

SEX & SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

SOME INFORMATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

PREGNANCY
STARTING TO HAVE
RELATIONSHIPS THE PRESSURE
TO GET SEXUAL
SEXUAL INTERCOURSE
FREQUENTLY ASKED
QUESTIONS ABOUT SEX
THE FIRST TIME

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STARTING TO HAVE SEXUAL FEELINGS & RELATIONSHIPS

Sexual feelings don't suddenly start at a particular age. But most young people experience puberty between twelve and sixteen. Puberty brings physical and emotional changes. One of these changes is the strengthening of sexual feelings. Sexual feelings have physical aspects, like feeling sexually aroused or 'turned on', and emotional aspects, like feeling sexually attracted to other people or falling in love.

Having sexual feelings is normal and natural. Sexual feelings are often an important part of having very strong, enjoyable and intimate relationships with other people. But at times it can feel confusing and it can be hard to know what to do.

It can take time for your body and your thoughts and feelings to catch up with each other.

Having sexual feelings quite often leads to having sexual relationships and experiences. Lots of young people find it hard to know what is right when it comes to relationships. And everyone feels embarrassed or confused at some time. There is no set time to begin having sexual relationships. It can sometimes seem like being popular or having a good reputation depends on going out with someone and having sexual relationships. But the main thing is to be able to make up your own mind about what you feel and what you do.

I know it isn't true but it's difficult to believe not everyone's having sex from the way people talk about it.

Sex & relationships

If a relationship gets sexual it can be very special. For a lot of people it's a normal part of going out with someone. If you go out with someone for a long time you might feel people expect you to be doing sexual things. But there is no rule that says you have to make a relationship sexual and that one thing has to lead to another.

Getting sexual is something that you should talk about. You need to feel sure that whatever you do is something you both want to do. Both boys and girls (even those who talk about sex a lot) can feel nervous. Talking things through often helps.

We're always laughing and talking about everything I think it helps with our physical relationship...We've been able to talk about sex and feelings and all that stuff.

Feeling Curious

You might want to do sexual things like touching, kissing or masturbating with someone else because you feel curious or want to experiment.

Sometimes it just seems like sex is really scary – you'll definitely get pregnant or get a disease – but everyone is curious and knows it can be good

But if you do sexual things with someone because you want to know what it's like, you might regret it or feel bad or upset afterwards. It can be hard to know what you want, and sometimes your judgement might be blurred too, especially if you are sexually excited or drunk or high.

I did do things when I was younger for confused reasons. I remember thinking I wanted to but really being excited knowing that I had done it at last. Now, I think more about my relationships and don't rush, like trying to do one or more sexual thing every time we see each other.

Because you care

You may want to do something because you want to show someone how much you feel for them. It can make you feel very close to share such a private thing as sexual feelings and experiences with someone. But part of you may not be sure you want to do it. You might have religious or moral beliefs about why you don't want to do something.

The main thing is to be able to make up your own mind about what you feel and what you do. And to know about the implications of having sexual relationships and experiences. For most people this means waiting until they are sure of their feelings and that they have the respect and trust of the person they want to have a sexual relationship with. Most people find relationships like this rewarding and something that makes them feel good about themselves.

The best thing about having a relationship is the feeling special and like a bond between you.

Relationships – well that's when two people are together, straight, gay or whatever, and they want to be and they have like a friendship but it's probably sexual too.

Because you are in love

Sometimes people say they are in love to pressure someone into doing things. You shouldn't do something you don't feel good about just because someone says they love you. Or that you would do something if you loved them.

It's hard to know if you're in love. It's so over used. People say 'You'd do it if you loved me' and write love at the end of letters to people they hardly know. I think its more special than that.

He says he loves me and talks about when we have children and live together. Sometimes this seems really romantic, but mostly I feel under pressure because I don't know what I want yet.

It's difficult to stop

You might feel like just letting things develop but then it can be hard to find the right time to stop.

He would sort of ask. Not always in words but by trying to do something and waiting for me to show if it was all right. One day he let on he was nervous when he told me about some friends asking if we'd done this and that and saying he wanted to but didn't want to upset me by pressuring me. Then we had a long chat about it.

