

sextalk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

factoid

Campus Health offers convenient and confidential STD testing. Call 621-9202 for an appointment.

Q. I tested positive for chlamydia 3 months ago, was treated, then tested negative. Since then I have not been sexually active. So, while I was with my boyfriend (who I got the chlamydia from) I occasionally used a vibrator. Is it possible that I might have reinfected myself with chlamydia? How long can STDs live and survive outside of the body on a sex toy?

A. Chlamydia is an obligate intracellular parasite and can only survive a short time (seconds to minutes) outside the human body. Chlamydia requires living human cells in order to live. For most STD organisms to thrive, they need very specific conditions: human cells to support them, appropriate moisture and temperature (preferably around 98.6 degrees). Sounds like your joystick doesn't meet any of these criteria. Even without a proper cleaning, chlamydia would not survive long at all on your dry, inanimate, room temperature vibrator. The same goes for other STDs – they live well in body fluids and tissues, but die shortly after leaving their human hosts.

While you are safe from last semester's chlamydia scare let's talk about some basic vibrator care tips. It's only smart to clean your machine between uses. While there are specially marketed products for cleaning, soap and water will do the trick perfectly well. You can also use baby wipes, rubbing alcohol, or hydrogen peroxide. If your vibrator is porous (latex rubber or silicone) adding a bit of bleach to the soap and water mixture will help destroy germs in tiny, hard to reach surface areas.

What about sharing your vibrator? If you are taking turns using a vibrator with a sexual partner, it's a good idea for each partner to use a condom on the dildo. This way you'll only have to peel off the condom and put a new one on, instead of getting up to wash the vibrator.

The Campus Health Pharmacy sells condoms by the 3-pack, 6-pack, dozen, or up to 100 for just \$11.00. You can also pick up products like personal lubricant and discount-priced ibuprofen to help relieve that headache that came from worrying about your vibrator these past few months!

Have a question? Send it to sextalk@email.arizona.edu

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