

# sextalk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

**factoid** Babies are born with over 300 bones in their bodies. By adulthood, humans' bones have fused together to form around 206 bones.

**Q.** Is there an actual bone in the male organ called the penis? Because it is called a boner, so does the bone grow or something? Is it against God's plan for me to masturbate? Because it is a form of sex (and I am not married) it would be premarital sex – which in the Bible is wrong. I am curious about these questions and I am too embarrassed to ask anyone else.

**A.** Great questions! No, there is not a bone in the penis, although it does become very hard during an erection. This occurs when a man is aroused and the penis becomes engorged with blood. To better understand this, here's a review of penile anatomy:

The shaft of the penis is comprised of two chambers of spongy tissue, the corpora cavernosa, which run along the inside length of the penis. When a man is physically (by touch) or mentally stimulated (through visual cues or sexual thoughts), the nerves of the penis allow blood to move into the corpora cavernosa. A membrane called the tunica albuginea, keeps the blood that is being pumped into those spongy chambers from escaping the penis. The result – a larger, harder penis. While an erect penis may feel as hard as a bone, it is only flesh and blood.

As for masturbation, there isn't enough room in this entire newspaper to discuss such a popular and heated issue. Masturbation has its joys, downfalls, benefits and myths. We can't answer what God's plan is for you – that is for you to discover and make peace with as it fits into your religious beliefs. There are many ways to interpret the Bible and you may wish to discuss this with a leader in your church. Many religious communities hold some heavy-handed views about masturbation. However, one thing is clear – the medical and counseling communities agree that guilt about masturbation is much more damaging than the activity itself. Masturbation, in and of itself, can be quite safe, helpful, and pleasurable.

Have a question? Send it to [sextalk@email.arizona.edu](mailto:sextalk@email.arizona.edu)

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