It can be hard to say what you want. But it is best to talk to each other before things develop. Try and be honest and think about how the other person might be feeling. If you can talk to each other it can be emotionally rewarding because you feel confident that you both care about each other, and are looking after each others feelings.

I wanted to tell her that I was nervous and inexperienced but thought I was expected to be the one who tried it on. Then she would just tell me when it was too much.

It also means that you have an opportunity to talk about things you might be worried about. If you start getting sexual before talking about the risks of pregnancy or infections they can be much harder to bring up later.

PRESSURE

HAVING SEX

Being sexually excited

Some sexual feelings can't be seen but others have physical signs. So when people are sexually excited things happen to their bodies. The main sign for a girl that she is getting sexually excited is when her vagina begins to moisten. Her vagina will also become longer and wider inside her body. Her clitoris – a sensitive spot at the top of where the vagina opens – will get bigger too. The main sign for a boy that he is getting sexually excited is when he gets an erection. This means that his penis fills up with blood and quickly grows longer, harder and curves upward.

For both boys and girls being turned on means that extra blood comes to the surface of the skin, particularly around the vagina and penis. You might feel pleasantly and particularly sensitive around your sex organs. But you can feel warm and sexy just about anywhere on your body. Your heart will beat faster and your breathing gets quicker too.

How do people masturbate?

You might become sexually excited by touching your own body. Many people enjoy touching or rubbing their genitals to give themselves sexual pleasure. This is called masturbation. For many people masturbation is their first sexual experience and the first way they express their sexual feelings physically. Masturbation is a good way of learning about your body and the things that you like sexually.

This doesn't mean that everyone does it, feels comfortable about it or that they think it is right. Some people have religious or moral beliefs which mean they feel that masturbation is wrong.

A girl usually masturbates by rubbing, stroking or squeezing on or around her clitoris. The clitoris is the most sensitive sexual part of a girl. A girl might touch her breasts too. A boy usually masturbates by stroking or rubbing his penis. Especially round the tip which is the most sensitive part.

People don't necessarily begin masturbating when they reach puberty. Some people hardly ever masturbate, and others masturbate a lot. It varies according to how a person feels. Some people masturbate when they are in a relationship with someone. Masturbation can last as long as you want, but generally people masturbate for between a few minutes and half an hour.

There is no physical reason why you should or shouldn't masturbate. It is not true that you'll go blind if you masturbate. It is not possible to masturbate too much, but you should stop if you start to make yourself sore. Some people think that if a boy doesn't masturbate his testes fill up with sperm. This is not true, the sperm are just absorbed into his body. It is also not true that girls who think about sex or masturbate are 'easy'.

Orgasm

When sexual excitement builds up and reaches a peak a person might experience an orgasm, also called a climax or coming. The sexual excitement might be through masturbating on their own, or kissing, masturbating or having sex with another person.

Sexual excitement usually grows gradually and a person feels more and more pleasure and a kind of exciting tension. All the feelings of tension then disappear when the orgasm happens, and the person experiences feelings of intense pleasure. The feeling can be so strong that a person might not be able to see, or hear or think about anything for a moment. They might even groan and call out with pleasure. Orgasms usually last only a few seconds but the feelings might last a lot longer.

When a boy has an orgasm he ejaculates. This means that sperm mixed with semen comes out of the end of his penis in a sticky white fluid. After a boy has ejaculated he loses his erection and usually needs to stop for a while. When a girl has an orgasm her vagina often becomes very wet, but she can continue being sexually aroused as long as she likes. Some girls can experience more than one orgasm without stopping.

If a person doesn't have an orgasm, it doesn't mean anything is wrong. In fact, worrying about reaching an orgasm or being nervous is quite likely to make it hard for a person to relax enough to have one.

Doing sexual things together

The first sexual things that people do together are often kissing, cuddling and holding hands. But there is no order you have to do things in, or times when you have to do them. People generally say that they don't want to do very intimate things straight away.

When people kiss they sometimes 'french' or 'deep' kiss. This is when both people open their mouths when they kiss and touch their tongues together. Sometimes people touch each other through their clothes, or put their hands inside to stroke and touch each other's bodies.

Sometimes they masturbate each other, which is usually called mutual masturbation.

SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

Deciding to have sexual intercourse

Sexual intercourse is sometimes called making love or having sex. It is when a boy's hard penis goes inside a girl's vagina. There are lots of things to consider if you are thinking about having sexual intercourse.

Having sexual intercourse means that a girl can get pregnant and a boy can become a father unless they use contraception properly. They can pass on a sexually transmitted infection if one of them is already infected. In most countries there is an age below which it is against the law to have sex.

You might want to consider what your parent's views are about sex and how they would feel if they knew you were having sexual intercourse. You might have religious or moral beliefs, which mean you don't want to have sex until you are married. Some people refer to not having sexual intercourse until you are married as abstinence.

There is a lot of pressure to have sexual intercourse for the first time – to lose your virginity. Some young people think that most other young people of their own age have had sexual intercourse. Some people say they have had sexual intercourse when they haven't.

It is difficult to know when you are ready to have sexual intercourse for the first time. If you are not sure about the time, or the person, or you aren't really ready. Quite a lot of people who had sex when they weren't really ready say they regret it afterwards.

I do regret doing it so soon. I think I wanted to lose my virginity really. I pretended it was for love, but it wasn't really. It was good, and I learnt a lot but I definitely think I should have been honest with myself.

Pregnancy & sexually transmitted infections

If a boy and girl are having sexual intercourse, then using a contraceptive or birth control properly, every time, will prevent the girl becoming pregnant.

Of course there've been a few times I've not used contraception. When I was younger and less confident and that. But you always have to wonder afterwards that way.

Some contraceptives are used by girls. The most reliable is the contraceptive or birth control pill, sometimes just called the pill. The pill works by affecting the hormones in a girl's body. Most kinds of contraceptive pill have to be taken every day. But, the contraceptive pill does not stop sexually transmitted infections.

The condom is the only type of contraception that can be used by a boy. The condom is a thin piece of rubber shaped like the finger of a glove. It goes over the boy's penis and stops the semen going into their partner's body. The condom is a reliable contraceptive but not quite as reliable as the contraceptive pill. Condoms can stop sexually transmitted infections.

If two people are having sexual experiences together, especially sexual intercourse, and one of them has a sexual infection they could pass it on to the other person. These infections are sometimes called sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or diseases (STDs). Using a condom will help prevent any infection from being passed from one person to the other.

Most boys and girls having sexual intercourse should consider using both the pill and the condom. This protects very well against both pregnancy and infections.

In the UK the contraceptive pill is available on prescription from a doctor. Condoms cost about £2.5 for a packet of three in chemists and other shops. In the UK you don't have to be sixteen to buy condoms.

I went and bought a load of soap and stuff and a pack of three. I was in a daze going to the check-out but no-one paid any attention at all. I felt stupid for worrying about it afterwards.

Condoms and other contraceptives are often available in health clinics. Sometimes these clinics have special evening or afternoon sessions for young people. They usually see both boys and girls and you don't have to be having sex to go to one.

Of course it's hard to use clinics. We have one which is open one evening a week, after school. It is really easy though. The biggest thing is going the first time. I tell people it's just their job. They aren't allowed to tell anyone who goes there and they've seen it all before

How do you have sexual intercourse?

Sexual intercourse between a boy and a girl starts with them both getting sexually excited. This is sometimes referred to as foreplay, and might involve kissing and cuddling, touching each other and other sexual activities. Foreplay is important as it means a girl's vagina begins to get moist and a boy gets an erection. If the girl's vagina does not get moist enough, then having sexual intercourse could be difficult or painful for the girl.

If a couple are going to use a condom for protection against pregnancy or infections, they should put it on the boy's penis as soon as he gets an erection. Some boys say they worry about using condoms in case they lose their erection or have difficulty putting the condom on. You could get some condoms and practice beforehand. Condoms come with instructions in words and pictures which show exactly how to use them.

After the condom is on, the boy or girl can guide his penis into her vagina. The couple then move their bodies so that his penis moves up and down inside her vagina. This usually rubs the penis and makes the boy sexually excited so that he has an orgasm. The movement might rub the girl's clitoris too so she can have an orgasm. But this depends on the position the couple are in when they have sexual intercourse.

