

TRUE YOU

EDITION 3

**SEX &
MAKING LOVE**

Intimacy

Is there more to it
than just physicality?

STIs

They're not sexy!

**IS THERE A RIGHT
POSITION AND
TECHNIQUE?**

How much do we
really know about
the **CLITORIS?**

**WHY DO YOU
WANT TO
HAVE SEX?**

**BEING
A VIRGIN**

The key to great
relationships and sex!

CONNECTION



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EDITOR'S Words

Let's talk about sex!! Isn't that the most exciting topic when in your teenage years? But what to like? How to do it? And where do we learn it from is a big question and with all the internet porn on offer it easily leads us down the rabbit hole into unloving, unpleasurable and often abusive and violent relationships.

This is why we have made this third edition of True2You to support you in all things **Sex, Sexual Health & Making Love.**

Your sexuality is unique to you and is about how much you value yourself and your body.

What is the secret to 'great sex'? And when does sex become 'making love'? Is there a difference between sex and making love? And if so, what is it? And have you realised that the most important thing about sex is connection? That actually, connection and loving you first is the key to good relationships and sex!

And what if intimacy is more than physicality and your relationship with yourself is the key ingredient for being truly intimate?

In this edition we explore why do we want sex in the first place, is it because we are thirsty for love or needing relief? What's physical pleasure, and are there any right positions or techniques? We look at the myths around masturbation and go deep with orgasms.

There can be a lot of pressure to have sex. The most important thing is to stay true to your body and wellbeing supporting yourself in knowing your body and sexual organs as well as how to protect yourself from sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancy. This edition supports you to be your own expert and best friend of your body and how to be in a relationship.

Enjoy this third edition of True2You and discover why, how and when you have sex is always about you being true to you.

If you need support with anything in your life don't hesitate to contact us. We have an amazing team of experts who will offer you the love and care you need and deserve to grow and live a joyful life.

Truly,
Rachel Andras



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Well-being is our Foundation



Obra Social "la Caixa"

CONTENT:



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10

SEX OR MAKING LOVE? Is there a difference?

04 LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX

06 WHAT ABOUT CONNECTION

14 What is INTIMACY?

18

WHY DO YOU WANT SEX?

22 BEING A VIRGIN

24 HOW WE TAKE WORDS ON TO THINK THAT THE WORD IS US!

26 QUIZ! ARE YOU READY?

28 WHAT IS IMPORTANT WHEN IT COMES TO SEX

30 CONSENT

34

STI'S...THEY ARE NOT SEXY!

44 QUIZ! How much do you know about STI's?

46 CONTRACEPTION

50 HORMONAL CONTRACEPTION FOR WOMEN

56 THE VULVA AND VAGINA

62 THE CLITORIS

64 THE PENIS

68 THE TESTICLES



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94

MASTURBATION

72 WHAT IS THE RIGHT POSITION AND TECHNIQUE?

76 LIBIDO

78 ORAL SEX

80 VAGINAL SEX

82 ANAL SEX



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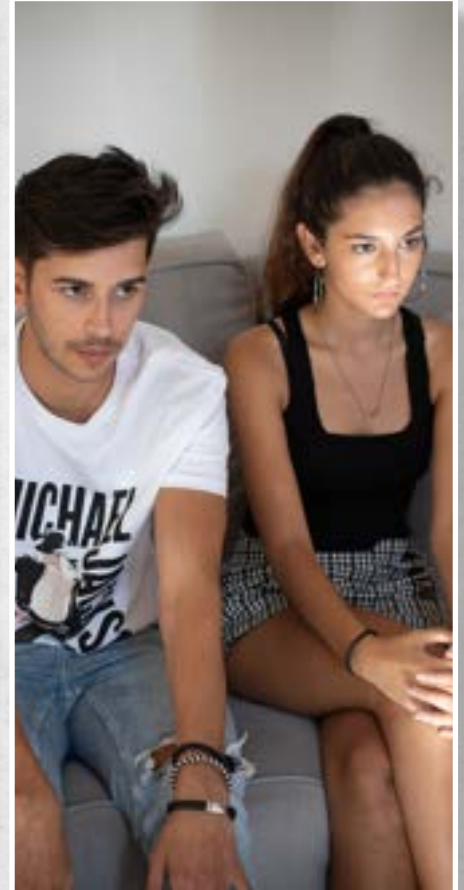
98

ORGASM

84 PAINFUL SEX

88 LUBRICANT

90 PLEASURE, SENSUALITY AND SENSES



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106

LET'S TALK ABOUT PORN

112 PORN AFFECTS US

116 PORN AND INTIMACY

LET'S TALK ABOUT Sex



Being ready!

What does it mean being ready for sex? Have you ever thought about it? Have you ever talked about it with friends? As well as knowing and being aware of contraception and STIs its also important to ask ourselves why do we want sex and what does being ready for sex mean?

For some it may be age, once the age of consent is reached they feel they are ready for sex.

For some being ready may even mean being married first as for some cultures and religions this is important.

But what if, being ready for Sex has absolutely nothing to do with Sex! What if it's about being who you are and feeling safe? Feeling fully comfortable and being able to trust the person, not feeling you have to pretend to be someone to fit a picture or ideal.

Whether its your first or twenty-first time, sex should always be something that you feel to do, want to do and do not feel pressured into.

Giving yourself the space to explore this more gives you the confidence to work out how you want to respond if sex comes up, and how far to go.

Ask yourself if you feel comfortable. Is it the right time, is it the right place, and with the right person? Do you really trust the person, and do you feel the same way about each other?



What about connection?

What if the most important thing about sex is connection?

Being into someone could be looked at by the level of connection we have felt with that person. It's not about the time you have spent with someone, whether it's one day, one month or a year – **its about what you feel** when you are with them.

So, what do you feel when you are connected to someone? Is it care and respect, an openness and no holding back? Or perhaps you feel you have to pretend you're someone else or can't share who you truly are? Do you feel confident and held by the person? Do you feel safe? Do you feel accepted for who you are?

The connection you have with the other person and how you feel is super important BUT the most important thing, when it comes to sex and relationships, is how much love you have with and for yourself.







The connection with your partner isn't just about having sex. It's about every moment leading up to that which sets the foundation for the connection and intimacy during sex.

When it then comes to sex and if you feel uncomfortable or feel your focus is on the performance and on the physicality, allow yourself to stop the moment and communicate what you feel. Perhaps this shows you that you are still holding back or are putting up a guard. Whatever it indicates for you, don't take it on as a problem but rather an amazing moment to be in touch with what you are feeling and communicate and express this. It allows the relationship to go deeper and to connect even more with your partner and yourself.

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Since sex is super intimate and allows yourself to be seen even more than ever, self-love and trust is super important. It is not just about physically being naked but rather staying in those moments and not feeling the need or want to hold up a guard or feel/create distance or separation with the other person.



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The more self-love and self-worth you have the more your relationships will be based on love and respect.



If you need or want something from the other person, or they are needing or wanting something from you we can get easily hurt, have arguments, leading it to become unhealthy.



Connection and loving you first is the key to good relationships and sex!

SEX OR MAKING LOVE

Is there a difference?

What is the secret to great sex?

And when does sex become making love?

Is there a difference between sex and making love? And if so, what is it?

Here's what some people said about what they felt having sex means and making love means to them:

HAVING SEX

- 'When you're having sex, your primary motivation is to get off and have an orgasm'.
- 'You don't need to love your partner when having sex'.
- 'Having sex is more physical and functional. It's about stimulation'.
- 'Sometimes, when I'm having sex, I turn into a different person. It's more a performance'.
- 'Sex is about right and wrong and often trying not to fail or trying to impress'.

MAKING LOVE

- 'When making love, climaxing is important, too (because it's always great), but the primary motivation is to connect with your partner'.
- 'Making love can mean taking time in exploring your partner's body, mind, and heart, not just because you are trying to have an orgasm, but because you are sharing a very intimate connection with them'.
- 'Making love might take hours, and you may even decide the orgasm wasn't your goal. It's all about deepening your connection and communication, growing your love'.
- 'I know that I can be myself when I am making love and don't have to try to be anyone else'.
- 'Making love is more communication, its enjoying being with your partner, not just in a sexual way'.

TESTIMONIAL

Sometimes when I'm having sex, my mind wanders. Whether I fantasize about someone else, a porn scene or something that stimulates me to get more aroused...I am not all in.

Making love is the complete opposite. I am fully present at every single moment. In fact, theres no way to make love otherwise. I have to be in the moment with my partner or risk losing the connection and intimate moment with them which they feel.

EXAMPLES OF LOVE-MAKING

- Being caring with them in any situation
- Appreciating the other and expressing it
- Knowing that you can be yourself with each other the whole time
- Stroking their hand while watching a movie, etc.
- Connecting with each other's eyes when out with others
- Holding hands while walking down the street

Sex is generally seen to be more about the physical act and not so much about the relationship and connection with the other person.

Is it possible that the difference between sex and making love is that sex finishes once the physical act is over, but making love is the continuous expression between people?

So, if you can have sex without making love... can you make love without having sex? 🤔

Any sexual activity before intercourse is called foreplay. This can include touching, kissing, licking and anything that gets each other sexually aroused.

What if you can have 24/7 foreplay with your partner not sexually, but how you communicate and are with each other?

If foreplay is attributed to enhancing sex or getting sexual... is it possible that everyday love-making, which means the loving expressions towards your partner, are like a forever foreplay of a 24/7 loving relationship?

Wow, does that mean that true lovemaking doesn't only happen with physical and sexual contact?

Which means that love making is about the whole relationship and not just the physical moment. If we think about it this way, it opens a whole new world of meanings and possibilities of being in a relationship!

What is intimacy?

When we think of intimacy what normally comes to our mind is being physically close with a partner or having a sexual relationship. What if intimacy is more than this?

Like any relationship it first starts with us and how intimate we are with ourselves.

We are not talking about masturbation, although it might be what first comes to the mind.

Intimacy is about allowing ourselves to feel the sensitivity within us, as a strength and being who we are, no matter what.

Our feelings and honoring what we feel can be part of this intimacy with ourselves.

We currently live in a world where we don't learn to truly connect and express our feelings. **Often, we don't even really know what we feel as we are so imposed on by what we should feel, do and think, that we may not know what connection or feeling intimacy really is!**

Then, when we start to explore our sexuality, we may try to use sex to feel that connection and intimacy with ourselves. When we are with another person and want to connect with them, we automatically go to thinking that it can only be done through being sexual. And intimacy can be sexual, **but sex cannot bring us connection and intimacy if we don't hold that within ourselves first.**

Intimacy is really loving ourselves from the inside out and being comfortable with showing ourselves for who we are!

Being intimate with yourself is taking care of yourself physically and mentally.

Of course, getting to know your body is a part of it, cherishing your body and not judging it are the key aspects. For example, creating a safe space for you, where you feel you are a complete and valid person, IS being intimate with yourself.

Then you can share more of who you are with others. It doesn't just have to be through talking, but also in which way you take care of things. Being intimate with yourself can help you develop deeper personal connections with friends, family, partners etc.

And yes, in some cases, this may be a romantic relationship.

Developing intimacy with your partner is opening a deeper part of you to your partner and speaking about what's going on for you, being honest with how you feel...

Opening to deeper part of you is becoming aware of how you are not only with yourself but how you are with others too.

For example:

- **How do you speak to/with others?**
- **Do you go into reactions, protection and/or get defensive?**
- **Are there elements of being controlling, pushing the person away or feeling you are unable to express yourself?**

GIVING YOURSELF SPACE TO BE AWARE OF HOW YOU ARE, REFLECTING ON YOUR INTERACTIONS WITH YOURSELF AND OTHERS AUTOMATICALLY STARTS TO BRING MORE INTIMACY TO YOU AS IT IS DEEPENING THE RELATIONSHIP WITH YOURSELF.



Why do you want sex?

There are many reasons why we may want to have sex and it is super important for you to know why you want to have sex!!

Is it to:

1. Deepen your connection and relationship with another
2. Because you are attracted to the other person
3. To commit to a person more
4. To show your love for and to the other person
5. For fun
6. Because it feels good/for pleasure
7. Because you love that person
8. Because you are curious
9. Because you need affection and to feel loved
10. Because you feel you have to
11. Because you are pressured
12. To get back at another person that hurt you
13. To relieve stress
14. To not connect to your feelings
15. To connect to your feelings and how you feel towards another
17. Because you don't want to be seen as frigid
18. Because you are bored
19. To boost how you feel about yourself
20. To have an orgasm
21. To fit in with peers because friends are in sexual relationships or having sex

These are only a few reasons and you may think of many more. But what we can see here is the difference in some of the reasons. There are some positive reasons in wanting to have sex but also some negative reasons.

For example, never ever EVER should anyone feel pressured into having sex with someone

When asking yourself why you want to have sex and you realise its not a supportive or positive reason. STOP! Re-evaluate the relationship, why you are in it or why you are seeking something thats not supporting. It's better to not do anything than to do something and have regret or hurts later.

Is there a difference in genders and what's felt about sex?

Could it be that for boys' sex is more first out of curiosity, to fit in with peers, or to feel good about themselves where for girls it is more about wanting connection or to feel they are loved and taken care of?

Then could it be that because girls are not getting this from boys, girls are becoming tougher, harder and less caring so not to get hurt? WOW!

So, where do we go from here then? If different genders (or the same gender) want different things?

Testimonial:

'As a young boy I felt that I could not be sensitive. To feel and express my feelings was not something I was encouraged to do but more to just get on with it.

No one asked how I felt so I grew up not being able to communicate what I was feeling. When I came into puberty and my sexuality started to unfold and porn was a remedy for the difficulty of dealing with feelings and the need for closeness. I learned to channel my feelings into sex/porn.

For me the longing for tenderness and intimacy and wanting sex somehow became one and the same. Intimacy and sexuality became so intertwined that I didn't know any different. In hindsight I can say that porn desensitized me. Not that I lost my sensitivity as such but because porn was my remedy to help me deal with my insecurity as a young man when it came to feelings and intimacy,

I became numb and would feel even further away from myself. Porn and sex became an addiction, a substitute for truly close and nurturing relationships with people in general and especially with a girl.

I had good friendships, but I was lonely inside, I was starving intimacy with myself and others. It became part of life, like any other habit only not a good one'

The testimonial shows us that if we don't express our feelings at a young age, this affects our relationships with others in the future and of course, it affects the relationship with ourselves.

It also shows us that boys and young men are actually innately tender and sweet, but when this is not nurtured, like with all of us, we lose touch of this aspect of ourselves, including how to communicate what we truly feel.

Express your feelings!

So, could the remedy be for us to start to express our feelings more?

Even if it seems awkward, clumsy, silly or not cool! What have we got to lose? Nothing! BUT we have everything to gain in no longer capping or holding back how we feel.

The more we start to express how we feel, the easier it becomes and the more we will feel the magic in our lives when we start to do this.



Being a VIRGIN

There can be a lot of pressure to have sex or do something sexual as well as a feeling that something is wrong with you if you are a virgin. But we are here to tell you its okay to be a virgin. We live in a world that is hyper sexualized and at every corner we are told that life is all about sex.

Most music videos are about sex, being sexy, desired and moving in a sexualized way. Sex is promoted pretty much everywhere, no wonder that we start believing that our life is boring without it!

It's normal to want to fit in and be a part of a group. It can make you feel accepted and build your self-esteem.

However, **never** feel pressured to have sex or do something sexual because 'everyone else is doing it'.

This could lead to being hurt, upset or regretting what you have allowed and what has happened.

If you don't feel ready or are not interested in sex you don't have to doubt what you are feeling.

Your sexuality is unique to you and is about how much you value yourself and your body.



Know yourself. **A big part of avoiding being pressured into doing something you don't want to do is knowing yourself and knowing what is important to you and what you value.** Being aware of your feelings can help you make the right choice for yourself.

Take your time. There is no rush.

Find someone who genuinely respects and cares about you and who you like and trust – avoid doing anything sexual just to complete a checklist. To enjoy sex with another person is NOT and should never be a challenging process of trial and error.

Self-love is the best foundation for you to know when you are ready for sex. A cherished and loved body tells you when it's ready.

#Be yourself. #Respect yourself. #Love yourself

What is virginity?

Being a virgin means never having had sex. Many people relate losing your virginity to penis-in-vagina sexual intercourse — but what about people who are not interested in this type of sex? Being a virgin is an idea and it's up to you to define what it means for yourself and there is no right or wrong definition.

Words have been transformed to disrespect and degrade others.

