



# THE LOVE DOWN

Your guide to sexual health  
and relationships



family  
planning nsw  
Reproductive & Sexual Health

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# All about relationships

Relationships are an important part of life. Healthy relationships can be fun, positive and where you find support and comfort. Not all relationships will be the same. Some relationships will last a long time and some will end. You might stop seeing someone and then become friends again. This is all normal.

There are many different types of relationships. These can be:

- family relationships
- friendships
- relationships at school
- work relationships
- intimate relationships

## Intimate relationships

Sometimes you might like someone as more than a friend. You might want to spend a lot of time with them or think about them in a sexual way. Sometimes they might feel the same way as you and sometimes they might not. An intimate relationship is a special relationship. It is a relationship you have if you really like someone and they feel the same way.

An intimate relationship can be between:

- people who are dating or 'going out'
- people who are seeing each other or a 'hook-up'
- a married couple
- people of the opposite sex
- people of the same sex

People in these different relationships might call each other 'partners'. People can be attracted to people of the opposite sex, to the same sex, or to both sexes. This is healthy and perfectly normal. No one should be bullied or ashamed because of the type of relationship they are having.

Whoever you choose to have an intimate relationship with is up to you. When you enter an intimate relationship, you may decide that you want to have sex, or you may decide that you are not ready.





## Sex - are you ready?

Spending time with your partner can be fun and exciting. You might want to show your partner that you care for them. There are a lot of ways that you can show someone that you care. This can be kissing, touching or having sex. This is OK as long as it is something you both want to do.

### Having sex for the first time

Having sex for the first time can make you feel many different things.

You may feel:

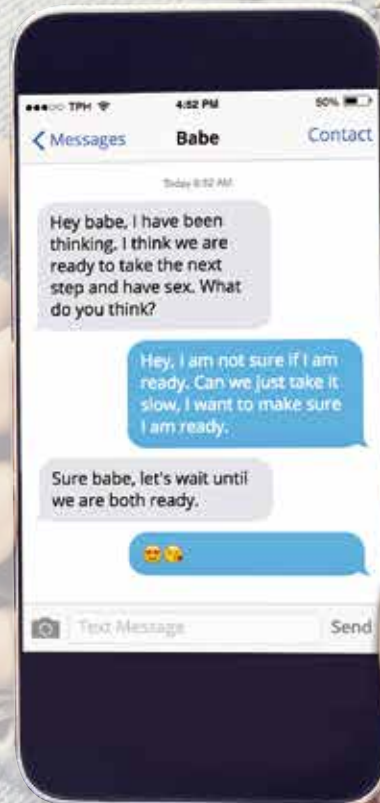
- happy
- nervous
- unsure
- excited

There is also a lot to think about before you have sex.

Some people might think:

- Am I ready to have sex for the first time?
- Is this something I want to do?
- Will it hurt?
- How is the other person feeling?
- What types of sex am I ready for?

These are good questions to think about.



### Talking to your partner

It is good to talk to your partner when starting a sexual relationship. This is so you can let them know how you are feeling. It is good to let your partner know if you are feeling nervous or unsure. Your partner might even feel the same way.

Some things you can say to start the conversation are:

- I would like to take it slowly
- I want to make sure I am ready
- I am nervous about this
- Are you OK with this?
- Is this something you want to do?

### Will sex hurt?

Some people worry that sex might hurt a bit the first time. Sex is different for everyone. Some people might feel a bit uncomfortable and some people might not. When you feel comfortable and your body is relaxed, sex will be more enjoyable. This means that you and your partner will have a better time when you have sex. Using lubricant on the penis, vagina and anus can also make sex feel more comfortable and enjoyable. Sex should not be painful. If sex hurts or if you have pain even after using lubricant, you can visit a:

- local doctor or general practitioner (GP)
- Family Planning NSW clinic
- sexual health clinic

Lubricant or lube is a slippery liquid that helps to make the genitals wet. Lubricant can be used to make sex more comfortable. It can also be used to make it feel better.

Condoms come with lubricant already on them in the packet.