There are quite a lot of different positions for sexual intercourse. One common way is for the girl and boy to be laying down, face to face with either the girl or boy on their back. Another way is for the girl and boy to lay on their sides with the boy behind the girl. If the boy is behind the girl the penis might not rub her clitoris and the girl or boy can do this with their fingers.

What is anal intercourse

Anal intercourse is when a boys puts his penis into the anus and rectum of another boy or girl. Some people might have strong feelings, especially religious or moral feelings about anal intercourse. For some people it is very pleasurable. But, other people may feel uncomfortable about the idea of anal intercourse and may never want to do it.

Some people think anal intercourse between a girl and boy is a good thing to do as a way of avoiding pregnancy. But it is better instead to avoid pregnancy by using contraception. Anyone wanting to try anal intercourse ought to think about whether the other person really wants to do it. If one person wants to try and not the other it is better not to do it. Some people think that anal intercourse is something only gay men do. This is not true. Many gay men never have anal intercourse. If two people are having anal intercourse they should think about using a water-based lubricant, and an extra strong condom.

After you have had sex

AFTER YOU HAVE HAD SEX

Something special, or something to regret

It was special. We planned it. We picked a day almost and I bought some condoms and then we didn't have to worry about that because I tried them out before. It was short but amazing. I felt so much love afterwards

But if it wasn't planned or was something you felt pressured to do, then you might feel bad or regret it happened. Your expectations will affect your feelings too. It will also depend on whether you were able to use contraception properly.

Whatever your experience, things can change. Talking about it can usually help you get over any embarrassment or worries. You might feel your relationship has reached a new and special intimacy.

If you have a bad experience or it changes your mind about having a relationship with the person you had sex with, it doesn't set a pattern forever. You don't have to have sex again with them, or with someone else. If you didn't use contraception you don't have to go on not using it in the future.

Worried about pregnancy?

If you didn't use contraceptives or you think they didn't work properly, you might be worried about pregnancy or becoming a parent.

In some countries a girl can get emergency contraception (sometimes called the morning after pill). This works up to seventy hours after sex.

If a girl can't get emergency contraception, or does not want to use it, there are still things a doctor can do to help. So it is important to see a doctor, or go to a clinic, or talk to an adult as soon as possible.

The first sign of pregnancy is usually that a girl misses her period. But, if a girl is worried that she might be pregnant this can delay her period. This means it is important to have a pregnancy test. You can buy testing kits from chemists but these are expensive and you still have to see a doctor to be absolutely sure whether you are pregnant or not.

I was worried because we didn't use anything. I didn't want to admit I wanted to do it so I wasn't prepared. It was a few weeks later that I thought I was pregnant because I missed my period. I talked to a friend and she encouraged me to go to the clinic. It was open one evening a week only for young people. They gave me a test and talked to me about my feelings and that and explained to me how I could bring up contraception with my boyfriend. I wasn't pregnant and didn't take the chance again.

If you think you or your partner might be pregnant you will probably be anxious about what to do. You might be worried about how people in your family will react. They might be angry at first, or find it hard to believe, but they might be able to help you consider what to do. Some people decide to have a baby if they are pregnant and others decide to have an abortion.

I freaked out when she told me we were going to have a baby. I kept thinking of me as a father. Like a boy having a kid. She was dead against telling anyone but I kept saying we'd do it together and sort things out. Inside I was excited and scared at the same time. We told her mum first. She was mad but then really practical about it. She went through the options and stood by us from the beginning. I think it was right to tell her because it affected her life too.

Worried about a sexually transmitted infection?

If you didn't use a condom, or the condom broke, then you may be worried about having a sexually transmitted infection. You need to visit a doctor or clinic where you will be treated in confidence.

Testing for a sexually transmitted infection usually involves a blood test and an examination. This might seem embarrassing but clinic staff do these tests and examinations all the time and are used to how people feel. It is important to see someone if you do have a sexually transmitted infection. Untreated sexually transmitted infections can be passed on to other people and can cause serious illnesses or make it impossible for a woman to get pregnant.

If you have a sexually transmitted infection you don't have to tell your family. You definitely should tell anyone you've had sex with so they can find out if they have it too. Some infections can be in the body for a long time without showing. So if you have had sex with more than one person it might have come from a previous partner. If you have a sexually transmitted infection it is important not to have sex before it is treated.