Bitch: The word bitch means female dog and is used to describe a sexually provocative woman or a woman you don't like and judge her to be malicious. Men also call each other bitch, implying that the other guy is a weakling, hence too female.

Did you know that the word bitch was first used by men towards Artemis, an Olympian Goddess of hunting, childbirth and protector of the girl child.

The men used the word as an attempt to disempower her as they felt threatened by her power.

No wonder the word gets thrown at strong, powerful women!

Virgin: The word virgin is used to describe someone, specifically women as heterosexually inexperienced and thus incomplete.

Did you know that in truth a virgin was simply and purely a woman who was unattached, unclaimed, and unowned by any man and therefore independent and autonomous.

Nothing incomplete here, the contrary a powerful fully claimed woman!!

Frigid. Slag. Slut. Some of the words that maybe hurled someone's way because someone or a group of people want to put a person down, hate the person, are jealous about the person or want to pressure the person into something i.e. calling someone frigid so they won't want to be labelled this and end up having sex or doing something sexual with someone.

Remember this is a word and NOT you.

It is just a word being fired towards you. Yes fired, it's like someone shooting at you and it hurts sometimes even more than a physical punch. Don't take it on or feel you have to change yourself or justify yourself for another to feel more comfortable or happy about how they feel in themselves.

How we take words on to think that the word is us!

Sissy

Fag

Gay

Be who you are not what others want to see you as or label you as.

If you are having words like these thrown your way, be with the people in your life who love and respect you. ❤️ They will confirm the truth of who you are, not what you are not.

Virgin

Slut

Bitch










Frigid

Prude

QUIZ!

Are YOU ready?

Being honest with yourself is the only way to know or not if you are ready for a sexual relationship. To support you with this here are questions that you can check-in with yourself.

| | YES | NO |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
|  Do you feel like the relationship you are in is healthy and you can trust your partner and feel safe with them? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  Do you feel a special connection with them? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  Can you have a laugh and spend time together without doing anything sexual? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  Have you talked about having sex? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  Do you feel comfortable talking to them about sex and what you do and don't like? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  Is your partner pressuring you to have sex? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  Do you feel you could say 'No' if you wanted to? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  Are you aware of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and other risks involved in having sex, like pregnancy? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|  Do you know about different types of contraception? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



Have you both agreed what contraception you will use?



Are you embarrassed to talk together about using condoms?



Do you want to have sex because you feel to and not because your partner wants to?



Do you want to have sex because your friends are saying they are having sex?



Do you think you might regret it later?

How did it go for you?

What have you said YES and NO to?

From reflecting on taking the quiz has this given you more insight on you and your relationship? Does this inspire you to have conversations with your partner you haven't had? Do you feel safe and comfortable to have these conversations? If not, then you know that you are at a place in your relationship that you may not be ready to have sex.

If you feel you are not ready for sex know that this is ok and that you never have to rush into anything. Respect who you are and what you feel and take this time to enjoy building a deeper relationship with yourself and friends and all the people in your life. Studies have shown that a lot of young people who have rushed into sex have later regretted it. This doesn't have to be you!!!

Being aware of STIs and contraception is really important and to be able to discuss this with your partner without feeling weird about it can be a great confirmation for the depth of your relationship. If you don't know about STIs or types of contraception, you can find out where your nearest sexual health clinic is for more support and advice.

If you feel that you are ready for sex, it doesn't mean you HAVE to have it! Always honour what you feel, knowing that you can say no anytime as well as yes.

Make sure you get contraception sorted before you have sex!

What's important when it comes to sex?

CONSENT:

In any kind of sexual act consent is ALWAYS the most important thing!

You can always choose whether you want to have sex, whoever you're with. Just because you've done it before, even with the same person, doesn't mean that you have to do it again. So, before you get down to anything remember the golden rule: **No sex without consent. Even oral sex.** Some people don't like giving or receiving oral sex, which is fine and needs to be respected. So, no pushing heads down or begging! **If the answer is no, RESPECT it and move on.**

COMMUNICATION BEFORE:

It's better to have an embarrassing talk about sex rather than an embarrassing, unpleasant or even traumatic sexual encounter before you're ready.

Have a conversation before. The best time to have a chat about what you like and dislike about sex, oral or penetrative (vaginal or anal), is **BEFORE** sex — when your clothes are still on. This allows you and your partner to have a discussion that isn't coercive or pressured.

Go over what you like, what you dislike or anything that is an absolute no-go. This means that when you are in the heat of the moment, you both know the rules.

COMMUNICATION DURING:

Communication before sex doesn't mean communication stops during it or doing anything sexual. **Listen and look for non-verbal clues. Connect to your partners body and what they are showing you through their body language. Ask them if they are enjoying it. At anytime, don't be afraid to give directions or to tell your partner if something just isn't working for you.** If your partner looks fearful or uncomfortable **STOP** and talk to them.

COMMUNICATION AFTER:

Just as important as it is to communicate with your partner before and during sex, it is equally important to communicate after as this builds the relationship and the pleasure of your experience with each other.

DON'T BE ASHAMED OF INEXPERIENCE:

It's totally fine to not know what you like or to not know how to have oral or penetrative sex. In fact, some of the most satisfying sexual experiences are exploratory ones. Be open to your partner about your experience or inexperience, and don't feel that you have to perform. **BE YOU!!**

True intimacy is the connection you have with each other and not the sexual act.

CONTRACEPTION:

Remember part of your communication together needs to be about contraception. For more information check out our articles on contraception.

CONSENT

What are you actually consenting to?

Sexual consent is when a person willingly agrees to engage in a sexual activity or have sex.

DO

1 Make sure you always have consent.

3 Read their body language. Are they relaxed, happy and saying yes with both their body and words?

2 Constantly communicate with your partner. This doesn't have to be a sit-down chat (although it can be) but simply asking is this okay, do you like this?

4 Listen to what your partner is saying and communicating. If there is any doubt as to whether someone is consenting or not then STOP. Check in with them. If they are unsure do not carry on.



DON'T DO

1 If there is no consent, then there is no sexual activity. It's that simple.

2 Do not continue if a person is silent, not responding, upset, tense, withdrawn, resistance or has no eye contact with you.

3 If there is no clear communication coming back to you or you are not feeling sure, don't continue.

4 Don't carry on regardless. Any sexual activity without consent is sexual assault or rape.

Is there a time when someone is unable to, and does not have the capacity to give consent?



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Yes! If a person has had alcohol, drugs, is asleep, underage, unconscious or being unclear in any way they do not have the capacity to agree or give permission to have sex.

Making sure you get and have the capacity to give consent before any sexual activity is super important!

If you have had consent from a person one time it doesn't mean you automatically have consent from them another time! Consent should always be a part of your communication with your partner.



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**If a person doesn't say
no it does not mean
they have said yes!**

Consent needs to be clear.



**Check out this
video on consent**

STIs They are not sexy!

Did you know over 1 million people every day are diagnosed with an Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI)! 🤔

While consent, knowing your boundaries, being in a relationship that is respectful, and fun IS sexy 🤗💋 STIs (sexually transmitted infections) aren't! Do you know your STIs? Having awareness of STIs is just as important as being able to tell if a relationship is healthy or unhealthy.

STIs can be passed from one person to another by:

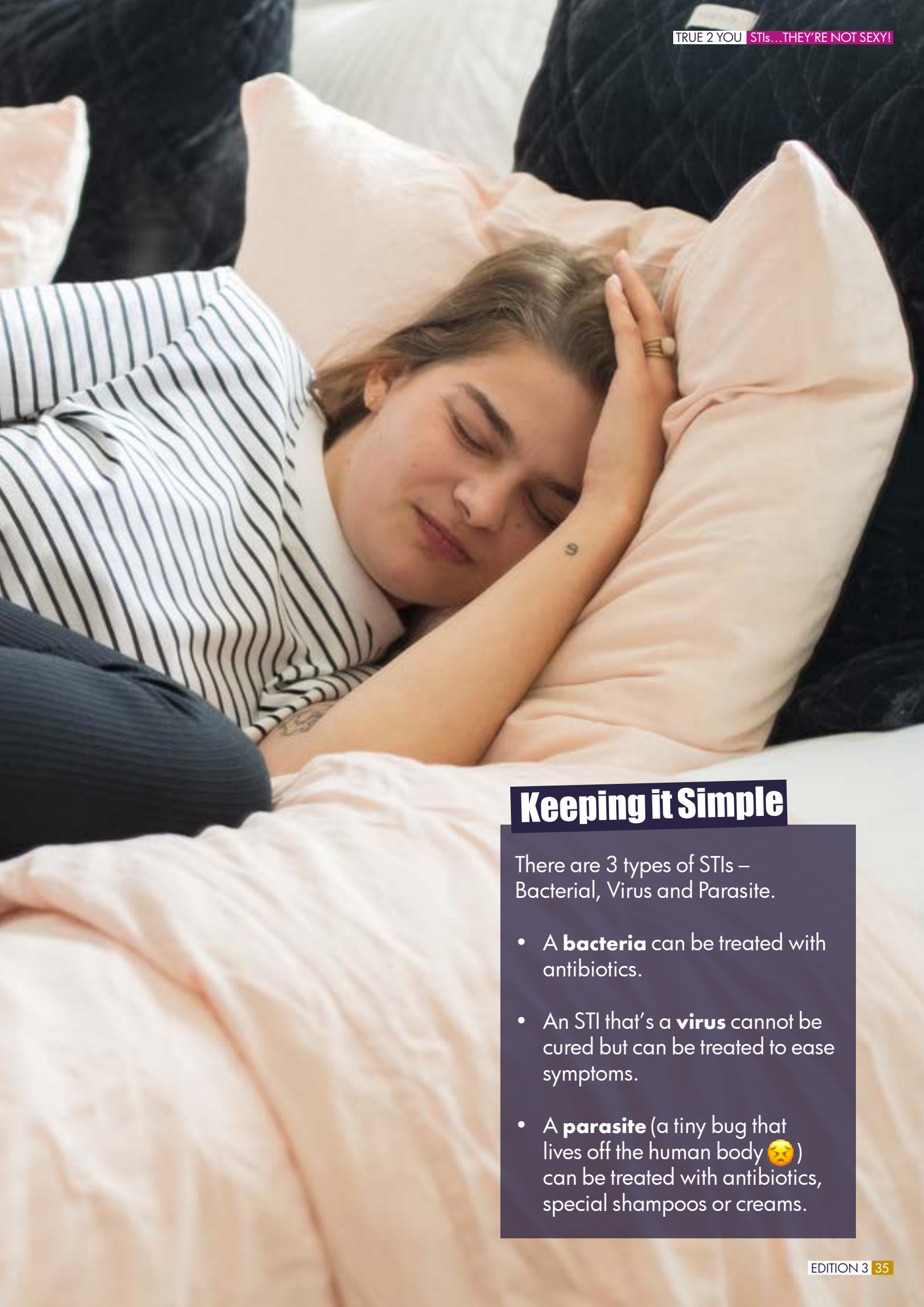
- unprotected vaginal sex**
- unprotected oral sex**
- unprotected anal sex**

Basically, where body fluid passes from one person to another.

STI symptoms vary from pain when passing urine, discharge from the penis or vagina, soreness, itching, rashes and redness and lumps or sores.

IMPORTANT:

With an STI sometimes there are no symptoms. For example, its common for people who have Chlamydia or Gonorrhoea to have no symptoms at all! Which means they could be passing it to another person without knowing it, or a person could be passing it to you without knowing it! In having no symptoms people might not think they need to get tested or need treatment, which as well as passing it to another person, could lead to an effect on the health such as infertility.




Keeping it Simple

There are 3 types of STIs – Bacterial, Virus and Parasite.

- A **bacteria** can be treated with antibiotics.
- An STI that's a **virus** cannot be cured but can be treated to ease symptoms.
- A **parasite** (a tiny bug that lives off the human body 🤢) can be treated with antibiotics, special shampoos or creams.

Parasites

| SCABIES | TRICHOMONIASIS | PUBIC LICE |
|--|---|---|
|  |  |  |
| <p>Signs and Symptoms</p> | <p>Signs and Symptoms</p> | <p>Signs and Symptoms</p> |
| <p>Intense itching that is worse at night and a rash</p> | <p>In women: Abnormal vaginal discharge, soreness swelling and itching around the vagina, pain or discomfort when passing urine or having sex.</p> <p>In men: Pain when urinating or ejaculation, need to urinate more frequently, discharge from the penis, soreness swelling and redness around the foreskin of the penis</p> | <p>Itching at night, rash and black powder in underwear</p> |
| <p>Effect of Health</p> | <p>Effect of Health</p> | <p>Effect of Health</p> |
| <p>Not a serious effect on health but does need to be treated</p> | <p>No serious health affects although some women with the infection may be at an increased risk of further problems</p> | <p>No serious health implication although can be uncomfortable itching</p> |
| <p>How it can be treated</p> | <p>How it can be treated</p> | <p>How it can be treated</p> |
| <p>Creams and lotions from GP or pharmacist</p> | <p>Antibiotics</p> | <p>Can be treated with medicated shampoos, lotions and creams from a doctor or pharmacist</p> |



Chlamydia

Type: Bacteria

MALE

FEMALE

Signs and Symptoms

Signs and Symptoms

Burning feeling while urinating



Pain during/after sex



Burning feeling while urinating



Pain during/after sex



Effect of Health

Effect of Health

If left untreated in men there can be an infection in the testicle



If left untreated in women are at risk of developing pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) and damage to the fallopian tubes



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In both men and women if left untreated can cause infertility

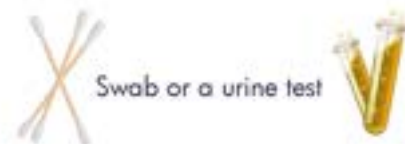
How can it be treated

MALE and FEMALE

Testing



Antibiotics



Swab or a urine test



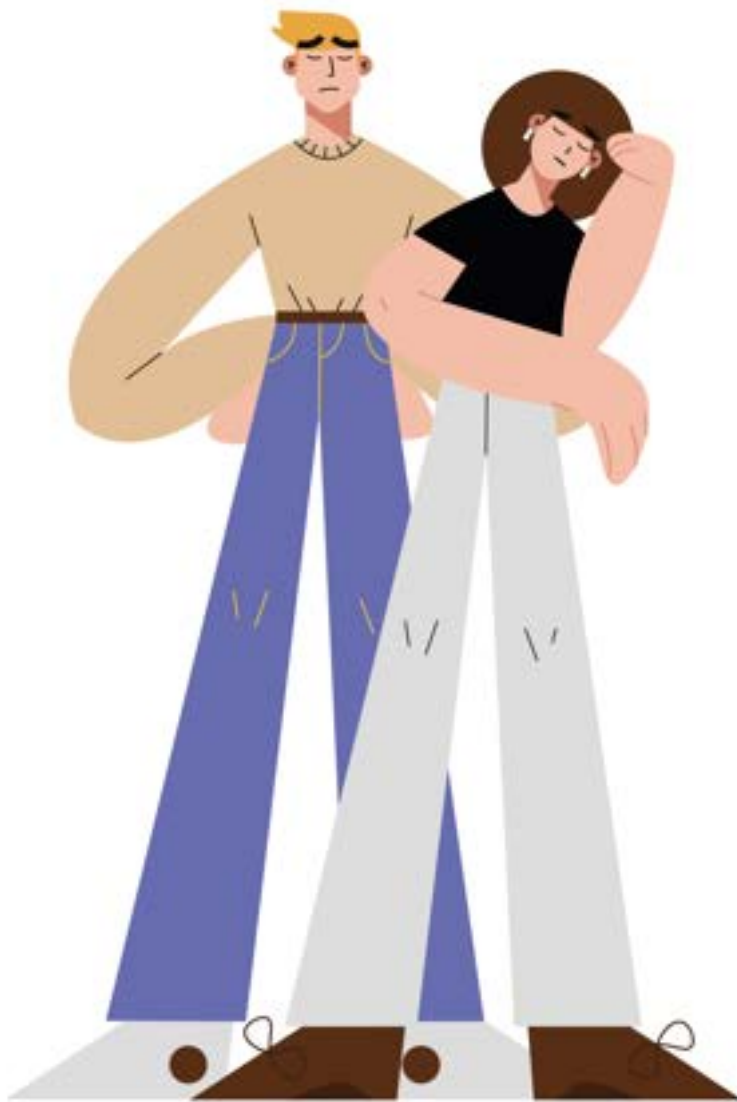
Did you know...

in England, Scotland, and Wales all young people aged 13-14 are offered the HPV vaccine in schools. The vaccine can help prevent genital warts, vaginal and penile cancers.

