name (see page 23).

Take care

- You can avoid many sexual health problems if you cut down on the risks you take by having safer sex.

Planning a **baby**?



If you and your partner want to have a baby, your partner should:

- give up smoking
- drink no more than 1 or 2 units of alcohol, once or twice a week and avoid getting drunk (1 unit = half a pint of ordinary strength lager, beer or cider, or a 25ml pub measure of spirit or a small glass of wine); and
- take a 400 microgram folic acid supplement every day. For more information, ask your doctor for the leaflet 'Folic Acid – What All Women Should Know' or ring NHS Direct free on 0845 46 47.

You can help by stopping smoking with your partner and cutting down how much alcohol you drink too.

It can take many months to get pregnant. If you and your partner have been trying for a baby for one year or longer, see your doctor for advice. One in six couples have fertility problems. There are many causes of infertility, some of which can be treated (see page 23 for information about specialist agencies).

If you or your partner have had health problems which might affect your chances of having a baby it is a good idea to see your doctor before you begin trying for a baby.

What if I have sex with other **men**?



The information in this booklet about sexually transmitted infections and testicular and prostate problems is important to all men – whether straight, gay or bisexual.

Practising safer sex is always important, but even more so when you have sex with a man. The main way of getting HIV infection in the UK is still sexual intercourse between men. If you have anal sex without a condom, there is a high risk that you will pass on or get HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, such as hepatitis B. Oral sex without a condom also carries some risk of HIV and other infections.

You can get a vaccine which will protect you against hepatitis B. For more information on sexually transmitted infections and HIV, see pages 10 to 12.

Several NHS sexual health clinics have confidential services for gay or bisexual men. You can phone the London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard on 020 7837 7324, or the National AIDS Helpline free on 0800 567 123, for details of local services.

If you are confused about your sexuality, talking can help. Organisations such as the London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard offer confidential help and advice.

More advice



You can get free, confidential treatment and advice at any NHS sexual health (GUM) clinic, or from your GP. You can find details of your nearest NHS sexual health clinic by phoning the National AIDS Helpline free on 0800 567 123, or phone your local hospital and ask for the 'GUM' or 'special' clinic. Clinics will be listed in the phone book under genito-urinary medicine (GUM), sexually transmitted diseases (STD) or venereal diseases (VD). You can find information about clinics on our sexual health website www.lovelife.uk.com

We have listed some groups and services opposite that may also be able to help you. Many are national organisations, so you may need to call them for details of your nearest local branch or helpline.

More information

We produce a range of leaflets and factsheets about sexual health. You should be able to get them, free of charge, from health centres, clinics and chemists.

You can also order free copies of any sexual health leaflets by phoning the National AIDS Helpline free on 0800 567 123 or by contacting your local health promotion unit (look in the phone book under your local health authority).

Please contact a sexual health clinic or your doctor if you are worried or not sure about anything to do with your sexual health.

Contact numbers

National AIDS Helpline (NAH) 0800 567 123

A 24-hour, seven-days-a-week, free and confidential telephone service with advice about HIV, AIDS, sexual health, local services, clinics and support services. Calls are free and confidential, and will not appear on your phone bill (this does not apply to calls made from some mobile phones – check with your mobile phone company for details).

National AIDS Helpline Language Line 0800 917 2227

This a multi-language line with an opening menu in Punjabi, Urdu, Bengali, Hindi, Gujarati, Arabic and Cantonese. You will be able to listen to messages in each language. From 6pm to 10 pm on the following days you will be able to speak to an operator who is fluent in each language:

Monday – Bengali

Tuesday – Urdu

Wednesday – Arabic

Thursday – Gujarati

Friday – Hindi

Saturday – Punjabi

Sunday – Cantonese

You will need to listen out for your own language and select the appropriate number.

The Welsh Language Service

is available on the main 0800 567 123 number every day between 11am and 11pm. The service is provided by a combination of Welsh-speaking advisers and Language Line.

A **minicom service** is available for people with hearing difficulties on **0800 521 361** 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Northern Ireland AIDS Helpline 0800 137 437

Open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm and 7pm to 10pm, Saturday 2pm to 5pm.

Contraceptive Education Service 0845 310 1334

A confidential helpline that gives you information on contraception, sexual health and your local clinics.

Monday to Friday 9am to 7pm
website: www.fpa.org.uk

Issue 01922 722 888

Advice, information and a guide to clinics if you are having infertility problems. Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4pm.

website: www.issue.co.uk

London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard 020 7837 7324

A 24-hour, seven-days-a-week helpline that offers you a range of services including advice about your sexual health.

Medical Advisory Service Helpline 020 8994 9874

Advice and information on general medical problems and men's health. Monday to Friday 6pm to 8pm.

Relate 01788 573 241

A national counselling organisation which can put you in touch with their local branches. Relate offers confidential counselling to individuals and couples on relationships and sexual difficulties. Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.
website: www.relate.org.uk

Terrence Higgins Trust Helpline 020 7242 1010

Open every day, 12 noon to 10pm. THT offers information, advice, practical support and counselling on HIV and AIDS.
website: www.tht.org.uk

The law

The legal age of consent for sex between a man and a woman in England, Scotland and Wales is 16. In Northern Ireland it's 17.

The legal age of consent for anal sex between a man and a woman in England and Wales is 18. In Scotland it's 16. In Northern Ireland it's illegal.

The legal age of consent for anal sex between two men in the UK is 18, provided both men consent. A lower age of consent is currently being considered in Parliament.

There is no law on the age of consent for sex between two women. However, certain laws suggest that both women must consent and be over 16, except in Northern Ireland, where they must be over 17.

Contact a sexual health clinic or your doctor if you are worried or not sure about your sexual health.

This leaflet only gives basic information about sexual health. We have used information based on the evidence and medical opinion at the time of printing.

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