THE FIRST TIME

"I'd known Simon for ages, but it wasn't until Year 11 (in the UK about 16yrs old) that we started going out. That was two years ago now and we've been together ever since. After about a year we both felt we wanted to have sex, go all the way. We'd nearly done it anyway what with all the snogging and fumbling we'd done on the sofa and at discos. Because we were friends and talked a lot we talked about sex too.

I know we were both really nervous, but talking and laughing really helped. Plus we were able to make sure nothing drastic happened. Although we loved each other loads we certainly didn't want a baby at seventeen or to put our health at risk. So we went together to the clinic, sorted things out so that there wouldn't be any worries.

We made sure we picked the right time and the right place too. It would have been awful for someone to walk in on us, during our private time. What was it like? - Well it's difficult to describe because I'd never felt anything like it before really. I'd had orgasms through masturbation before, but sharing yourself with someone you love and respect was really good. It brought us closer together."



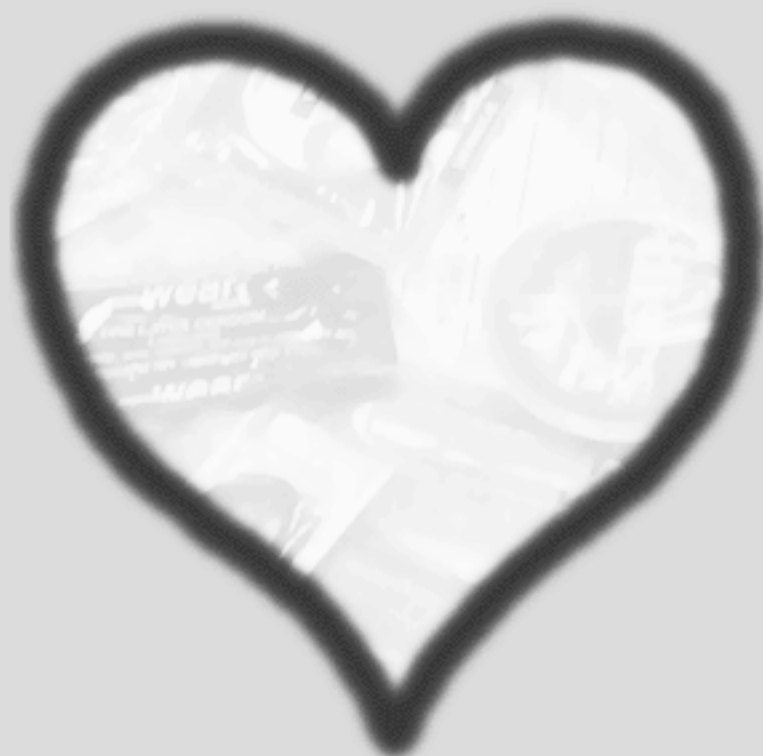
I was round at Terry's

"I was round at Terry's. It was a great party. Loads of people were there. I was just standing around with my mate Steve and I see this girl over his shoulder. She smiles at me, right, so I give it the business. You know, I talk to Steve but every now and then laugh really loud and look at her again, smiling loads. She kept smiling back, so I moved in. We got talking and everything's going fine. She laughed at my jokes. Next thing I know she's looking at me all soppy and we kiss. Then it all got out of control. She's whispering to me to come upstairs - you know - and I said, 'you go on, I'll come in a minute, I've got to go to the loo first', or something

Anyway she goes off and Steve comes over. He's really excited, going on about 'taking my chances' and 'having it off'. I didn't know what to say. I mean I was really excited about the kiss still and he's saying that I must be a right stud to pull a girl like that. It is true, I have had lots of girlfriends but it doesn't mean I'm experienced. I mean, I'm really good at chatting up and smooth-talking but I've never actually done it. Slept with someone. But I couldn't tell him that could I?

Anyway I went upstairs, and found her in the bedroom, with all the lights off on top of a pile of coats. She had taken off half her clothes. I had been intending to say something. All the way upstairs I'd been thinking, 'tell her, tell her you're a virgin.' But how could I? I just knew she thought I wanted to have sex. I was thinking, 'I don't want it like this, what about protection and that?'