Genital Warts

Type: Virus

MALE and FEMALE



© Victor Rubio

Signs and Symptoms

Small fleshy growths that start as the size of a pinhead and grow larger. They can appear on the inside and outside of the genital and anus area. They are usually painless but can itch and bleed



Effect of Health

If left untreated the warts may grow in number and size but are not harmful to health



How can it be treated **Testing**



Freezing or burning the warts by a doctor or nurse as well as using creams and liquids, however as genital warts is a virus, they may come back



There is no routine test for genital warts. If you can see or feel lumps that you think may be warts, find your nearest sexual health clinic to get checked



Did you know...

That there is now a strain of Gonorrhoea called Super Gonorrhoea!

This is where the bacteria becomes resistant to certain antibiotics. Medical professionals are aware of this strain of gonorrhoea to make sure the correct antibiotics are prescribed.

Gonorrhoea

Type: Bacteria



MALE and FEMALE

Signs and Symptoms

Stomach pain



Yellowish/white discharge

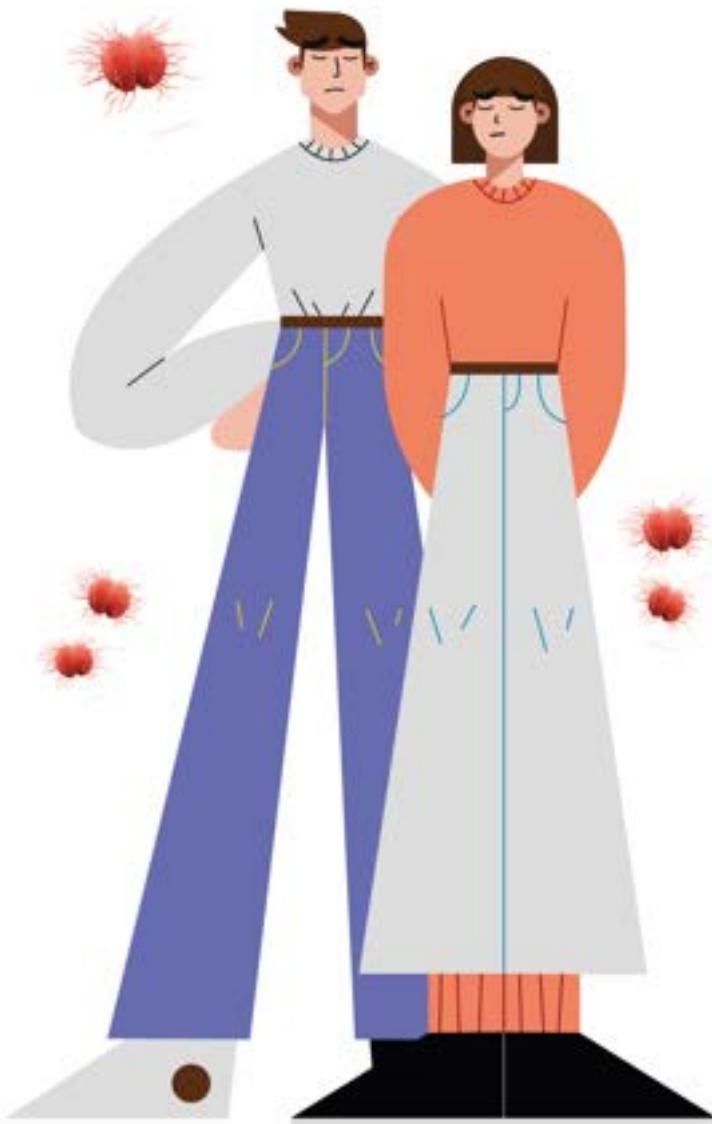


Pain when urinating



Effect of Health

In both men and women if left untreated can cause infertility



© Victor Rubio

How can it be treated



Antibiotics by injection



Testing



Swab or a urine test





Herpes

Type: Virus



MALE and FEMALE

Signs and Symptoms

Feeling unwell with flu-like symptoms, **stinging, tingling** or **itching** in the **genital or anal area**, **painful blisters** that turn into **red sores**



Effect of Health

Although there are no serious implications as herpes is a **virus** **outbreaks can reoccur**, and **blisters** can appear at any time



How can it be treated



No cure but antiviral creams and tablets can help to ease symptoms



Testing



A swab is used to take some fluid from the visible blisters or sores



© Victor Rubio

Did you know...

That HIV can also be passed from person to person by sharing needles.

PEP: if someone thinks they have been exposed to HIV within (3 days) 72 hours it is possible to take an anti HIV medication called PEP which could stop infection.

PREP: is a medication that can be taken before sex which can reduce the risk of HIV. Note PREP does not reduce the risk of other STI's.



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HIV

(Human Immunodeficiency Virus)

Type: Virus

MALE and FEMALE

Signs and Symptoms

2-6 weeks after HIV infection flu like symptoms may be present, a person can then seem healthy and well for many years until their immune system start to break down



Effect of Health

If left untreated there can be serious health implications leaving a person vulnerable to other diseases also can lead to AIDS (Auto Immune Deficiency)

How can it be treated



Not curable but preventable and treatable. Regular blood tests taken to check how cells are fighting infection and a combination of antiretro virals are used. A healthy diet and lifestyle helps to support the immune system.



Testing



A blood test and sample of saliva from the mouth





Syphilis

Type: Bacteria



MALE and FEMALE

Signs and Symptoms

1st stage:

Painless sores that can appear on the genitals and mouth as well as other areas of the body

2nd stage:

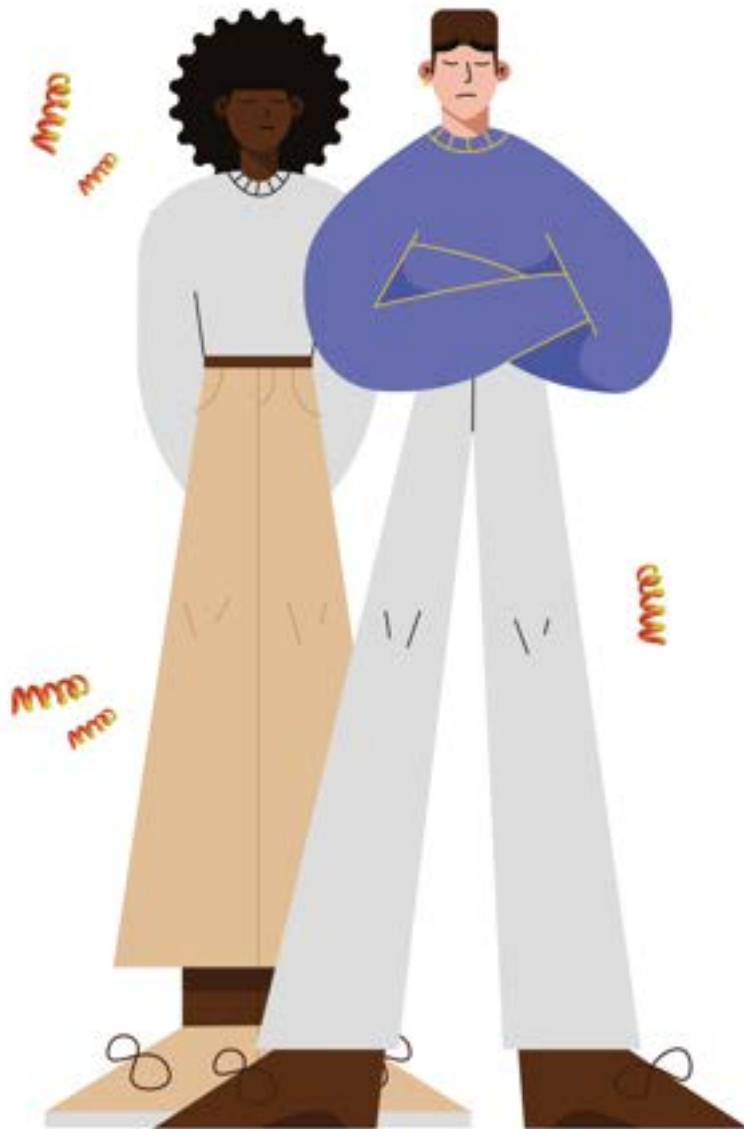
Rash, sore throat, tiredness headaches or swollen glands in neck, groin or armpits

3rd stage:

Can affect the brain and nervous system

Signs and Symptoms

If left unnoticed and untreated syphilis can be serious and can spread to the brain and nervous system which could lead to death



© Victor Rubio

How can it be treated



The first stages of syphilis can be treated with antibiotics



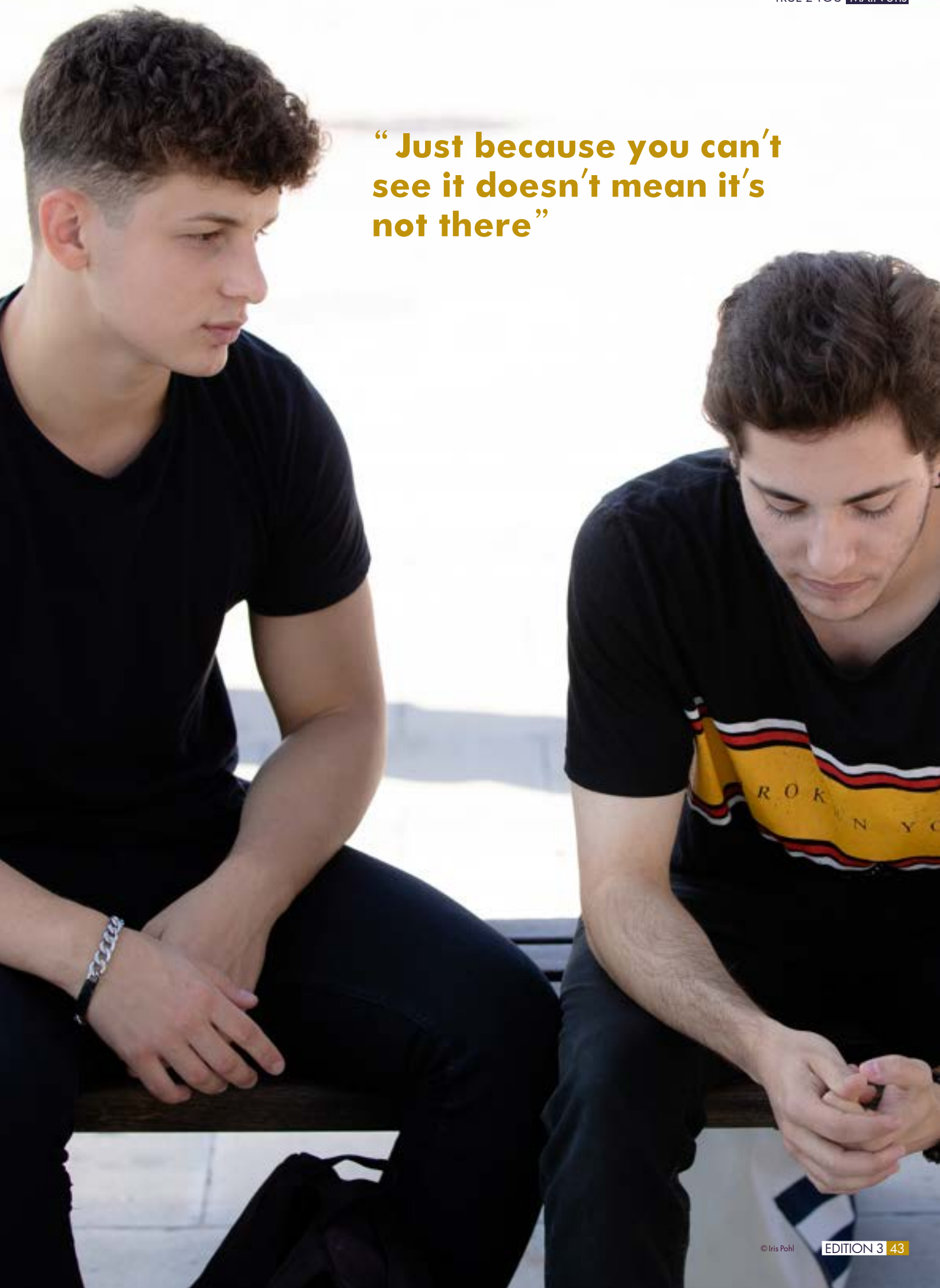
Testing



A blood test. May also include removing a sample of fluid from any sores using a swab



“ Just because you can't see it doesn't mean it's not there ”



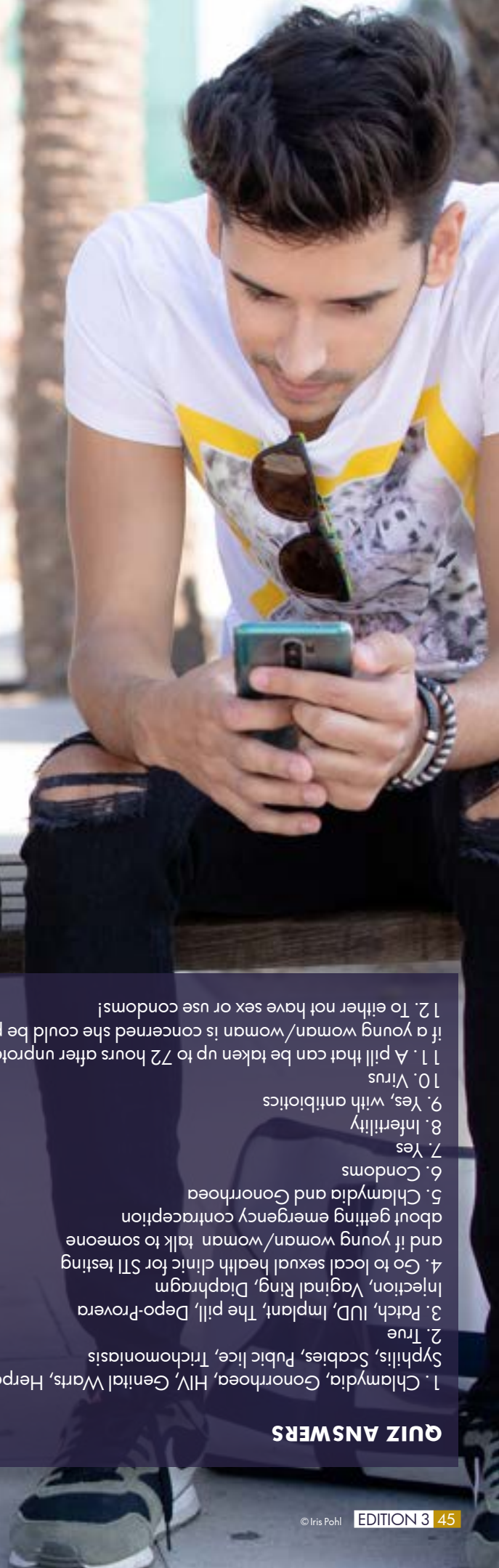
STIs

QUIZ!

How much do you know about STIs?

- 1 Can you name 3 STIs?
- 2 You can catch STIs from oral sex? True or False?
- 3 Can you name 3 contraceptive methods that can prevent pregnancy?
- 4 If a condom splits what should you do?
- 5 What is the most common STI in young people?
- 6 What is the only form of contraception that protects against STIs and prevents pregnancy?
- 7 Do condoms have an expiry date?
- 8 If Chlamydia or Gonorrhoea were left untreated what could a health implication be?
- 9 Can Syphilis be treated?
- 10 Is Genital Warts a virus or bacteria?
- 11 What is emergency contraception?
- 12 What is the best way to avoid an STI?

Take our quiz to find out:

**QUIZ ANSWERS**

1. Chlamydia, Gonorrhoea, HIV, Genital Warts, Herpes, Syphilis, Scabies, Pubic lice, Trichomoniasis
2. True
3. Patch, IUD, Implant, The pill, Depo-Provera Injection, Vaginal Ring, Diaphragm
4. Go to local sexual health clinic for STI testing and if young woman/woman talk to someone about getting emergency contraception
5. Chlamydia and Gonorrhoea
6. Condoms
7. Yes
8. Infertility
9. Yes, with antibiotics
10. Virus
11. A pill that can be taken up to 72 hours after unprotected sex if a young woman/woman is concerned she could be pregnant
12. To either not have sex or use condoms!

CONTRACEPTION

Your Body your Choice

There are over 11 different contraceptive methods. We will cover most of them here briefly but if you want to find out more information about contraception speak with your local contraception and sexual health clinic.

Male Condom

What is it:

Made from latex (can also get non-latex condoms if someone has allergies to latex), a condom is used to cover a penis preventing sperm from entering the vagina.

