



Safer Sex

Don't risk your health, look after yourself.

- Safer sex is about enjoying sexual activity in a way that protects you and your partner(s) against both *sexually transmissible infections* (STIs) including HIV, syphilis and unplanned pregnancy.
 - always using water-based lubricants with condoms and other forms of barrier protection - never use oil-based lubricants as these can cause condoms, dams and gloves to break
- Practising safer sex is an important way of looking after your sexual health.
 - getting tested for STIs regularly and not engaging in sexual activity if you or your partner have been diagnosed with an STI or if you suspect that either of you may have an STI.
- Having sex is never completely risk-free, but you can make it safer by:
 - always using a condom or other barrier protection when having vaginal, anal or oral sex
 - also using contraception when having vaginal sex to prevent unplanned pregnancy
 - enjoying sexual activities that don't involve the exchange of semen, vaginal fluid or blood
 - never reusing a condom or other barrier protection or using a condom that is damaged or has passed its expiry date
- Condoms are the best form of protection against STIs and unplanned pregnancy, but they do not eliminate the risk of either of these things from happening. The best way to protect yourself from STIs is to always use a condom when having sex and to get tested for STIs regularly. Using a condom with another form of contraception when having vaginal sex will also help to reduce the risk of unplanned pregnancy.

Be prepared.

- Practicing safer sex means planning ahead. If you are thinking about having sex, always have barrier protection (condoms, dental dams or gloves) at hand. Don't rely on your sexual partner to provide them.
- You can buy condoms from most supermarkets, pharmacies, convenience stores and service stations, from vending machines in public places such as public toilets and train stations and online. You can also access free condoms and other safer sex products from Family Planning Victoria, sexual health clinics and some community health centres. To find your nearest sexual health clinic, visit: [StaySTIFree](#) or [1800MyOptions](#).
- Make sure you know how to use condoms and dental dams correctly. Practice at home!

Have no regrets after sex.

- Decide on your boundaries when it comes to sex. Know what you enjoy and feel comfortable doing.
- Alcohol and other drugs can decrease our inhibitions, increase our confidence and impair our judgement and decision-making - all of which can increase the chances of having unsafe sex.
- No one should be pressured into making a decision about having sex. If a partner says 'no' or otherwise shows that they might not be into what's happening, you should stop immediately and check in with them.
- You may take greater risks with your sexual health when you've been drinking alcohol or taken other drugs. Avoid having regrets after sex - be prepared to practice safer sex before you go out to party.
- Talk with your partner about what you both do and don't enjoy when it comes to sex and the importance of practising safer sex. Let your partner know that no barrier protection = no sex.

Had unprotected sex?

If you do have unprotected sex, it is important to get tested for STIs as soon as possible afterwards.

- If you've had unprotected vaginal sex and you aren't using other contraception, you may need to take the emergency contraceptive pill to avoid unplanned pregnancy. You can buy the emergency contraceptive pill from any pharmacy - you do not need a prescription from a GP.
- If you know or suspect that you may have been exposed to HIV, you should seek immediate advice about post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) to prevent HIV. Call the [PEP PhoneLine](#) on 1800 889 887.