

10 TIPS FOR SMARTER, SAFER SEX

1. Talk smart sex first, then have smart sex later.

If you can't talk about sex, you shouldn't be having sex! Be straightforward about your sexual intentions and limits so that both partners know what to expect. Besides, it is much easier to be rational and reasonable before sex than in "the heat of the moment!"

2. Two are better than one!

All contraceptives, like the pill and patch, are better when used in combination with another form of birth control, like a condom. Keep in mind that condoms are the ONLY birth control method that protect against both pregnancy and STIs! If your partner will not use protection, then you may want to re-think your relationship. Is a few minutes of fun without protection worth the major consequences that can follow afterwards?

3. Do not feel pressured to have sex!

If you do not want to have sex, you DO NOT HAVE TO! (even if you feel like "everybody's doing it," which they aren't)! Remember, sex is about a CONSENSUAL PARTNERSHIP. NO ONE should feel pressured to have sex just to please their partner!

4. Don't have sex while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

Alcohol is the drug that leads to the most HIV infections, not heroin! This is because alcohol lowers our inhibitions and our good decision making skills, which means we are less likely to use protection at all, or if we do use it, to use it incorrectly. Alcohol also makes sex less enjoyable for both men and women!

5. Use the buddy system.

When going out, go with friends and keep an eye out for each other. Always tell someone that you came with if you do choose to leave with another person that you did not come with. Trust your judgment and gut instincts and don't worry about hurting someone's feelings: if it doesn't feel right, it probably isn't right!

6. Remember that "no" means NO and that passed out doesn't mean yes!

Being drunk is not a defense for committing sexual assault! If you are too drunk to understand the person or you know that a person is too drunk to have sex, DO NOT have sex

with them, it could be considered rape. Be clear about your limits and remember that “NO” means NO! In the state of Ohio, no one under the influence of alcohol or other drugs can legally consent to sexual activity.

7. Respect the fact that everyone has the right to make her/his own personal decision about sexual activity, including you!

It is everyone’s right to decide when and how they have sex, whether it’s their first or four-hundredth time. There is no ideal age or “deadline” that a person must have sex by. If your partner is not ready to have sex, respect and be supportive of their decision; do not push them to have sex!

8. Be prepared for a sex emergency.

Carry two condoms with you just in case you do not put one on correctly or tear one while opening it. It is both partner’s responsibility to make sure that they are practicing safer sex and should work together to make that happen. It is just as important, if not more important, for women to know how to put on and use condoms as it is for men! Remember: STIs can be transmitted through oral, vaginal and anal sex so always use protection for every single sex act!

9. The best protection does not mean less affection!

Abstinence is the ONLY 100% effective way to prevent STIs and pregnancy! Being intimate does not mean that you have to have sex - there are many other ways to be intimate with your partner! If you are not ready to talk about sex and deal with the potential consequences of sex, like pregnancy and STIs, you are not ready to have sex!

10. Make sexual health a priority.

Even if you are not sexually active, but especially if you are, both men and women need to have regular check-ups to make sure they are sexually healthy. Women need to have annual gynecological exams; however, having an annual Pap smear does not mean that women are automatically screened for STIs. In order to be screened for STIs, one needs to specifically ask for STI tests.

For More Information:

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