It was awful, looking back, but I did it. I fumbled around and we were hardly talking so eventually, after a bit of wrestling I got it in and it lasted about 10 seconds. I just got dressed and left. I kept thinking, 'well I've done it but what could it have been like?'



How long does sex last?

It depends what you mean by sex. A boy might find he comes very quickly the first time he has sexual intercourse. Usually sexual intercourse lasts longer as people get more experienced and know what to expect. But with a new partner it can take time for people to get used to each other.

Is it noisy?

Only if you want it to be! Some people do make noises when they are having sex. They might moan or groan with pleasure or even cry out. Some people talk to each other. Others don't speak or make any noise. But your body might make noises that you can't help – squelching and squishing. These might be embarrassing or funny, but they are perfectly normal.

How often do people do it?

Sexual appetite is entirely a matter of personal taste. Some people have sex once a day and others once a month. It probably varies for most people depending on whether they are in a relationship, how busy they are and how they feel. Most people think about sex far more often than they do it.

What is oral sex?

Oral sex is when one person licks or sucks another person's penis or vagina. A girl cannot get pregnant from giving oral sex to a boy, even if she swallows his sperm. Oral sex can be a very intense and intimate experience. Some people enjoy giving oral sex or having it. Other people feel uncomfortable about the idea and don't want to do it. Sometimes people feel pressured to have oral sex when they don't want to. It is very important to think about what the other person really wants if you want to have oral sex.

Some sexually transmitted infections can be passed on through oral sex. There are flavoured condoms available that you can use when having oral sex. These are to stop any infections which might be passed on.

What about same sex feelings?

It can be that when you first feel sexually attracted to someone, they are the same sex as you. These feelings may be permanent, or they may change.

I thought, well, this is just the phase bit. Sooner or later I'm going to start finding women attractive. I never did.

It can be hard to accept these feelings. This is not because they are wrong but because people can be prejudiced towards gay and bisexual people. Same sex feelings can also conflict with people's religious views. Gay people are people who are attracted to the same sex as themselves bisexual people are attracted to people of the opposite and same sex.



MORE ABOUT SEX

Will it hurt the first time?

Girls especially might wonder if it will hurt the first time they have sexual intercourse with a boy. It can hurt and some girls do bleed a little bit. If a girl is sexually excited and relaxed her vagina will probably be moist enough for the boy's penis to go in without hurting. The vagina is very stretchy and, if a boy and girl have sexual intercourse, usually only part of the penis is inside the vagina. The average penis is between eleven and eighteen centimetres long when it is erect.

The bleeding usually occurs because the girl has a hymen which breaks at first intercourse. The hymen is a small piece of thin skin which goes across the opening of the vagina and protects it when she is young. It has some gaps in it where the blood can come out when she has her period. Sometimes a girl might have already broken her hymen without even knowing.

Do we need to use contraception the first time?

Yes, because a girl can get pregnant the first time she has sexual intercourse. It can be especially difficult to get contraception organised for the first time you have sexual intercourse. Some people say that if they buy condoms or go on the pill before the first time it seems as though they had already decided and were planning to have sex. This isn't necessarily true. It is just being prepared for when you do decide it is the right time.

Can a girl become pregnant even if she doesn't have sexual intercourse?

Yes. If a boy's penis goes near to a girl's vagina there may be sperm in the fluid which comes out of the boy's penis before he ejaculates. This can lead to pregnancy or a sexually transmitted infection.

Should I tell other people?

Some people talk to others about their sexual experiences, especially losing their virginity, as it makes them feel grown up. This is not a good reason to tell other people.

You might want to tell close friends or someone in your family, especially if you have questions. But sexual relationships are private between two people and you should consider why you are telling anyone.

What does sex feel like?

Similar things happen to most people's bodies when they have sex – they get sensitive and warm and excited and may have an orgasm. Enjoying sexual activities with another person is possible whether you have an orgasm or not. Not being able to have an orgasm with another person doesn't mean that you don't fancy them or love them. Your emotions might be different each time you have a sexual experience depending on the circumstances. Having sex can be one of the most intense and pleasurable physical and emotional experiences a person can have. But it won't always be wonderful.