Advantages:

Is the only form of contraception that protects against STIs. Easy to use. No artificial hormones are involved. There are many different types, even really thin condoms (but just as strong) so if people don't like the feel of condoms it feels more sensitive when having sex with their partner. No serious side effects.

Disadvantages:

Couples may find condoms interrupt sex (stopping to get the condom etc) but this can be used as part of the foreplay.

Condoms are strong however if not used correctly may tear or split.

Checks to do on a condom:

Condoms are 98-99% effective. The 1 or 2% they are not is when checks have not been done or they are not used correctly.

Checks to do:

- ① **The condom should be put on when the penis is erect (hard)** and before it comes into contact with your partner's body.
- ② **Check the condom is in date.** All condoms should have an expiry date, if the condom is out of date the lubricant on the condom can dry out and the condom can split. 🍆
- ③ **Make sure the condom has a kite mark on either a CE or heart symbol**   on the condoms means it has been tested to a good standard.
- ④ **Make sure there is air in the packet by moving the condom to the side of the packet.** If there is no air in the packet (the packet is flat) then it means the packet has been pierced which can make the lubricant dry out and therefore split the condom. If there is no air in the packet do not use, get another condom.
- ⑤ **Open the packet carefully** using hands so not to tear the condom (don't use teeth to open the packet) 🤔👤
- ⑥ **Make sure the condom is the right way up.** It should look like a Mexican hat (with the condom coming up through the middle of the ring). 🎩
- ⑦ **Hold the tip of the condom between your forefinger and thumb to make sure no air is trapped inside the tip** (the condom may split if air is trapped inside).
- ⑧ **Place the condom over the tip of the penis.**
- ⑨ **While squeezing the tip of the condom, roll it down over the length of the erect penis.** Note: If the condom will not unroll, it's probably on the wrong way round. Take it off and start again with a new condom as there may be sperm on it.

During and after Sex:

- **Make sure the condom stays in place while you're having sex.** If it comes off, stop and put on a new one on.
- After ejaculation, while the penis is still hard, **hold the condom in place and carefully withdraw the penis from your partner's body.**
- **Only take the condom off the penis when there is no further contact with your partner's body.**
- **Never use a condom twice!**
- **Never use 2 condoms (one on top of the other)!!** 2 condoms is not better or more protected than 1. Friction can happen between them and they could end up both splitting or tearing.

Female Condom

What is it:

Similar to a male condom but is placed inside the vagina.

Advantages:

Protects against STI's. No serious side affects.

Disadvantages:

Could get pushed into the vagina. Would need to make sure the penis is in the female condom in the vagina. Although available not as used and as popular as the male condom.

WITHDRAWAL METHOD – IS NOT CONTRACEPTION AND DOESN'T PROTECT AGAINST PREGNANCY OR STIs

You may have heard of the withdrawal method. Also known as 'pulling out'.

This involves the penis being removed from the vagina prior to ejaculation to prevent pregnancy.

This is seen as a risky and non-effective form of contraception

as prior to a male orgasm and ejaculation there is a small amount of pre-ejaculate semen, also known as precum, which contains sperm.

Even this tiny amount of precum, before ejaculating can lead to pregnancy if the female is ovulating.





HORMONAL CONTRACEPTION

For women

Hormonal contraception contains artificial hormones of either estrogen and progesterone or just progesterone which are released into the body to stop ovulation.

The way hormonal contraception works is by stopping ovulation, thickening the cervical mucus to prevent sperm reaching an egg and thinning the lining of the uterus (womb) to prevent a fertilised egg implanting in the womb to grow (pregnancy).

There are some non-artificial hormone types of contraception which are the condom, diaphragm, copper IUD and sponge.

Here is some basic information on forms of hormonal contraception.

Note: for medical advice or more information contact your GP or your local contraceptive and sexual health service.

The Pill:

The pill is a small tablet taken orally and is normally taken for 21 days, then a 7-day break is taken where the body has something called a 'false bleed' which is not an actual period but a bleed due to the withdrawal of the artificial hormones.

Contraceptive Patch:

This looks like a plaster, the patch is stuck to the skin and releases the artificial hormones estrogen and progesterone (the same hormones as the pill). A new patch will need to be used each week for 3 weeks out of 4.

Implant:

A small flexible tube about 40mm in size that is inserted under the skin of the upper arm which releases the artificial hormone progesterone into the body that can last up to 3 years. It requires a small surgical procedure to fit and remove it.

Injection:

The injection can either be in the buttock or upper arm. There are different types that lasts up to either 8 or 13 weeks. Once the injection has been given it cannot be removed from the body so if it doesn't feel right in the body and you experience side effects, these might not clear until 8-13 weeks.

IUS:

A small plastic 'T' shaped device which releases the artificial hormone progesterone into the body. Can last up to 5 years but can be removed at any time.

Vaginal Ring:

A small soft plastic ring that is placed inside the vagina and can be left there for 21 days, it's then taken out placed into a special disposable bag and placed in a bin. 7 days after removing the ring a new one is inserted.

Remember: Both these types of hormonal and other non-hormonal birth control (IUD, Diaphragm, Contraceptive Sponge and Fertility Awareness Method) don't protect against STIs. Only condoms protect against STIs.

Side effects of hormonal birth control

Like any medical drug, side effects can be experienced with hormonal birth control. One of these is how it can affect mood.

Some studies have found that girls and women who use hormonal birth control are significantly more likely to be diagnosed with depression.

If someone starts using hormonal contraception in their early teenage years, they may not be aware that their emotions and moods are changing due to taking this and think that the mood changes and emotions are natural (that it is just in their character to have ups and downs or to cry at the slightest thing or suddenly feel angry and frustrated).

These moods can become part of someone's everyday life and they may feel that's how and who they are so it could be difficult to make the connection of the mood changes with the hormonal contraception that's being taken.

Hormonal birth control can also have other side effects that include migraines, hair loss, loss of libido (sex drive), weight gain, bloating, nausea, headaches, dizziness, breast tenderness, ovarian cysts and they may effect normal thyroid function and overall hormonal health.

If you choose to take hormonal contraception it's a great idea to observe your body and any changes that are happening so you are aware if or how it is affecting you.

Taking any artificial hormones changes the bodies very delicate system of hormonal health which is an important internal health compass for your overall wellbeing.





Non-hormonal contraception

IUD (also known as the coil)

Is a small plastic and copper 't' shaped device put into the uterus by a doctor or nurse. The copper that is released into the body is toxic to sperm and therefore prevents sperm from surviving inside a woman's body. The IUD can stay in the body for up to 5-10 years but can be taken out at any time. Specific side effects with the IUD is that it can make periods heavier or longer and there is a small increased risk of ectopic pregnancy (when a fertilised egg implants itself outside of the womb, usually in one of the fallopian tubes) if the IUD fails.

Diaphragm

Is a flexible soft silicone or latex device that is used with spermicide (a cream or gel that kills/prevents sperm entering the uterus). The Diaphragm is placed in the vagina to cover the cervix. This is only used when having sex and can be put in any time before sex (however extra spermicide needs to be used 3 hours before sex). It may take a while in getting comfortable in how to use it. Some people may be sensitive (have allergies) to spermicide.

Contraceptive Sponge

Is a specific sponge that can be used, made of a plastic foam that contains spermicide it is inserted into the vagina before having sex. The same sponge cannot be reused but one sponge can last up to 24 hours (if would need to be left in 6 hours after having sex) it cannot be left in for more than 30 hours. Like all these methods it doesn't protect against STIs.

Fertility Awareness Method

This method is based on observing your body and cycle every day. It involves identifying and recording daily signs and symptoms of fertility during the menstrual cycle to avoid pregnancy, monitoring the length of the menstrual cycle. Daily readings of the body's temperature are noted as well as changes to cervical secretions (cervical mucus).

This method can give you greater awareness of your body and is a natural contraception where no artificial hormones are used so would not experience any side effects, but you would need to be dedicated and consistent in taking the recordings of your body. It can take about 3-6 menstrual cycles to learn and daily records would need to be kept.

Emergency Contraception

This is not a form of contraception and shouldn't be taken too many times but can be used to prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex or if contraception that has been used has failed, for example, forgetting to take a pill or the condom splitting. It is advised that emergency contraception is used as soon as possible to prevent pregnancy.

There are 2 types of emergency contraception:

- The emergency contraceptive pill. Also known as the morning after pill.
- The intrauterine device (also known as the IUD or coil). The IUD can be inserted up to 5 days after unprotected sex.

Antibiotics - some types of antibiotics can interfere with contraception so if you have been prescribed antibiotics by your GP and are taking hormonal contraception during this period use condoms as well to make sure you are protected.

Remember it is your body your choice so only go with what feels right for YOU. If you try a form of contraception and it doesn't feel right for you then you can change this.



The vulva and vagina

The vulva is the name for the external parts of the female genitals and often mistakenly called the vagina. The vulva and labia form the entrance of the vagina, and the vagina is the internal, or inside part of the female genitals.

The vulva is made up of:

The **mons pubis**, the pad of tissue that is usually covered with pubic hair. It functions as a cushioning during sexual intercourse and also contains sebaceous glands that secrete pheromones (chemical substance) for sexual attraction.

The **labia majora** are the outer lips which are covered with pubic hair and are there to enclose and protect the other external genital organs.

Labia minora are the inner lips (inside the Labia Majora). They begin at the clitoris and end under the opening of the vagina. The skin is hairless and can be short, long, wrinkled, or smooth. Often one lip is longer than the other. Its role is to protect the vaginal and urethral openings from irritation, dryness, and infection.

The clitoris is under the point where the inner labia meet and has more of a sensual role than a functional one.

The hymen is a thin membrane of tissue that covers the vaginal opening, although it is not known to have a specific function it's thought that it keeps germs and dirt out. During puberty estrogen is made by the ovaries and causes the hymen to change shape and stretch becoming susceptible to tearing (sometimes this can cause a slight pain, but sometimes not). The hymen then becomes a half moon shape allowing the menstrual blood to leave the body during menstruation.

The urethra is a tube that is connected to the bladder and where urine leaves the body and is separate to the opening of the vagina.

The vestibule holds the opening for the vagina and urethra.

The urinary opening sits just in front of the vaginal opening and is where urine leaves the body.

The vaginal opening is below the urinary opening and where menstrual blood leaves the body, where sexual penetration is, and babies are born.

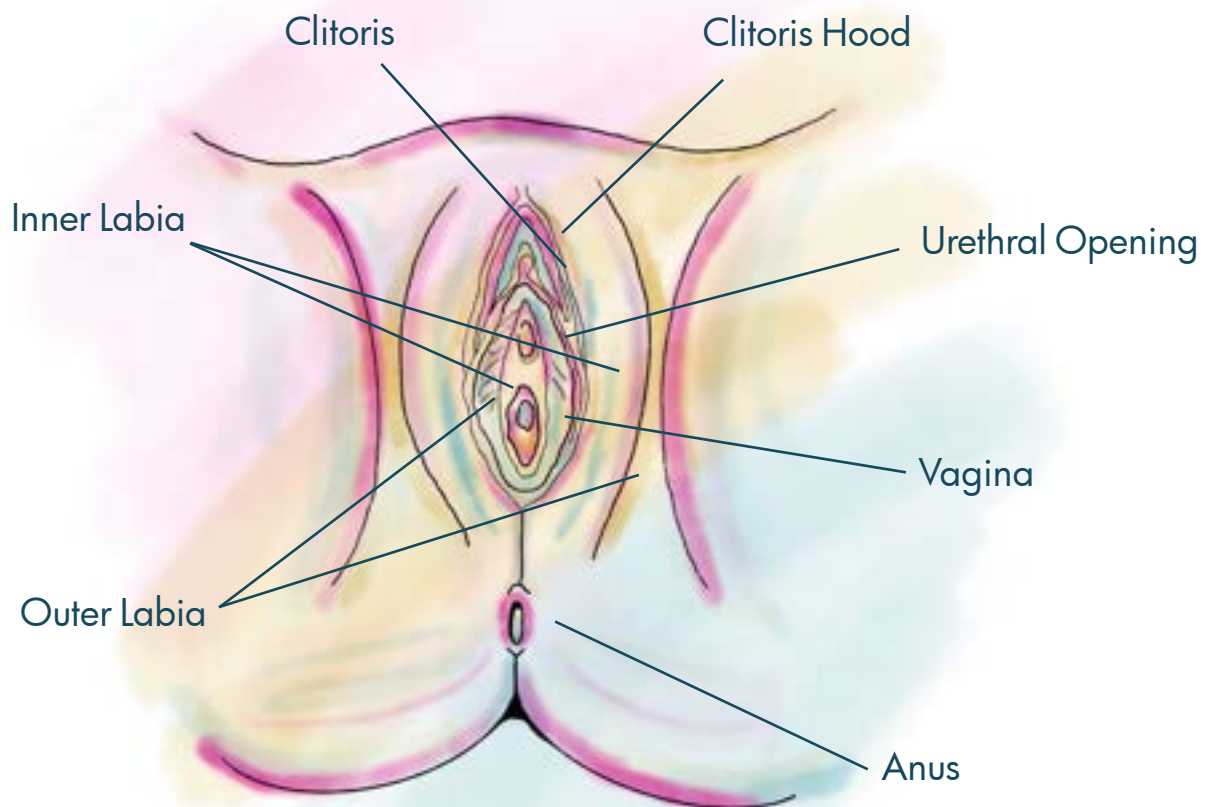
The perineum is the area of skin between the vagina and the anus.

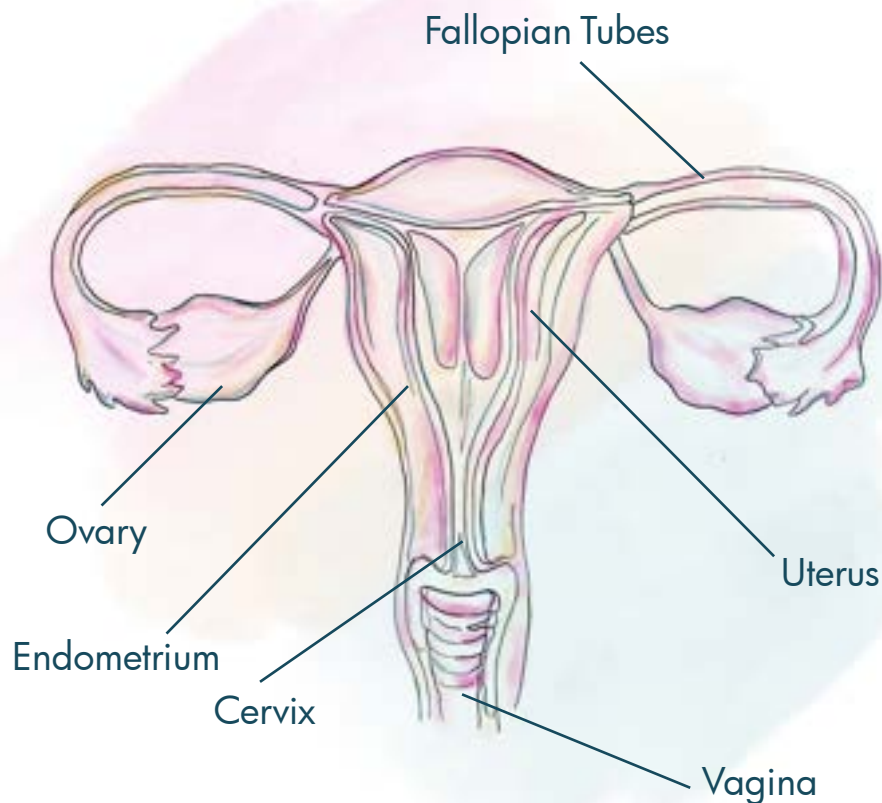
The vagina is the female sexual organ, an elastic, muscular canal, about

3-6 inches long, with a soft, flexible lining that provides lubrication and sensation. The vagina connects the uterus to the outside world.

The vagina is a woman's most sacred space and the opening to her centre of sacredness, which is the cervix.

The cervix is a cylinder-shaped neck of tissue that connects the vagina and uterus. Located at the lowermost portion of the uterus, the cervix is composed primarily of fibromuscular tissue.





© Artwork by Sumha Serafin

During menstruation, the cervix opens a small amount to permit passage of menstrual flow. During vaginal childbirth, the cervix dilates widely to allow the baby to pass through.

The cervix produces cervical mucus that changes in consistency during the menstrual cycle to prevent or to aid pregnancy. Just before ovulation cervical fluids increase and become like raw egg whites in consistency which nourishes the sperm cells and enhances their ability to move through the cervical canal. After ovulation the mucus becomes thicker and makes it more difficult for sperm to enter.