You can use more lubricant if you want to. Always use a water-based lubricant.

Other types of lubricant can cause the condom to break.

Lubricant should always be used for anal sex.



# Consent - why is it important?

Consent is when one person gives permission to another person to do something. This means both people know what is about to happen. It also means knowing they have the option to say 'no' or change their mind later on. You and your partner should feel safe every step of the way.

You need consent to:

- kiss
- hug
- touch your partner on the genitals, breasts or anus
- have oral sex
- have vaginal sex
- have anal sex

If someone is asleep, unconscious or drunk/on drugs they cannot consent.

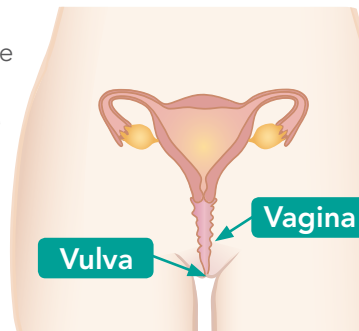
Pressuring or making somebody do any of these activities without their consent is sexual assault. Sexual assault is a crime. Remember, it is important to get consent before any sexual or intimate activities.

You can ask for consent by saying:

- Are you ok with this?
- Is there anything you do not want to do?
- Do you want to stop?
- Do you want to go further?

The **genitals** are sometimes called 'private parts'. The genitals are:

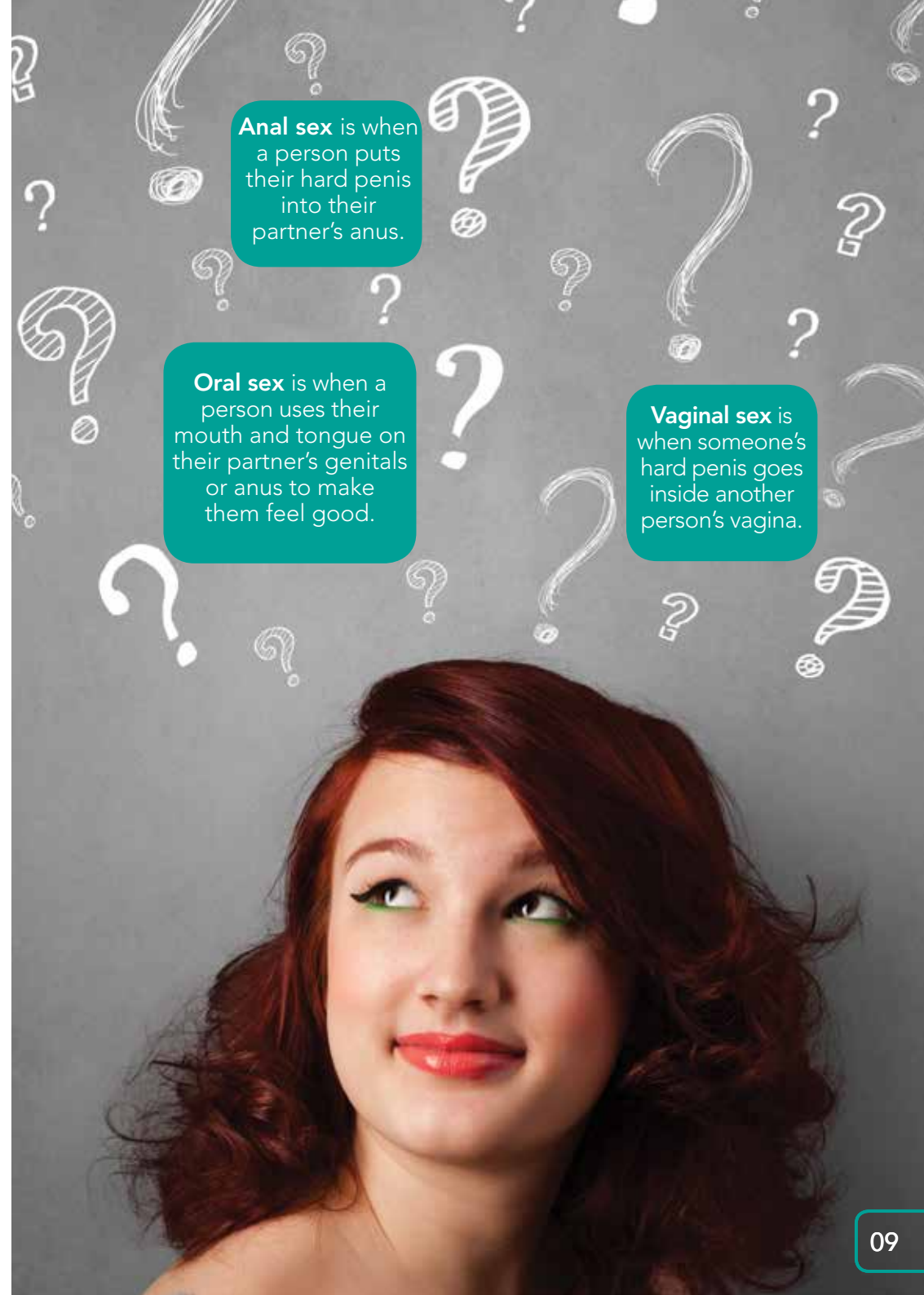
- **the penis including the testicles**
  - The penis is the part of the male body that hangs down between the legs.
  - The testicles are behind the penis and make sperm.
- **the vulva (vagina, labia and clitoris)**
  - The vulva is the outside part of the female genitals and is between the legs.
  - The vagina is the inside part of the female genitals and is between the legs.
  - The labia are two large and two small lips of skin. The labia cover the vagina.
  - The clitoris is a small and sensitive organ at the top of the vulva.



