

the facts...

**75%** of UA students  
don't use tobacco.\*



\* past 30 days

we got the facts from you.

Health & Wellness Survey 2006  
(3,102 respondents) administered to a random  
sample of undergraduate classes at the UA.

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[www.health.arizona.edu](http://www.health.arizona.edu)

**sextalk.**  
answers to your questions about sex and relationships

**factoid** Want to quit smoking? The Great American Smokeout on Thursday, November 16th is a good day to start! Click on [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) for more info.

**Q.** After my boyfriend and I have sex sometimes, I get very swollen in my vaginal area. It sometimes takes 24 hours to go down. Is this something I should worry about?

**A.** It depends on how severe the swelling is and whether you have other associated symptoms, especially pain. Has this been happening more regularly or is it something new (which would make it more likely to indicate infection)? Is it generalized swelling or localized swelling? There are many possibilities to consider and we have more questions for you than answers.

Localized swelling could indicate something like a swollen Bartholin's cyst. Yeast infections can also cause swelling and pain that can get worse with intercourse. You may be experiencing dermatitis or an allergy to something you are coming into contact with during sex such as condoms, lubricant, etc.

The reaction you describe could also be a normal sexual response associated with increased blood flow in the area. If you are not having orgasms, this could prolong the time needed for swelling to resolve (somewhat like a female version of "blue balls" – see below) where it takes time for blood to flow out of the genital area back into the normal circulation.

Next time you have the swelling symptoms, call the Campus Health triage nurse at 621-6717. She can help you evaluate whether you should come in for an exam.

**Q.** What are "blue balls"?

**A.** When a man becomes sexually aroused, blood is carried to the penis and testicles by arteries, causing an erection and an increase in testicle size. This engorgement of blood can lead to a bluish hue in the testicles. If ejaculation occurs, blood flow returns through the veins, and the engorgement subsides relatively quickly. Eventually the penis and testicles return to their normal state. Without ejaculation, it takes longer for the blood to dissipate, causing an aching, heavy feeling. While "blue balls" is uncomfortable, it can be relieved through masturbation, passage of time, or sexual intercourse.

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

SexTalk is written by Lee Ann Hamilton, M.A., CHES and David Salafsky, MPH, health educators at The University of Arizona Campus Health Service.

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