During heterosexual intercourse (vaginal penetration) the vagina receives the penis. It's an important moment when having sex as it is the woman who guides the male partner when to insert the penis. However, it is often experienced the other way around that the man is the one who decides and kind of intrudes the vagina. This leads to many women having pain when the penis enters, as the vagina may not be 'ready' or she is not given her leading role

we could say and hence is not inviting the penis in, but instead entered.

On a physical level the vagina needs to be warm, swollen and well lubricated to be considered ready to being entered. All the tissue is soft and spongy, and the penis can glide in. If there is no change with the vagina (it's not ready) then it can cause friction and the muscles may contract which can cause pain.

Did you know

- **The clitoris** has 8,000 nerve endings! 4,000 more than the tip of a penis.
- **Your vagina cleans itself!** The vagina produces fluids needed that cleanse the vaginal area.
- **Just like snowflakes no two vulvas are the same.** The labia majora and labia minora look different in colour, shape and size.
- **Other than the intestines, vaginas contain more bacteria (good bacteria) than anywhere else in the body which help balance the pH levels.** When these levels are thrown off it can cause itching, unusual discharge, burning and unpleasant odour.
- **Your vagina grows when aroused.** The vagina can double in size when aroused where the upper part of it elongates and pushes the cervix and uterus slightly deeper into the body to make room for penetration.
- **The vagina naturally lubricates** to make penetrative sex more enjoyable and comfortable.

Many young women experience pain during intercourse which is NOT normal.

You should never under any circumstances experience vaginal pain during intercourse.

The vagina tells us if she is ready or not so it's wise to listen to her and not override the communication just to do it or to please the desire for intercourse of your partner.

HEALTH CHECK


Important note: If you notice any changes in shape, size, colour, unusual discharge, blisters, sores, itching or swelling speak to your GP or healthcare professional for a further check-up and to prevent infections.

- **Knowing your vulva** in look, shape, size and feel is really important so it's easy to spot any changes in appearance or discharge.

- **Professionals suggest to check your vulva once a month** in between periods, checking around the same day each month.

Find a private and comfortable space you won't be disturbed. You will need somewhere with good light and have a handheld mirror.

- **Check the area where the pubic hair grows.** Checking for any bumps, rashes, spots, or moles.



- **Finding the clitoris** look for any discolouration, bumps, or growths. Doing the same for the labia majora (outer lips) and labia minora (inner lips). Also check the opening of the vagina, opening of the urethra and perineum for any lumps, bumps, growth, or rashes.

The clitoris

How much do we really know about the clitoris?

When people talk about the clitoris, they usually refer to the glans which is a pea-sized nub where the inner labia meet. This 'nub' is the most nerve-rich and very sensitive outside part of the vulva but is only the tip of the iceberg, as two thirds of this delicate organ (the body which is the corpora, crura and bulb) are within the body below the glans.

With twice as many nerve endings as the penis, this precious organ is an amazing power source in the female body and the depth of pleasure our bodies can hold by design is misunderstood at best, often actively discouraged and generally unknown.

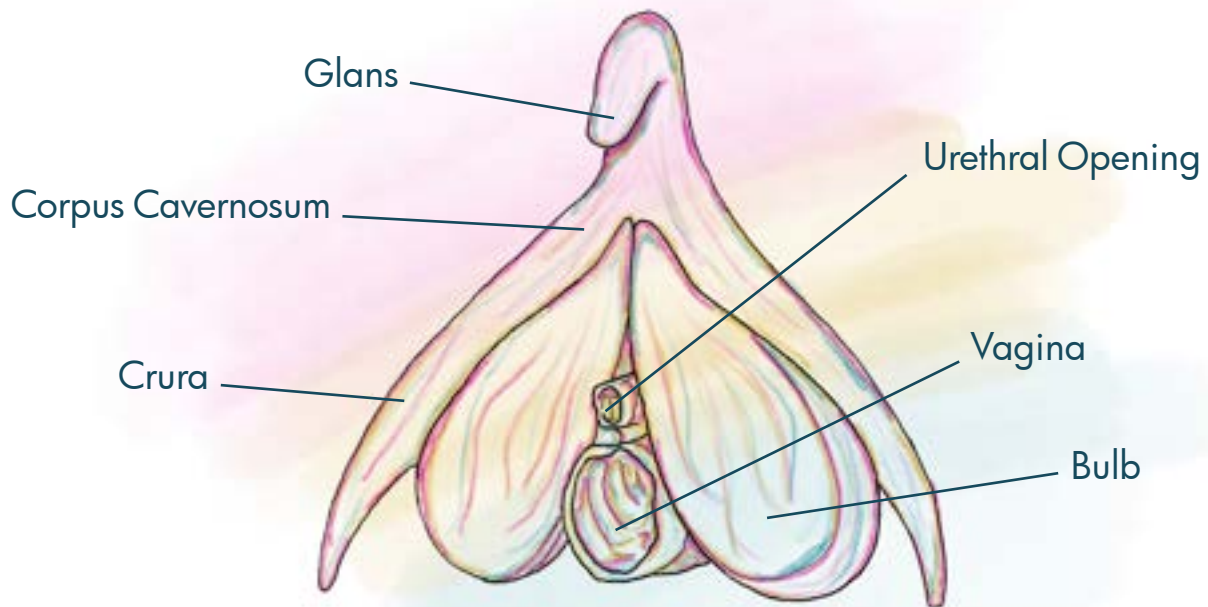
Pleasure is different for every woman and hence stimulation of this chalice shaped organ can be felt from the inside and the outside.

It's the real G-spot!!

Yes, the so-called g-spot is actually part of the clitoral inner network!

Don't believe that because it's hidden it is less powerful and get to explore a most precious part of your body but not solely through physical stimulation, also just by knowing that there is an innate delicacy and beauty within you. Allow yourself to connect to this beautiful inner network of delicacy on a daily basis. Just imagine that in your body is a very sensitive chalice that radiates preciousness and beauty – this is the clitoris!!!





© Artwork by Sumha Serafin

What is a chalice?

The word chalice derives from the Greek kalyx, and it simply means 'cup'. The most common shape for a chalice is with a large bowl on top, with a stem that widens out as it goes down to a flat base. The chalice has also been referred to as the Holy Grail giving it miraculous power and it is used as a religious object. For many the chalice symbolises the feminine energies of the universe and is also described as the womb of the goddess.

Every woman is different in body shape and feels different when stimulated, so always communicate with your partner about what you like and what they like to make it a pleasurable moment for both of you.

Try this exercise:

For a practical way to deepen your relationship with yourself, stand shoulder width apart with your feet and then imagine a pendulum hanging from your cervix in between your feet and start to move the imaginary pendulum in a side-wise figure eight movement, focusing on the middle point of the eight. You will feel how the whole area of your vagina, clitoris, uterus, mainly your whole lower female parts become alive and ignited.

The Penis

The penis is the male sexual organ, reaching its full-size during puberty. As well as the sexual function where it carries semen out of the body, it's also where urine leaves the body.

The penis is really similar in shape to the clitoris, but instead of being more of an internal organ like the clitoris, it's more of an external one, made up of the root, body (shaft), and glans.

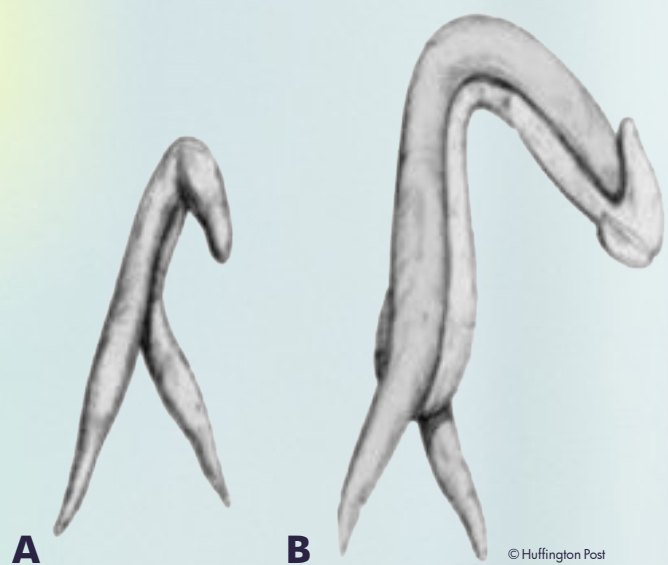
The glans part of the penis is also called the 'head' or the 'tip' and contains 4,000 nerve endings, which make it the most sensitive part of the penis.

If a boy, young man or man isn't circumcised the foreskin is the shroud of skin that covers the head of the penis. Circumcision is the surgical removal of the foreskin.

Along the sides of the penis are two strands of tissue called corpus cavernosum, this is where blood fills this tissue to cause an erection.

Similar to a female body every male body is different in shape and size and feels different when stimulated; so as always, communicate with

your partner about what they like and what you like to make it a pleasurable moment for both of you. The penis is an organ that isn't just there to function, as in getting an erection in time and or being the last part of the urination, it's a very sensitive part of the body.



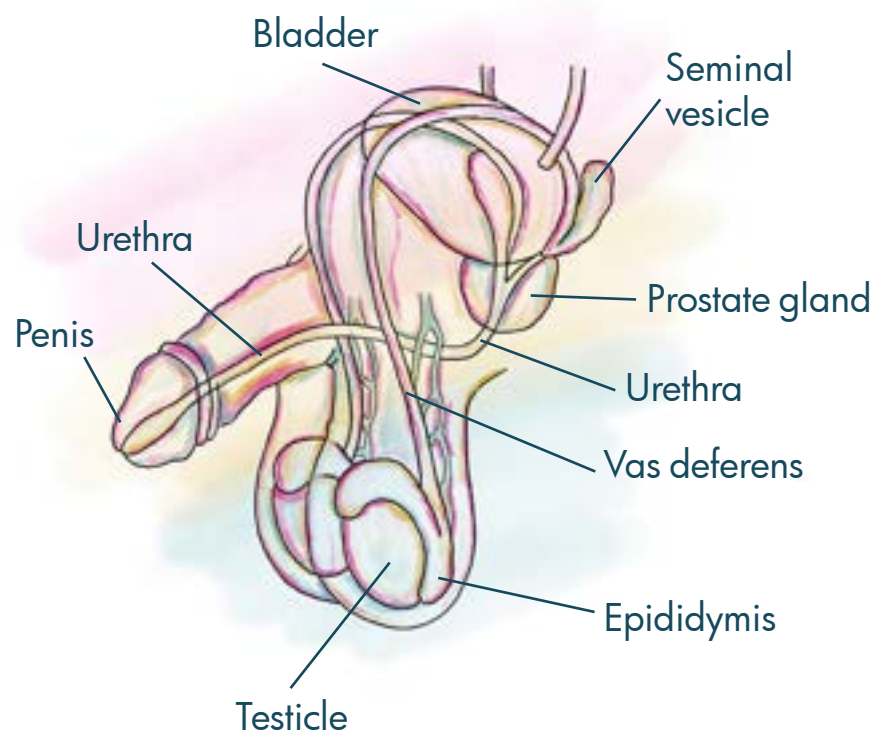
The clitoris (A) and penis (B) emerge from the same cells in a zygote.

In the media/society the penis isn't represented as a sensitive or precious part of the body but seen instead as something that is only there for sex with expectations of how it should perform and of course how big it should be making many young men feel pressured during puberty hoping their penis will be big, as big penises make someone a real man (which of course we know is completely not true).

Premature ejaculation occurs when ejaculation happens sooner during sexual intercourse than he or his partner would like.

Premature ejaculation is when you have an orgasm before intercourse or right after you start. There's no set time when ejaculation should happen during sex, but if you ejaculate and lose your erection very soon, you and your partner may feel there's not enough time to enjoy it. This can be frustrating and even embarrassing, however, it's a common issue for males and data says that between 30% to 40% have it at some time in their life.

Size really doesn't matter especially when you make it about connection with another and the sensitivity of touch. There can also be the pressure of having an erection for as long as possible which can be why so many young men have premature ejaculation when having sex for the first time or several times because of putting themselves under pressure and a level of what's expected from them.



Taking care of your penis

Caring for you and your body is always super important, the more we care for ourselves the more this is felt by others and respected. This includes caring for the genitals. Your penis is not a performer but a part of you and like any part of us connecting with it and taking care of it is key.

Washing your penis and testicles every day is really important, if you don't then a yellowish-white creamy substance called smegma starts to build up under the foreskin or on the head of the penis. Smegma is a natural substance (secretions, moisture, oil and skin cells) found on the genitals but if left to build up can lead to an infection so it's important to clean gently and properly everyday. If you have foreskin pull it gently back to wash underneath.

When masturbating or simply being under the shower and washing it, do you allow yourself to treat your whole body with tenderness and delicacy, including your penis? Or do you rush to get washed and dressed as quickly as possible.

CHALLENGE!!

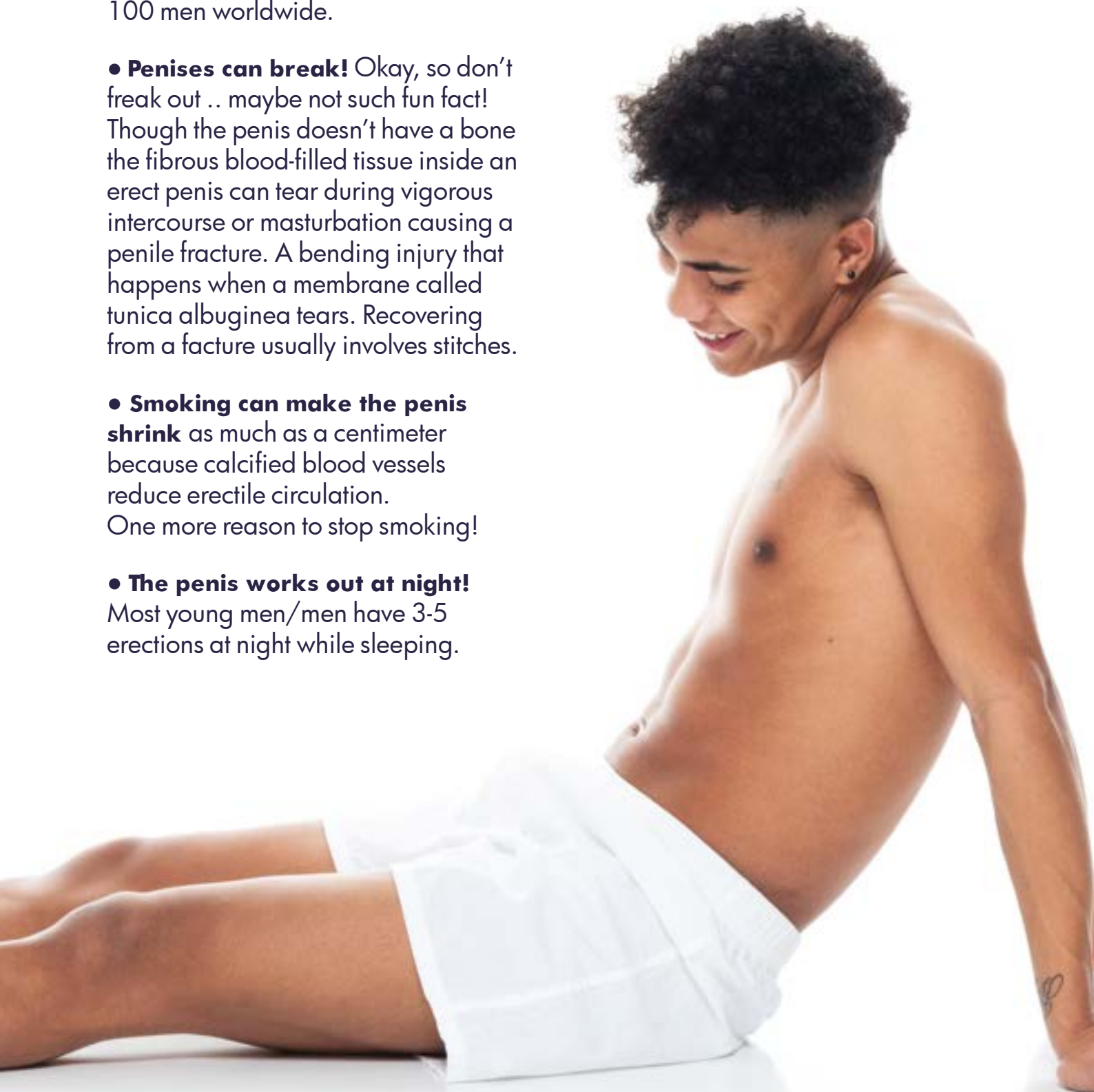
If rushing is what you normally do try taking your time and treating your body with respect and care when washing for a week and see what the difference is, not only in that moment but in your day and relationship with yourself and others. You might be surprised to see that such a simple thing can make such a difference!