**Anal sex** is when a person puts their hard penis into their partner's anus.

**Oral sex** is when a person uses their mouth and tongue on their partner's genitals or anus to make them feel good.

**Vaginal sex** is when someone's hard penis goes inside another person's vagina.





There are two types of consent:

- verbal consent
- non-verbal consent (body language)

Your partner gives consent if they:

- say 'yes'
- say 'that feels good'
- pull you closer
- nod to say 'yes'

Your partner may not give consent.

If they have not given consent they might:

- say 'no'
- say 'I want to stop'
- say 'I am not sure'
- push you away
- turn or look away from you
- hold their arms tightly around their body
- stay very still

It is good to get both verbal and non-verbal consent. This will help you know if your partner is comfortable or not. If your partner is not comfortable or unsure you should stop. They may not be ready or they may have changed their mind.



A few things about consent:

- Consent is when a person gives permission without any pressure or manipulation from their partner.
- A person can say 'no' if they do not want to take part in intimate or sexual activities.
- A person can give consent and then take away their consent. This is ok. If someone changes their mind you

should STOP what you are doing. If someone seems unsure, you should also stop and check if they are ok. You should not make your partner feel bad if they are not ready to have sex.

- You need to get consent from your partner every time you have sex, even if you have had sex before.
- There are different types of sex that people can have, these are:
  - oral sex
  - vaginal sex
  - anal sex

If someone consents to one type of sex, it does not mean that they consent to all types of sex. You need to get consent every time for each type of sex.

**Verbal consent** is when you or your partner say 'yes'.

**Non-verbal consent** is when you or your partner give consent but do not talk. Your partner might use their body to show that they have given consent.

Sometimes people are scared to say 'no'. If you are not sure if someone has given their consent, it's always best to ask.

The only way to know for sure if someone has given their consent is to ask.





## Age and consent

The law on consent is there to protect young people. There are times when a person cannot legally give their consent. This is when they are:

- drunk
- taking drugs
- asleep or unconscious
- unsure or unaware of what they are consenting to
- threatened, pressured or scared

In NSW, the age of consent is 16. This means it is against the law for a person to have sex with a person under the age of 16. However, we know that some young people will choose to have sex before they are 16. If someone is under the age of 16 they still have the right to access sexual health services and support. A young person under the age of 16 is able to:

- make decisions about their own body
- buy or access condoms
- get an STI test or visit a doctor confidentially (without their parents finding out)
- get advice from a doctor about sex and their body

People may decide they are comfortable and ready to have sex at different ages, and that is OK. No matter what age, it is always important that both people give consent to any sexual activity.

