

## Sex: Will I or Won't I?

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Gay men who are HIV positive can and do have healthy and satisfying sex lives. All gay men have the right to such a sex life.

But getting a diagnosis of HIV can be a lot to deal with and everyone responds differently. Some gay men with HIV



Many find that having HIV has no impact on their sex lives while others find it difficult to form sexual relationships because of the prejudices they feel or experience. It is not uncommon for men with HIV to feel undesirable — especially shortly after diagnosis — but everyone is desirable to someone else in some way. The difficulties may be the barriers we create in our own heads.

Whatever our situation, it is important we all become and remain informed. Informed about pleasure, desire and safe sex, about advances in HIV treatment. Even about the law. Being informed regarding the many aspects and complexities of HIV makes it easier for us to negotiate sex — regardless of our HIV status.

*“I was still reeling with shock from being told I was HIV-positive when I walked from the doctor’s office straight into the counsellor’s office. I wasn’t absorbing much — I just wanted to get out of there. But I remember the basic summary. I laughed about it to myself on my way home as I went over it ‘Avoid stress, have a healthy lifestyle, give up smoking and recreational drugs, always have safe sex and find out about HIV treatments. As a recipe for stress reduction? What a joke...”*

*“Well, for two years after I was diagnosed, I had lots of casual sex — all safe. I couldn’t deal with the idea of telling anyone I was HIV positive, particularly if that led to being rejected. Being rejected at any time isn’t easy. So if I avoided getting close to anyone, I didn’t have to disclose or deal with rejection. After two years of that, this cute man told me he was HIV-positive on the way home. We’re still together.”*

*“When I found out I was HIV positive I immediately called a positive friend. One of the things he told me was I could still have sex, and if they were positive I could ditch the condoms. Sex! I didn’t want sex! I needed to work my world out. And unsafe sex... I didn’t want the clap and my doctor had talked about reinfection. It was two years later that I was ready to become a sexual being again.”*

*“I was positive, my boyfriend was negative. We thought it would be the other way round. We needed to find out more about safe sex. It’s one thing to have ‘safer’ activities like oral sex when you don’t know — but when you’re having sex with the man you love and you know you have the [virus](#) [1]A small infective organism which is incapable of reproducing outside a host cell. and he doesn’t it’s a different story. For me, it’s like a constant threesome with one partner who’s a turn-off — him, me and the virus.”*

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**Links:**

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

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

[3] <http://www.napwa.org.au/resource/hiv-gay-sex/maintaining-a-fulfilling-sex-life>