Did you know...

- **An average male orgasm lasts 6 seconds.**
- **Some men are born with 2!** it's a condition called Diphallus and affects 100 men worldwide.
- **Penises can break!** Okay, so don't freak out .. maybe not such fun fact! Though the penis doesn't have a bone the fibrous blood-filled tissue inside an erect penis can tear during vigorous intercourse or masturbation causing a penile fracture. A bending injury that happens when a membrane called tunica albuginea tears. Recovering from a fracture usually involves stitches.
- **Smoking can make the penis shrink** as much as a centimeter because calcified blood vessels reduce erectile circulation. One more reason to stop smoking!
- **The penis works out at night!** Most young men/men have 3-5 erections at night while sleeping.

- **Phallophobia** is the fear of a penis.
- **Koro** is a syndrome when individuals have an irrational belief that their penis will retract back into their body!



The Testicles

The testicles, also called testes are two oval shaped organs in the male reproductive system and are contained in a sac of skin called the scrotum. The scrotum hangs outside the body below the penis near the upper thighs. The testes can be the same size or one can be bigger than the other which is normal. The testes are responsible for making sperm

and producing hormones called Androgens. Testosterone is the main androgen which is an important hormone during puberty for developing muscle and bone mass, deepening the voice and growth of body hair. It's also the hormone responsible for sex drive and fertility (making of sperm).

What makes up the testes?

The Epidiymis is a long tube that's located near each testicle and moves the sperm from the testicles. It's tube where sperm matures and connects each testicle to the vas deferens before ejaculation.

The Vas deferens are 2 tubes connected to the epididymis and where the sperm is stored. They carry the sperm out of the scrotal sac when ejaculation happens.

The Seminal vesicles are sac-like glands located below the bladder.

These glands produce the semen that sperm moves in.

The Prostate gland is about the size of a walnut, and surrounds the neck of the bladder and urethra (tube that carries urine from the bladder). The gland secretes a slightly alkaline fluid which forms part of the seminal fluid (fluid that carries sperm).

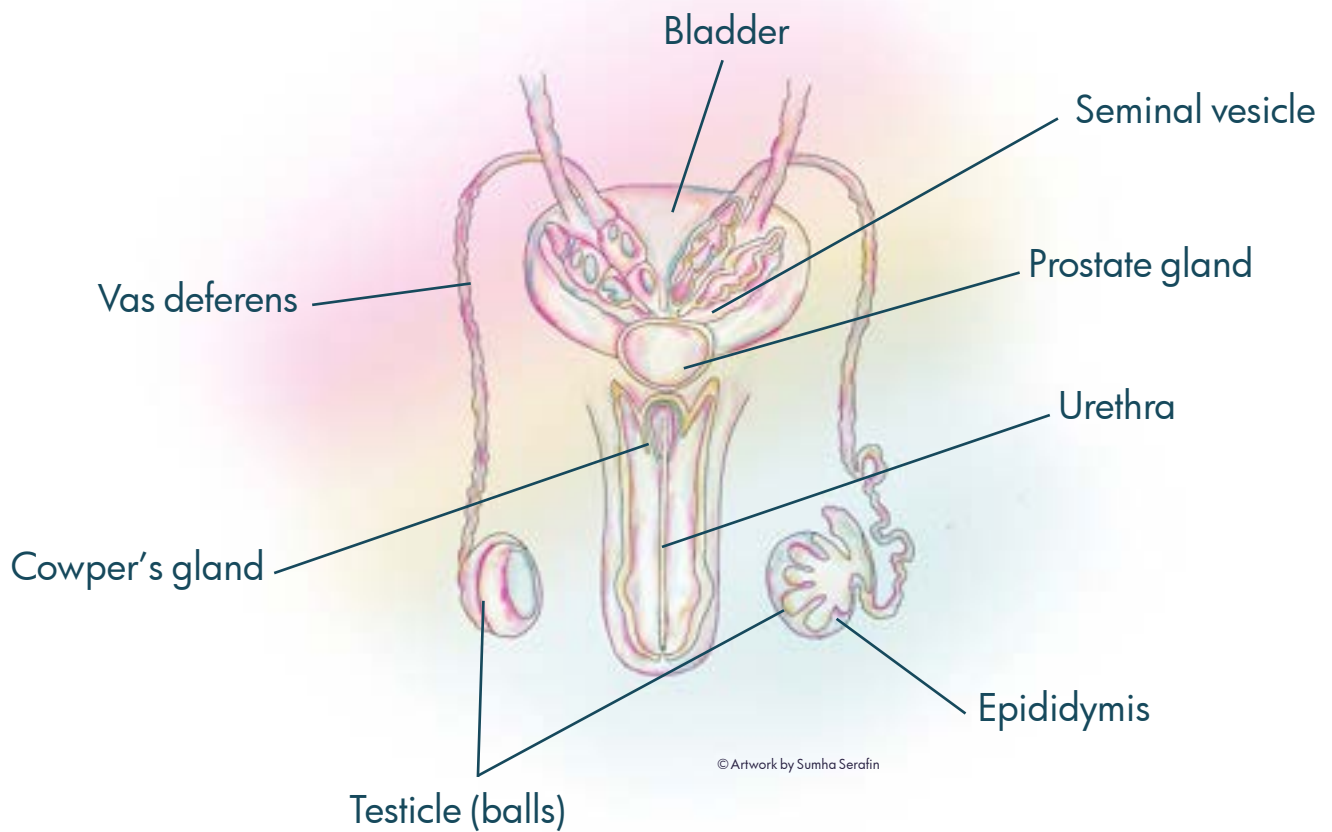
The Urethra is a tube that allows urine to flow outside the body. It's also the channel for semen to pass during ejaculation.

What's the difference between

semen and

sperm?

Sperm are the sex cells that are a part of fertilization and semen is the fluid that the sperm move in.



Did you know?

Sperm have no sense of direction! And most cannot swim in a straight line.

The average ejaculation contains 200 million sperm! Once ejaculated a sperm cell can live in their partner's body for up to 2/5 days

Testicles are sperm factories! Producing approximately 1,500 sperm every second! Which would be 130 million every day!

One hangs lower for a reason. The testicle on the left hangs a little lower than the one on the right due to temperature, allowing the temperature of one testicle to change without affecting the other, clever eh

It's normal for one to be **slightly bigger than the other**

The scrotum is as sexually sensitive as the vulva

The testicles are 5 ° colder than the rest of the body to preserve the sperm

The term blue balls has nothing to do with them being cold! Its used to describe when a person gets aroused but doesn't get any release.

When a person gets an erection the blood vessels to the penis and testicles expand to make room for increased blood flow.

After an orgasm the blood flow decreases but if there is no orgasm the decrease takes longer which is where the discomfort can come in.

The testicles can also grow in size when getting an erection

Its really important to do regular health checks with your body so you get to know your body and are aware if anything changes that doesn't feel right.

Health Check

During puberty there are lots of ways the testicles and penis change which is normal and natural. The penis and testes can have bumps and lumps which are harmless and a buildup of keratin (enlarged oil glands). Another reason for sores or lumps and bumps can be at STI, skin conditions, poor hygiene or some cases cancer.

Examining for any changes with your penis and testicles

- The best time to examine your penis and testicles is when in the bath or shower, as the heat relaxes the skin of the scrotum.
- To examine your testicles hold your penis out of the way.

- Support your scrotum in the palm of your hand, this will help you to become familiar with the size and weight.
- Examine one testicle at a time using both hands.
- Gently roll a testicle between your thumb and fingers, your testicles should feel smooth so check for any lumps, swellings or bumps.
- If you see or feel a pea-sized lump contact your doctor. It's probably nothing to worry about, but it's important to get it checked.
- Check for any changes in the size, shape, or feel of your testicles.

Important Note:
If you notice something that doesn't feel right or if you have any pain, discomfort, discharge or smell then contact your GP for a check up.

What is the right position and technique?

There is no right position or technique. The best position is what feels right for you. Simple. Your joy and pleasure during sex does not depend on having to be in a specific position and although it may be fun to try new positions, don't expect to find the magic one.

Sex is always the expression of how you feel about yourself and with your partner.

The position is just a tiny ingredient of a whole menu that is all about connection. And whatever position you choose will only be as relevant as the connection you have during sex. Positions will not give you a deeper or different connection with your partner. The connection comes first and from this the position will follow. Therefore, your relationship and the connection you have with your partner is the actual main ingredient.

Remember: Everyone's body is different, we all have different shapes and sizes, and this also includes our genitals.

So, one position that may work for one person might not work for another. And just because you had sex once in one position doesn't mean that you will have to continue to have sex in that position. The way we feel and how our body feels can change from one moment to the next.

Being honest with yourself and communicating about these changes and how you feel is really important or else you might end up doing something you don't feel comfortable with.

Enjoy experiencing what a difference it makes when you're being respectful and loving with yourself and your partner, communicating what kind of touch and sex you actually like, and finding out what your partner likes and what you could do together.

Sex is supposed to be fun. No one expects you to know what to do at any given moment. When being loving with yourself and your partner all you really have to do when having sex is make space for each other to explore, communicate and most importantly **ENJOY**.



Don't try to compare your experience to others! And be aware that many people exaggerate when it comes to sex, so don't believe most of what you hear.

Being into someone also doesn't mean that you have to have sex, there are many ways of enjoying each other's company. Sex is something we do when we feel truly safe and connected to our partner.

Needs and pictures sometimes get in the way, and we get convinced that we need to have sex in a certain way. We get fed pictures and ideals from movies, tv, music and porn.

Getting rid of these pictures and ideals might initially be difficult but this is where being honest in the relationship and coming back to what our body is communicating, supports us.

It's really important to not base sex on the outside and what the 'ideal' version of sex might look like.

Sex is about connection and enjoying being with your partner and yourself in every moment. It's about feeling the depth of your relationship and the way you are with each other. Feeling the beautiful body of your partner and the sweetness of his or her hands on your body.

When it hurts then STOP and communicate what you are feeling and change position or technique so it doesn't hurt.

If having sex continues to hurt seek professional advice from a sexual health service or doctor.



Libido

Libido refers to sexual desire and is also called sex drive. Your libido is influenced by:

- biological or hormonal factors (testosterone and oestrogen levels)
- your psychological wellbeing
- the level of intimacy you feel in your relationship

Loss of libido or low libido seems to be a common problem that affects many people at some point in their life.

If you feel you have loss of libido one of the first things to consider is whether you're happy in your relationship. Do you have any doubts or worries that could be behind your loss of sexual desire?



Your libido isn't just a function that makes you want to have sex, it is about the relationship you have with yourself and each other and how you are with each other at all times.

For example, are you caring and attentive to each other, when your not being physical?

Being in a long-term relationship doesn't mean that you will lose sexual attraction towards your partner. The more open and intimate you are with your partner the stronger the relationship can be.

Communication and connection are always key in a relationship!

If you feel you have loss of libido check with your doctor if you have a physical or psychological issue that make sex difficult or unfulfilling like ejaculation problems, erectile dysfunction, vaginal dryness, painful sex, an inability to orgasm, depression or feeling stressed, etc.

If you feel you have an overly high sex drive and want to be aroused in that moment, or lots of times, it can seem demanding and make your partner feel uncomfortable so make sure you check in with them about this, or get support if needed.



Oral Sex

Oral sex is stimulating your partners genitals with your mouth (tongue and lips), which can include licking or sucking the vulva (cunnilingus), the penis (fellatio), or anus (analingus). You can have mutual oral sex where partners both give and receive at the same time, also known as 69, or one person giving and the other receiving.

When giving or receiving oral sex it's easy to single out the part of the body that's receiving it and just focus on that, and if giving oral sex can have thoughts come in of 'am I doing it okay or do they like this?' so still check in with each other, you can use your hands to caress and touch your partner's body and skin as well so not just focusing on the genital area. The genitals are super sensitive so the lightest touch can be enjoyable.

As with all sex, oral sex can be a very intimate, personal and pleasurable act to engage in with your partner. It is common to feel vulnerable with a partner giving or receiving oral sex, because it is so intimate. So, it's really important to feel comfortable with this and communicate what you like and what you don't like. **Communicating what you like and don't like with your partner can be fun and doesn't have to be serious!**





Vaginal sex is a form of penetrative sex where an erect penis goes into the vagina.

The top of the penis and the clitoris have thousands of nerve endings in the glans, so they are a part of the body that's really sensitive and, when stimulated, feel pleasure. When people think about sex, they often think it means penis in vagina sex. Some people really like this – which is great for them. However, some people (with penises and vaginas) do it even when they don't like it because it can be seen as the only thing that counts as 'proper' sex (this is so not true).

With vaginal sex there can be a risk of pregnancy as well as STIs so it's important to discuss contraception with your partner including how you feel and what you like and don't like.

Remember sex is so much more than our genitals! It's about connection first and knowing your own body. Sex is the celebration of the connection you have with the other person and it is about celebrating and enjoying each other.

Also remember that you never have to perform when it comes to sex (just be you), and also that sex should never hurt.



Penis-Vagina Sex

Anal Sex

Anal sex is sexual activity involving the anus. The anus and rectum (which the anus leads to) both have very sensitive nerve endings. Regardless of sexual orientation, many people enjoy anal sex.

With anal sex, as with any type of sex, it is super important that both partners are into it. Everybody likes different things and is turned on differently, so when it comes to anal sex, as always, communication with your partner is key as well as knowing that it is something

you want to or don't want to do. Anal sex has become more popular through porn. However, if porn is making you want to try anal sex, don't do it like you see it in porn!!!

Anal sex requires a lot of trust, care and lots of lube (which is rarely if ever seen in porn).

Trusting someone to be super careful and respectful with you while having anal sex is just as important as when having any other intercourse or pleasure together. If not, anal sex can be a bad experience which is not loving or pleasurable.

**Let go of the scripts
you have learned -
Especially from porn!**

If either of you feel pain at any point it's important to STOP.

Sex should never be painful and pain is never something you should feel like you have to put up with!!

You may find that you need more lubricant with anal sex, than with other types of sex, as the anus isn't self-lubricating. It is also important that you feel in control and comfortable with how deep the penetration goes. The anus has very delicate skin, which is easy to tear and can take a while to heal. **So, go slow and gently!**

IMPORTANT

It's easier to get an STI (sexually transmitted infection) through anal sex as viruses or bacteria from semen can easily get into the blood stream of the other person.

Because of this it is important to always use condoms for anal sex! After anal sex NEVER put the penis or sex toy into a vagina or someones mouth! Always wash the penis or sex toy with care before having other types of sex.

Remember to claim what it is that makes it truly enjoyable and that both you and your partner are on that same page.

PAINFUL SEX

Okay so first .. sex should never be painful ..not even the first time!!!

Sex should always feel comfortable and enjoyable!!

For sex to be enjoyable and comfortable arousal is needed. Becoming aroused is the body's way of preparing for sex – but it **doesn't mean that you have to have sex.**

You can be aroused by being near or even thinking about a person that you like or when there is consensual physical touch with another.

When aroused a lot of blood flows around the genitals, making the penis erect and hard and the vagina relaxed and stretched out. With arousal also comes natural lubrication (getting wet), which comes through the vaginal walls and makes the entry very smooth. If arousal doesn't happen, sex can be painful, specifically for women.

So, don't try to have sex with a non-aroused vagina or penis!!!

Even though sex should never be painful, many people, particularly women, feel pain during sex and not only the first time!!

It's also important that if you have any concerns or are experiencing painful sex to contact your GP or a professional to speak for advice and support.

Painful sex can also happen when our body shuts down, when we don't feel connected with our body or the other person and only have functional sex.

Don't carry on with painful sex in the hope that it will get better, because often it doesn't get better and in fact it can get worse.

Communicating with your (sexual) partner about what you are experiencing is very important.

Definitely don't feel ashamed or believe you are not functioning correctly (especially in cases, where your partner seems to enjoy the sex) and therefore continue with the painful intercourse.

Speaking with your partner can offer an intimate conversation and clear any emotions and problems you may experience regarding sex.

If you are experiencing painful sex go through the check list on the next page and see if any of the points apply to you. Also, talk to your GP or Gynaecologist about it.

Remember that your body is always communicating with you and if something doesn't feel right to also look at the relationship we have with ourselves, including psychological and emotional wellbeing.

How do you feel in your relationship?