It is unlikely people under the age of 16 and their partner will be charged if:

- they both understand and agree to the sexual activity (both have given consent)
- they are both over the age of 14
- the age difference is not more than two years

If you want more information on consent and the law you can call the Family Planning NSW Talkline on 1300 658 886 or go to [www.theshopfront.org](http://www.theshopfront.org)

## Where to get help

Sex without consent is sexual assault and is against the law.

There are people you can talk to if you have been sexually assaulted. If you have been sexually assaulted and are in immediate danger call 000. You can also go to a local hospital if you need medical care.

Anyone can call the NSW Rape Crisis Service 1800 551 800 (24 hours).

You can also call Kids Help Line 1800 551 800 (24 hours).

If a young person has been accused of a crime after having sex, they should seek legal advice. They can get support from Shopfront or Youth Law Australia.

# STIs - what are they?

A sexually transmissible infection is also called an STI. An STI is an infection that is passed from one person to another person during sexual activity.

This includes sexual activity when:

- the genitals touch and rub together
- body fluids are passed from one person to another

These body fluids can be:

- fluid from the penis (semen or pre-cum)
- fluid from the vagina

If you have an STI you can pass it on to your partner through unprotected sex. Unprotected sex is when you have sex without a condom.

This includes:

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

A **condom** is a thin piece of latex rubber or non-latex that covers the penis. The condom is rolled over a hard penis before sex. You can buy condoms at:

- the supermarket
- the chemist
- the petrol station



## How do you know if you have an STI?

The only way of finding out if you have an STI is by having a sexual health check-up.

You can get a sexual health check-up at:

- your local doctor or GP
- a Family Planning NSW clinic
- a sexual health clinic

The test is confidential and private.

This means that no one will find out:

- what you talked about
- that you had a sexual health check-up
- if you have an STI or not

## What is a sexual health check-up?

A sexual health check-up may include:

- a doctor or nurse asking you about your sexual history
- a urine test, swab test or blood test
- talking about other things such as healthy relationships, contraception and preventing STIs

You might feel embarrassed about getting a sexual health check-up. This is normal. But do not worry, doctors and nurses do this test all the time.

You can do the urine test and swab test yourself if you want to. Speak to your doctor or nurse for more information.

A **urine test** is when you urinate or pee into a jar.

The urine will be sent to a laboratory (lab) to see if you have an STI.



A **swab test** uses a cotton swab.

The swab is wiped over the tip of the penis, vagina, anus or throat.

This collects some body fluid that is sent to a lab for testing.



## When should you have a sexual health check-up?

You should have a sexual health check-up if:

- you have ever had sex
- you are starting a new sexual relationship
- you have ever had unprotected sex
- your partner has an STI
- the condom breaks or comes off during sexual activity
- you have any symptoms - symptoms can include pain when peeing, pain during sex, itching in the genital area, unusual bleeding from the vagina or penis

**Discharge** is a fluid that comes out of a vagina or penis.





# Safe sex

You can help protect yourself and your partner from getting an STI by having 'safe sex'.

Safe sex is when:

- you and your partner give consent
- you use a condom to prevent:
  - STIs
  - unplanned pregnancy (when having vaginal sex)

Condoms are the best way of preventing most STIs. They reduce the chance of STIs spreading by stopping body fluids from being passed by one person to another. However, condoms don't always prevent STIs that are spread through close skin to skin contact.

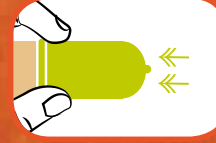
Condoms also help prevent unplanned pregnancies during vaginal sex. When used correctly, condoms stop sperm from entering the vagina and prevent the person from becoming pregnant.

An **unplanned pregnancy** is when a person becomes pregnant but did not plan to.



