

It's Your (Sex) Life

Your Guide to Safe & Responsible Sex



fight for your rights:
protect yourself





The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation is an independent national philanthropy dedicated to providing information and analysis on health issues to policymakers, the media, and the general public. The Kaiser Family Foundation is not affiliated with Kaiser Permanente or Kaiser Industries.

The content for this booklet was provided by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation as part of an ongoing public education partnership with MTV on sexual health issues.

Additional free copies of this booklet may be obtained by calling: [1.888.BE.SAFE1](tel:1888BE SAFE1) or online at www.fightforyourrights.mtv.com

Contents



- 6 / 7 Avoiding Unintended Pregnancy
- 8 / 13 Birth Control Chart
- 14 / 15 How to Negotiate with Your Partner
- 16 / 17 Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- 18 / 20 STD Chart
 - 21 HIV Testing
- 22 / 23 Condom Cues
- 24 / 25 How to talk to Your Partner About Safer Sex
- 27 Reading List
- 28 Hotlines

Introduction

There's no doubt about it: Sex can be one of life's most fulfilling experiences. But, you'll need to take the right precautions. These days, what you don't know about sex can hurt you so you'll want to get the facts — and fast.

Whether you're currently having sex with someone or not, you probably have lots of questions about contraception, diseases, and other intimate topics. Fortunately, we have some answers.

Of course it's your body and it's up to you what you do with it. That's why you need to make informed choices to protect yourself from accidental pregnancy and STDs, as well as the emotions that having sex can stir up. Making smart sexual decisions is easier than you might think — all it takes is a little foresight and planning before you're in the heat of the moment. So make the effort to safeguard your physical and emotional health now and in the long-term.

As a first step, it's very important to know your own body. Knowing what is "normal" for you is important so that you can tell when something is different. If you're a woman, you should pay attention to how often your menstrual periods are, how much you normally bleed, and what kind of discomfort (if any) you have with your period. A simple and easy thing that can help is to mark when your periods start and end on a calendar. Between your periods, you should know what your vaginal discharge is like, so that you can tell if something changes. Being aware of how your body works when it's healthy will help you recognize any symptoms that may signal an unintended pregnancy or STD.

Everyone — women and men — should be aware of any skin changes (like sores) on the genitals, as well as any unusual discharge or discomfort when urinating; these could be signs of an STD. However, many STDs show no symptoms: talk with your healthcare provider about your risk, and what STDs you should consider getting tested for.