How do you feel about your body?

Are you generally enjoying sex?

POSSIBLE CAUSES FOR PAINFUL SEX

- Uncertain feelings towards sex that might stem from shame, guilt, fear, or anxiety.
- Sexual positions you are not comfortable with or not feeling comfortable with penetrative sex.
- Feeling that your partner is being too rough.
- Injuries or irritation of the vagina or penis due to rough sex and/or masturbation.

POSSIBLE MEDICAL CAUSES FOR PAINFUL SEX IN WOMEN:

- Infections: Bacterial, yeast, or sexually transmitted infections can cause pain during sex and usually have other symptoms, like discharge.
- Skin conditions that affect the genital areas.
- Vaginal dryness is the most common cause. Dryness can not only make sex painful, it throws off the vagina's balance of good bacteria, which can result in infections that contribute to painful sex.
- Vaginismus: The muscles at the opening of the vagina become tightly contracted, causing pain during sex.
- Vulvodynia: Chronic pain at the opening of the vagina, including burning, stinging, soreness, itching, rawness, and pain during sex.



POSSIBLE MEDICAL CAUSES FOR PAINFUL SEX IN MEN:

- A tight foreskin can make penetration painful, as the foreskin is pushed back.
- Small tears in the foreskin that can't be seen but cause soreness and a sharp, stinging pain around the tear.
- Inflammation of the prostate gland (prostatitis).
- Testicle pain and swelling can sometimes be caused by getting sexually aroused but not ejaculating (coming). This can also be a sign of an infection, such as Chlamydia.


Lubricant

For penetrative sex (vaginal or anus) wetness is very important. The vagina and the anus are very delicate areas of the body. So, it's important to avoid too much friction as it can cause damage and sometimes pain. **Being relaxed and sexually aroused is super important, but so is being wet.** The vagina can get wet when aroused but the anus doesn't. So when it comes to anal sex you should get some lubricant.

Lubricants don't prevent pregnancy or STIs, but can make sex more comfortable and pleasurable!

Although vaginas, when aroused, create their own lubricant this can be a lot or very little depending on the person, so some vaginas might not get quite wet enough to make penetrative sex comfortable or pleasurable which is where lube can support.





Always pay attention to you and your partners body and check if you both really feel like having penetrative sex. Don't force yourself to have entry sex by using lubricant or try to make your partner get wet enough for sex!

NOTE: It's important what lubricant you use. Lubricants come in four types: water based, silicon based, hybrid based, and oil based. Water, silicon and hybrid are ok to use with condoms, as they don't damage the latex, but oil-based lubes should not be used with condoms as they can cause damage to the latex condom.

Remember when you are using a condom the lube needs to be put on after the condom is put onto the penis, not before.

Not to use with a condom:

- Baby oil
- Bodylotion, handcream or sun cream
- Petroleum jelly (Vaseline)
- Coco butter or Coconut oil
- Hand sanitizer
- Olive oil or massaging oil
- Other oil-based products

Pleasure, Sensuality and Senses

GETTING TO KNOW YOU MORE

When it comes to sex all too often our senses and sensuality are missed out completely! It can be rushed or a tick-box for someone to say they have 'done' it, with one person feeling great while the other person might not feel so great and it just felt **mechanical** with **no true connection or intimacy**.

What about first learning to bring that PLEASURE to you? This is super simple and can be fun.

Time for you

Put aside a time and space for you to complete the Senses Star. For each point feel what's important for you. What do you love to touch, smell, taste, hear or see?

Touch

For example, touch could be when someone in the family or a friend hugs you, or you might have a snuggly/fluffy blanket or jumper that you love, or it could be stroking a pet, playing with your hair, wearing satin pyjamas or ALL of these!



For smell what do you like smelling?

It could be a favourite perfume, the smell of freshly cut grass or freshly washed clothes, or a favourite shower gel (this could also be touch as well when you use it).

What's your favourite taste?

Do you like the sweet taste of a mango or prefer the taste of a sour green apple? Or do like juice instead of the actual fruit, or maybe fruit isn't your thing at all? Exploring what we like supports developing more of an intimate relationship with ourselves and becoming more aware of our senses.

What's your thing?

What do you enjoy seeing?

Sunrises, sunsets, clouds in the sky, crowds of people or somewhere where there's loads of space and no people? Do you have a favourite colour or like a specific pattern? Your list can be endless when you include everything you like!

You might find when you do this you will probably have quite a few things for each point of the star.

Sound

Do you enjoy hearing raindrops fall onto a roof or the ground, the ringtone of your phone or listening to your favourite artist when in a car? The sound of someone's voice or the sound of the sea?

When we are more aware of these senses and what we love, it can support in reducing any stress we experience, aid relaxation, and build our self-worth. And ultimately, it can help build your confidence in a relationship to know what you love and then be able to express this to your partner.

Senses, Sensuality and Pleasure ... getting intimate with you partner

Are you aware of every touch on and to your body, even the slightest ones? Do you feel and hear your in- and out-breath you take as well as those of your partner? How does each kiss taste? What can you taste and feel when you are being kissed and or kissing someone's body? Can you smell the scents surrounding you? Do you notice how your partner's body smells?

Have you noticed how your body responds to these senses, especially when you let yourself feel and experience them more deeply?

How much you allow of this detail and deepening of the senses while having sex can make a difference to the experience. Then instead of it being just a mechanical movement you start to explore a more intimate relationship with them. Adjusting along the way with what you are feeling, correcting any movement that doesn't feel good, you realize it is then no longer just sex but that you are making love.



Masturbation

Masturbation is stimulating your genitals for sexual pleasure and/or to reach an orgasm. It can be a fun way of exploring the physical and sexual pleasures of your own body, finding out what you do and don't like sensually and sexually. Doing this can also help you communicate pleasure points to your sexual partner. Mutual masturbation can also be a part of your sexual foreplay.

Masturbation is often a very mental or visual activity as you can use fantasies or desires about someone or a situation or looking at stimulating images to arouse you. But, when we do this it can actually take us

further away from what we truly feel and the connection to our own body, because we end up focusing on what is outside of ourselves.

If you masturbate try experimenting what it feels like to masturbate without fantasies or images, just connecting to yourself and what that feels like for you.

Staying with you when exploring your body can help you to build a deeper relationship with yourself, supporting you to feel more confident and comfortable with and in your own body.

Busting the Myths of Masturbation

1. Masturbation is dirty

Myth! With a lack of sex education people have felt shame and guilt around sex and enjoying sex. There's nothing dirty or shameful about sex and this includes masturbation (which is a form of solo sex) and getting to know your body, what an orgasm feels like and what you do and don't like.

2. Female masturbation is embarrassing or gross

Not true! The idea of female masturbation is so repressed. Masturbation is accepted as 'normal' for guys and taboo for girls. Female masturbation is completely healthy and fun and it totally goes along with the mindset of needing to love yourself before anyone else can.

3. Masturbation must end in an orgasm.

Again, **myth busted** and not true. There is no outcome or 'finishing line' with masturbation but it can be an opportunity to enjoy your body and the experience. Just like sex with a partner there is no pressure with masturbation and what this 'should' look or be like.

4. Masturbation can cause you to suffer erectile dysfunction.

Myth. Erectile dysfunction is when a person is not able to have an erection during intercourse. This can be caused by anxiety, stress, tiredness alcohol or drugs or a health problem but not from masturbation.

5. If my partner is masturbating it means I'm not enough!

Myth. Similar to all the other myths if your partner masturbates it doesn't mean you are not enough!

People have different libido levels and if someone is in a relationship it doesn't mean to say they can't masturbate! Having a conversation with your partner around masturbation and whether it be a private or shared experience and what you feel can demystify anything around this.

"Masturbating was one of the best stress relievers I've ever discovered. Not only that, but it gives you the opportunity to explore and figure out what you like. Knowing myself helped me communicate better to my partners later on, and made everything else less stressful!"

**Learning to
just stay and be with me
and enjoy my body**

TESTIMONY 1

I started masturbating when I was younger. Nobody talked to me about masturbating and there was no external stimulation for doing it. I just discovered it and would get a pleasure-related relief by stimulating what I later discovered was my clitoris. I would mainly do it at night before going to bed, being already in bed as a means to get settled and sleep. There was the high feeling of the stimulation, but mainly it would settle my body from the days tension.

I didn't think it as sexual at all. My parents were aware of this and just saw it as something I would do, it was normal. I wouldn't hide it and there was no reason for me to hide it but as I got older, I realised that it was something very intimate and personal and would only do it being with myself.

When I masturbated, I never had fantasies or imagined things it was just stimulating my genitals to get the relief that the orgasm provides you with.

In becoming a young woman and starting sexual activity I realised that my self-stimulation could also be sexual and for a few years would start to use sexual fantasies when doing it.

Masturbation supported me to know exactly where my physical pleasure points are and I remember it would drive me crazy if partners were totally unaware of my pleasure points and just fumbled around randomly. I also did not like to be touched by partners as they were never as delicate and sensitive as I would be with myself. However, I was very open about it and would let them know and guide them on how to touch this precious intimate part of mine.

TESTIMONY 2

Going into my teens I liked touching and masturbating myself when I was in my bed before going to sleep. I liked how if I touched (what I now know as my clitoris but didn't know then) it was hypersensitive and when I had an orgasm it would go through my whole body, and I would have this intense pleasure for a few seconds that would then go.

I'd also have a sense or feeling that I had done something wrong. A bit shameful, that no one else would do this and although I liked the sensation it felt there was something missing.

I now know that this something missing was my relationship with myself, because when I was masturbating even though the sensation felt good there was also a feeling of emptiness.

So, then I would think I would have to think about something that turned me on so it wasn't so weird (not that it is weird) but this trying to think of something while masturbating brought a hardness to my body that didn't feel great. It was like I had to justify why I was masturbating!

In loving myself more and having more self-worth I found it easier to let go of this and instead when I did masturbate learn how to just be with me, experimenting on how my body felt and just staying with that. It felt easier, free-er, no hardness and no weirdness I would explore and be with different parts of my body. Where parts of my body felt tense could I let go a little bit more, was I aware of my breath, what did my heart feel like, did I like how I was touching, where I was touching. This helped me to let go of pictures from the outside and instead to learn to just stay and be with me and enjoy my body.

TESTIMONY 3

I started masturbating to porn and fantasies when I was 13 years old.

My first orgasm was kind of random, meaning I didn't even know that it was an orgasm. I just knew that I wanted to experience it again and figured out that porn and fantasies were an easy and fast way to do it. It wasn't that I particularly liked doing it to porn and fantasies, but it was just the best option that I thought I had.

So, I kept on watching porn for several years and also started searching for more extreme porn as I was still thinking that this was the only way for me to get an orgasm when I wasn't in a relationship. I thought it wouldn't even be possible to have an orgasm when not watching porn or having a fantasy.

Later in my life, during a conversation around masturbation someone shared with me that instead of watching porn or using fantasies to just be with my body and enjoy this, and when thoughts come in about girls or men (for me it was girls) it's a sign of not truly being with me. So I tried this and if thoughts came in about girls

I wouldn't criticize myself but observed what was happening and come back to me and my body.

When I was connected to my body I felt the love I had for myself and handled my penis in a completely different way as being a part of my whole body and not just focusing on that and an orgasm. It wasn't about getting it over and done with but enjoying it and me in a completely different way.

The first time I masturbated this way I noticed the orgasm wasn't just through my penis but I felt this through my whole body, even my toes and in my fingers.

Also masturbation took much longer as I was feeling more into my body during it and not checking out.

I loved masturbating this way and after the first time started questioning why I did not know this right from the beginning but instead thought porn and fantasies were the only way! Something that was so simple, but I wasn't told this until I was 20!



Orgasm

IT'S NOT THE GOAL

Sex is a great way to pleasure your partner and experience pleasure with your partner. So, focus on the journey, and not the destination.

Sex shouldn't be a race to the finish line. Use it as a way to learn about your partner's pleasure — and your own. It will make for a much more enjoyable experience. And if you do orgasm? Well, that's just a cherry on top.

What is an orgasm?

An orgasm (also known as climaxing or coming) is a feeling of pleasure that happens during a sexual activity including solo masturbation.

Orgasm with a vagina

How does it happen?

When a person with a vagina is stimulated the blood vessels dilate within the genitals. This increases the blood supply which causes fluid to pass through the vaginal walls making the vulva wet and also for the vulva to swell. The heart rate and breathing can quicken. The area of the vagina can become firm as the blood flow to the vagina reaches its limit and the clitoris pulls back against the pubic bone. Unlike people with a penis, people with a vagina do not have a recovery period after an orgasm, so it is possible for them to continue to have orgasms if they are stimulated by their partner again, this is also known as multiple orgasms.

Did you know the breasts can increase by size during an orgasm? As the blood levels in the body pump up, vessels dilate and the skin around the breasts swell making them temporarily increase in size from up to 15 or 25%

Orgasm with a penis

How does it happen?

When a person with a penis is stimulated, blood flows into the penis causing the penis to increase in size and become rigid, also known as an erection. The testicles are drawn up towards the body as the scrotum tightens and the thighs and buttock muscles tense. Contractions happen in the pelvic floor muscles, the

prostate gland, seminal vesicles and vas deferens which push semen into the urethra where it is carried out of the body, known as ejaculation. Unlike a person with a vagina a person with a penis is unable to have multiple orgasms, there is a recovery phase where the penis and testicles return to their original size.



People with a penis tend to orgasm quicker than people with a vagina³

Hormones and the body

A sensory experience

During an orgasm the body releases hormones dopamine, oxytocin, prolactin, serotonin and DHEA. Researchers have found that genital sensory cortex, motor areas, hypothalamus, thalamus, and substantia nigra in the body light up during an orgasm.

There is an increase of blood flow in the body which is why parts of the body might look or feel flushed.

When someone is reaching an orgasm, the hypothalamus goes into overdrive preparing the body for a feel-good orgasm which can lead to a reflex of the hands and feet clenching. The body then release serotonin and DHEA at the point of orgasm which are feel good hormones that can boost the mood.^{(1) (2)}

What can affect orgasms

It can be common for many people to not be able to orgasm. Studies show 75% of women never reach orgasm from intercourse alone and 10% to 15% never climax ⁽¹⁾

Several things can stop or prevent a person from having an orgasm are ⁽⁴⁾:

Stress, worry, problems in a relationship, a previous traumatic sexual experience, physical health problems/ conditions, emotional, physiological and mental health and wellbeing, hormones hormonal changes such as changes in and during the menstrual cycle as well as hormones being affected by certain medications such as antidepressants (could have an

effect on a reduction in a person not wanting or feeling like having sex), genital sensitivity, difficulty maintaining an erection or a reduction in the natural lubrication the body produces.

Alcohol and drugs – can decrease natural vaginal lubrication and make it difficult to maintain an erection. Note alcohol and drugs can also affect someone's capacity to consent to sex or anything sexual.

If you are concerned or feel you have any of these you can speak to your GP, a counsellor or a trusted adult for further support.