## Remember

- Condoms should be put on when the penis is hard
- Condoms can only be used once. After a condom has been used it should be put in the bin
- Condoms should be kept in a cool and dry place. They can be kept in wallets, but only for short periods of time
- Never use two condoms at the same time. Using two condoms at one time can make the condoms break
- Use a water based lubricant to help stop the condom from breaking



# How to use a condom

It is important to know how to use a condom the right way. The steps to putting on a condom are:

1. Consent. Ask if it is ok?
2. Check the expiry date on the back of the condom packet.
3. Carefully take the condom out.
4. Check the condom is the correct way up.
5. Pinch the tip of the condom with one hand. This gets rid of any air from the tip of the condom.
6. Roll the condom all the way down the erect penis.
7. Apply water-based lubricant if you need. Always use lubricant for anal sex.
8. If you feel comfortable, you are now ready to have sex. Check to make sure the condom doesn't break or slide off the penis during sex. If this happens, stop and put on a new condom.
9. After sex, while the penis is still hard, hold the base of the condom and remove the penis.
10. Put the condom in the bin.

## What to do if a condom breaks

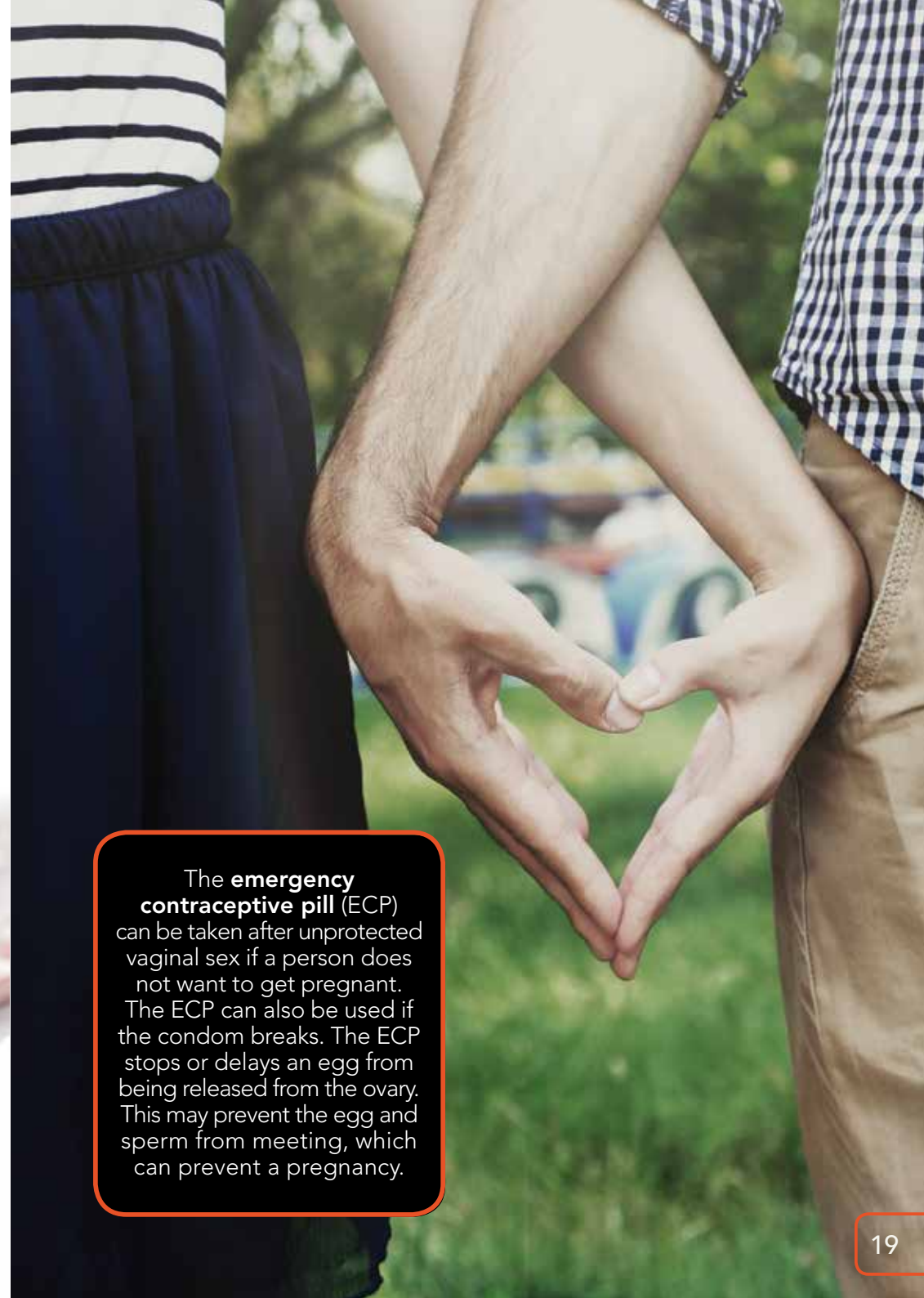
Sometimes a condom might break. There are two things you can do if a condom breaks:

