

An introduction to safe sex

Created 1 Jul 2002 - 12:00am

Safe sex is any sexual contact which avoids semen, blood or vaginal fluid getting into the bloodstream of another person, and therefore includes sex which does not transmit HIV. Although practising safe sex will prevent transmission of HIV, it may not protect you from some [STIs](#) [1][Sexually Transmissible (or Transmitted) Infection] Infections spread by the transfer of organisms from person to person during sexual contact. Also called venereal disease (VD) (an older public health term) or sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). – like gonorrhoea, or Hepatitis A.

Gay men with HIV may also wish to consider sexual activities that decrease the risk of picking up or passing on an

For example: An HIV positive couple may decide to have anal sex without condoms. They may decide this after comparing viral loads and finding they are both at undetectable levels.(See Viral Load page 21) They may also decide this after discussing treatment histories together with their doctors and finding that neither has a [resistance](#)

A single positive man who has lived with HIV for some time and has limited treatment options may decide he does not want to risk contracting any STIs. He may choose to engage in only very low risk safe sex practices with casual partners, preferring mutual masturbation over oral sex, for example. (See STIs page 17)

A positive/negative couple may place most importance on not transmitting HIV. They may always use condoms for anal sex and never “cum in mouth” for oral sex. One or both partners may also have sex outside the relationship but keep these contacts safe, and have regular check-ups for STIs.

All these examples are different but they share one important feature. All these people have made informed choices about the sex they have.

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- [Sex and relationships](#)

Links:

[1] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/188>

[2] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/190>

[3] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/125>

[4] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/109>

[5] <http://www.napwa.org.au/resource/hiv-gay-sex/safe-sex>

[6] <http://www.napwa.org.au/resource/hiv-gay-sex/the-safe-sex-basics>