Orgasm and porn

Porn is nothing like real sexual relationships. In porn actors are used, they are surrounded by a production crew, lights and pressured to perform. There are breaks and re-takes which can give the impression that the sex is lasting for a long time when actually it isn't and the actors can pretend to have an orgasm when they are

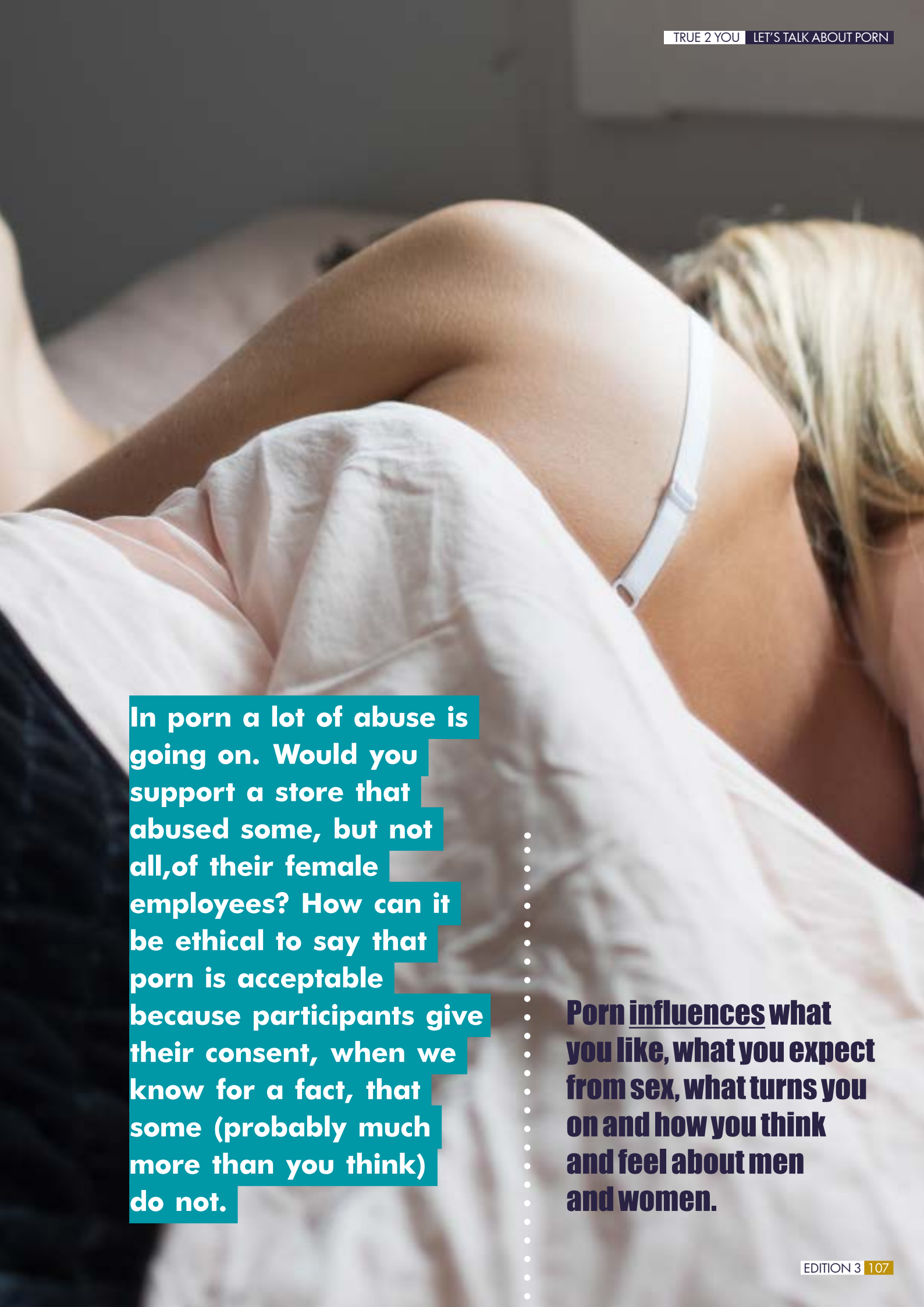
not having one. This is completely different to real relationships where people feel a connection and are attracted to each other sharing an intimate moment. So never compare your relationship and sexual experience to what you see in porn or with anyone else's stories or experience.⁽⁵⁾

LET'S TALK ABOUT PORN

30% of the internet traffic is porn!!!!


You might think 30% is not that much but it is! In 2018 the visits to Pornhub totalled 33.5 billion. That equates to a **daily average of 92 million visitors** and now in 2021 Pornhub's daily visits exceed 100 million a day!! This is **30.3 billion searches**, or 962 searches per second.

Every minute, 63,992 new visitors arrive at Pornhub and this is just on Pornhub! ¹ Porn has been marketed as a relationship enhancer, harmless personal entertainment, and a solid sexual education source! However, research shows that porn harms the brain, damages relationships, and negatively affects society as a whole.²



In porn a lot of abuse is going on. Would you support a store that abused some, but not all, of their female employees? How can it be ethical to say that porn is acceptable because participants give their consent, when we know for a fact, that some (probably much more than you think) do not.

Porn influences what you like, what you expect from sex, what turns you on and how you think and feel about men and women.




Remember it took decades for society to believe the science that proved smoking cigarettes was harmful!³

Porn is a product - sex is natural and normal. Porn is something entirely different. Professional porn actors have a whole team of people to make every detail look perfect, from directing and filming to lighting and makeup, maybe even a plastic surgeon or two to thank. With some careful editing, a typical 45-minute porn flick that took three days to shoot can appear to have happened all at once, without a break. Film the right bodies from the right angles at the right moments,

edit out all the mistakes, Photoshop away any imperfections, add a catchy soundtrack, and you have something most definitely NOT like “natural” sex with “normal” people.

Porn also makes it look like no matter what a man does, the woman likes it even though so many of the sex acts shown in porn are degrading, painful or violent. And these are just a couple of the countless lies porn sells.



DID YOU KNOW THAT THE ROOT WORD OF PORN, PORNE, MEANS “WHORE”, “PROSTITUTE”, “SEXUAL SLAVE WITHOUT VALUE”?

This is quite a revealing definition!! Its not a question of right or wrong but what is it really teaching us?

- Its actors getting paid for doing what they are told to do.
- Consent doesn't matter, or even worse non-consensual sex is used as arousal.
- There is no trust or communication. It's not about the pleasure and what the other person wants.
- The body is used as an object. It's nothing about relationships and love and care.
- It is mostly about abusing and mistreating the partner sexually, specifically women.
- In porn women do not have the right to say 'no', and they are shown as enjoying everything men expose them to, no matter how degrading or violent it is.

Regan Starr: "I couldn't breathe. I was being hit and choked. I was really upset, and they didn't stop. They kept filming. You can hear me say, 'Turn the camera off', and they kept going."

Testimonials from porn performers:⁵

Corina Taylor: When I arrived to the set I expected to do a vaginal girl boy scene. But during the scene with a male porn star, he forced himself anally into me and would not stop. I yelled at him to stop and screamed 'No' over and over but he would not stop. The pain became too much and I was in shock and my body went limp."

Porn is inseparably connected to sex trafficking - sex trafficking is a situation in which "a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age." Coercion means force and the moment a victim is forced or intimidated into a commercial sex act against their will sex trafficking has occurred. This doesn't have to be a lifetime but can happen in an instance or situation. The more people watch porn the more demand for sex trafficking exists.

Porn .. its connection to violence - the vast majority of porn - violent or not - portrays men as powerful and in charge; while women are submissive and obedient. Watching scene after scene of dehumanizing submission makes it start to seem normal. It sets the stage for lopsided power dynamics in couple relationships and the gradual acceptance of verbal and physical aggression against women. Research has confirmed that those who watch porn (even if it's nonviolent) are more likely to support statements that promote abuse and sexual aggression toward women and girls.



**IN PORN
A LOT OF
ABUSE
HAPPENS**

As Internet porn grew more popular; it also turned darker, more graphic, and more extreme. Today hardcore porn involves scripts fusing sex with hatred and humiliation.



© Iris Pohl

1. PORN HAS AN IMPACT ON THE BRAIN

Any repetitive behaviour can literally rewire the brain. Repeated consumption of porn can pump out chemicals forming new nerve pathways which can lead to profound and lasting changes in the brain...not in a good way!

2. PORN CAN LEAD TO ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION

Research has shown that more and more young men are seeking help because of their addiction to porn or porn habit stopping them getting an erection with their partner.

As well as erectile dysfunction porn also has an effect on low sex drive and trouble reaching or having an orgasm. Many frequent porn users reach a point where they have an easier time getting aroused by internet porn than by having actual sex with a real partner.

3. PORN IS ADDICTIVE

Porn triggers the release of dopamine into a part of the brain called the reward center. It gives a 'high' feeling and makes you want to repeat the behavior again and again. **As with any drug you develop tolerance and what used to excite you becomes boring with time, making you seek more hardcore material and extremer situations to get the next high.** Many users find themes of aggression, violence, and increasingly "edgy" acts creeping into their porn habits and fantasies.

Some people report feeling anxious or down until they can get back to their hit of porn. This sounds like the classic symptoms of addiction. In a survey of 1,500 young adult men, 56% said their tastes in porn had become "increasingly extreme or deviant." Things that were disgusting, shocking or morally shameful become normal and acceptable.

4. PORN HAS AN INFLUENCE ON WHAT YOU LIKE SEXUALLY

According to a survey in 2020 (by the research company Savanta ComRes), 38% of women under the age of 40 have experienced unwanted slapping, choking, gagging or spitting during consensual intercourse.

5. PORN IT CAN MAKE YOU LONELY

Porn can fuel anxiety, depression, and leave consumers lonelier than before. "The more one uses pornography, the lonelier one becomes." The worse people feel about themselves, the more they seek comfort wherever they can get it. Normally, they would be able to rely on the people closest to them - a partner, friend, or family member. But most porn users aren't exactly excited to tell anyone about their porn habits, least of all their partner. So, they turn to the easiest source of "comfort" available...more porn!

6. PORN CAN HURT YOUR PARTNER

If your sexual fantasies become influenced by porn and your partner may not be wanting to act out the degrading or dangerous acts porn shows or you don't even tell your partner about your porn watching **you may start looking for sex with other people (prostitutes or affairs) to do what you have seen on porn.** In a survey former prostitutes shared that 80% of their customers had shown them images of porn to illustrate what they wanted to do.

7. PORN TELLS US WHAT IS NORMAL

Porn tells us that girls like to have hard and rough sex, like to be called names during sex and be treated disrespectful.

Porn tells us that women always want to have sex and that they like pleasing men.

Porn tells us that men always need to have sex.

Porn tells us how our bodies have to look like. For example, that it is weird to have pubic hair.

8. PORN DOES NOT CONSENT, THERE IS NO CONSENT WITH PORN


Porn tells you to not get consent from your partner. **Porn tells you that women like to be forced into sex. With porn actors there is also a huge issue with consent.** When you watch porn, there's no way to know what kind of "consent" the actors have given. You can't assume, just because someone appears in a pornographic image or video, that they knew beforehand exactly what would happen or that they had a real choice or the ability to stop what was being done. In porn you see victims of sex trafficking.

TESTIMONIAL¹

I had never had a boyfriend before him, so everything we were doing was new to me.

But soon I realized that the way he touched and kissed me wasn't intimate or naturally affectionate.

He was very possessive, aggressive, and demanding. There were many times that I asked him to stop whatever he was doing and he would ignore me.




Sometimes he would pin my arms down, pull my hair, grab my body too hard, and I constantly had bruises up and down my back from him pushing me against a wall.

At first, I went along with it but soon I realized I was really uncomfortable with everything we were doing.

Our relationship had started out with him kissing my forehead and holding doors open for me to him I literally pinning me down and forcing kisses on me.

PORN AND INTIMACY

Porn may cause an avoidance of any intimacy with another person, similar to how someone experiencing anorexia is with food. Someone into porn may refuse all emotional and sensual relationships in order to keep their feelings at bay. They may avoid relationships, dating, and any genuine connection with others.



When someone watches or is addicted to porn relationships become more about sex than intimacy – the relationship is seen more for its potential physical sexual encounter and not for actually connecting with a partner.

You start being a performer in your own relationship, trying to recreate what you see online instead of expressing what you truly feel and like.

Having a greater awareness of our environment and what is around us is key as well as being able to question and not accept everything we see and hear as 'normal'. Porn isn't real so if someone watches porn as their way of educating themselves about sex and relationships its going to lead to a false way of relating to and being with partner, making harder to just be themselves.

Remember, love and cherish your body, have and know your boundaries, do what YOU feel and not what the trend says, listen to YOUR body.

TESTIMONIAL

Even learning about the exploitation and abuse in porn, I still found it hard to fault and not enjoy it – especially if the women were sexy. Asking myself what the harm was in the fantasy is if they are willing participants?

As I became more aware of how I felt, I started to ask myself what was my role in it?

Was I just a consumer who 'enjoyed the product' or was I in truth nothing more than the meat in the sandwich – while I was using the woman I was watching to get off on and outplay a fantasy, I was abusing my body using porn as a means to get pleasure from something that was hollow, empty and lacking intimacy.



Seeing the hollowness in the actors eyes realizing that every person I was looking at was an empty body that had no sensitivity, sensuality or feelings.

I started to realize that it wasn't just the bodies on the screen that were being abused but also mine. Porn trains you to not live from your sensitivity and to enter a never-

ending cycle of seeking more and more without any true satisfaction and settlement in your body.

It's like in those movies where the beautiful woman turns into a skeletal ghost and when you look at her you also become that same dead body not able to feel or express the love you, in truth, are.

TRUE 2 YOU SUPPORT

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

If you need any help or support with anything **don't hesitate** to contact our team who are here for you at: info@true2you.eu

You can also connect with us through the website at: <https://true2you.eu/ask-an-expert/> and meet with our team of professionals to talk about sex, love, relationships, safety online...basically anything that's on your mind! We provide a judgement-free zone and a space for you to just to be and talk about what you want to.

GROUP DISCUSSIONS EXPLORING DIFFERENT TOPICS

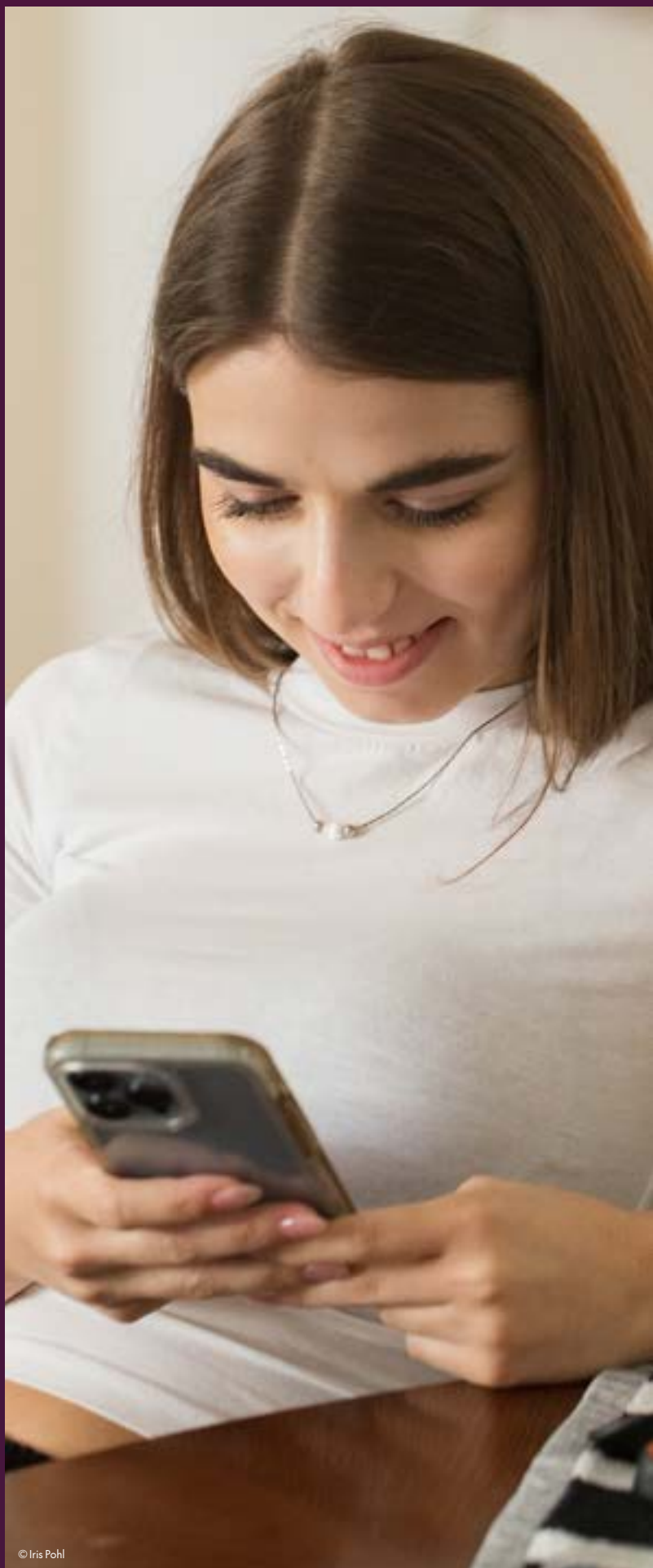
Online groups are also held for girls and young women and boys and young men as well as mixed groups. This space is used to explore and look at different topics from different angles and what people are experiencing, have experienced or have any questions about. Your personal information is treated confidentially and participation is free. In the groups we learn from each other, and sharing's can be absolute gold and valuable when we hear or learn from others, especially in seeing and feeling that we are not alone.

Check out our team and agenda below and sign up to start your conversation with us!

<https://true2you.eu/support-groups>

And if we are unable to help you, we will look into finding a trusted organisation or service near you that is able to.

Remember - there is nothing on the outside that can replace the amazingness you are already on the inside! Re-connect and be true2you!



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All content in this magazine was inspired by a multitude of materials. Some of the materials have been used and many have been adapted to fit the specific context and age group and last but not least our amazing team has developed many!

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