- get a sexual health check-up
- use an emergency contraceptive pill if you are at risk of getting pregnant

You do not need to go to the doctor to get the ECP. You can get it from a chemist or Family Planning NSW clinic. The earlier ECP is taken after unprotected vaginal sex the better it works, but it can be taken up to 5 days after sex.

The ECP should not be your usual form of contraception. If you are taking ECP regularly, visit your doctor or a Family Planning NSW clinic to talk about other types of contraception.

**Contraception** is what people use if they want to have vaginal sex together but do not want to have a baby.



The **emergency contraceptive pill (ECP)** can be taken after unprotected vaginal sex if a person does not want to get pregnant. The ECP can also be used if the condom breaks. The ECP stops or delays an egg from being released from the ovary. This may prevent the egg and sperm from meeting, which can prevent a pregnancy.



# Sexual health and the facts

## Myth

Only people who have lots of sexual partners get STIs.

## Fact

Anyone who has sex can get an STI, even people who have had unprotected sex only once. The best way of preventing STIs is to use a condom every time you have sex.

## Myth

Males will run out of sperm if they masturbate too much.

## Fact

The body makes millions of new sperm every day so males will not run out of sperm if they masturbate a lot. Masturbation is healthy and normal.

## Masturbation

is when a person touches their genitals to make themselves feel good.

## Myth

You can't get pregnant if the 'pull-out' method is used.

## Fact

When a penis gets hard, it releases a clear fluid called pre-cum. Pre-cum can have sperm and STIs in it.

This means that sperm can still travel during sex and then fertilise an egg. Therefore a female can still get pregnant if the 'pull out' method is used.

The **'pull out' method** is when a penis is pulled out of a vagina before ejaculating (cumming).

## Myth

A female will always bleed the first time she has sex.

## Fact

A female will not always bleed when she has sex for the first time. This is because her hymen has stretched or she has very little hymen tissue.

A female's hymen can stretch when she:

- plays sports
- does exercise or activities like riding a bike
- puts something in the vagina like a tampon or finger

This does not mean that females should not play sports or ride a bike.

This just means that some females will not bleed when they have sex for the first time. This is normal and OK.

## The hymen

is a thin piece of skin tissue that covers part of the opening of the vagina.

All females are born with hymen tissue.

Some females are born with lots of hymen tissue and some are born with not much.



## Myth

People only have sex to make babies.

## Fact

There are many reasons why people have sex. Some people have vaginal sex because they want to have a baby.

Other people have sex because it feels good, it is fun and it makes them feel closer to their partner.



## Contact us

For information about sexual health and relationships:

- visit [www.bodytalk.org.au](http://www.bodytalk.org.au)
- call the Family Planning NSW Talkline on 1300 658 886
- visit the Family Planning NSW website at [www.fpnsw.org.au](http://www.fpnsw.org.au)

To talk to someone in your language, call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 131 450.

Ask them to connect you to Family Planning NSW.



[fpnsw.org.au](http://fpnsw.org.au) | [talkline 1300 658 886](tel:1300658886) | [shop](#)

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