

# sextalk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

## factoid

Two-thirds of all STDs occur in people 25 years of age or younger. Less than half of adults ages 18 to 44 have ever been tested for an STD other than HIV / AIDS. (ASHA STD Statistics 2005)

**Q.** I got some semen on my hand when my girlfriend and I were “playing”. Is it possible that she can get pregnant from the residue on my fingers? The semen would have gotten on her genital area, but I never inserted my finger inside her. What are the dangers of sexual activities that are not actual intercourse (e.g., oral sex, fingering)? We have both been tested for STD’s and are monogamous.

**A.** The chances that your girlfriend got pregnant as a result of semen on your hand that touched her genital area, but did not get placed directly inside her vagina, are exceedingly slim to none. To put this in perspective, let’s first describe the ideal situation for getting pregnant. Conception is best achieved when the penis is positioned inside the vagina during ejaculation, and when the woman is at the most fertile stage of her menstrual cycle (either shortly before, during, or shortly after ovulation). Any changes in this scenario will lessen the likelihood of pregnancy, although not eliminate it entirely.

While the activity you and your girlfriend engaged in has a very low risk of pregnancy, other activities such as having intercourse up until the point of ejaculation and then pulling out, pose higher risks. Penetration greatly raises the odds of conception.

As for risks inherent in sexual activities other than actual intercourse, they vary depending upon the activity. Fantasy talk and masturbation pose no risk at all. Genital touching/massage, and casual and intimate kissing pose some risk of STD transmission, but it’s very small. Skin to skin contact (“rubbing”) can transmit genital warts and molluscum contagiosum, especially in the genital or groin area. Oral sex on either a man or woman is risky in that it can transmit STDs such as herpes, chlamydia, gonorrhea, and hepatitis B, among others.

Unless you are absolutely certain that you and your partner are free of all these STDs (note: a standard STD screening generally only tests for chlamydia and gonorrhea, and sometimes HIV), it is best to play it safe and use condoms or dental dams during oral sex.

For more information about STDs, visit the American Social Health Association website at <http://www.ashastd.org/>.

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

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