

# sextalk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

## factoid

If taken within 72 hours of unprotected sex, Emergency Contraception (Plan B) can reduce a woman's chances of pregnancy by as much as 89%.

**Q.** I am a very sexual person, particularly for a female. Since guys typically seem to be more sexual than girls in terms of their desire for sex, I've done some reading on my own and come across a term that seems to fit me: hypersexual. However, one thing that concerns me, as I read, is that it seems to be associated with bipolar disorder, which I don't think I have at all. Can you explain what hypersexuality is, if it's possible to be hypersexual and not bipolar, and anything else that may help me further understand myself? Thanks a bunch!

**A.** It sounds like you enjoy sex and perhaps like to have sex frequently. Hypersexuality is hard to determine. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines hypersexual as: "exhibiting unusual or excessive concern with or indulgence in sexual activity." The crux of the matter is this: who determines what is "unusual or excessive"? Whether your desire is higher than most young women may depend on who or what you are comparing yourself to: girlfriends, roommates, or family, social and cultural norms.

While research confirms that men generally think about sex more often than women, masturbate more often than women, and have more sexual partners in a lifetime than women, they do not necessarily corner the market on sexual enjoyment. Your self-perceived hypersexuality may mean that you are very "normal & healthy" and simply enjoy having sex more frequently than others. If you are able to control your sexual impulses (rather than them controlling you) and you are not using sex as a habitual escape from work, school, feelings of anxiety, loneliness or anger, then your behavior probably falls within the range of "normal" sexual expression.

Hypersexuality does not guarantee a diagnosis of bi-polar disorder. People with this condition generally face multiple challenges besides sexual impulse control. Sex is just one of the many impulses (fast driving, shopping sprees, gambling, etc.) that are difficult to control during a "manic" phase.

If you find that your sexual thoughts, feelings, and behaviors greatly disrupt your concentration and daily life, consider talking with a professional, licensed counselor. You can arrange a session Monday-Friday at Counseling and Psychological Services at the Campus Health Service. Call (520) 621-3334 for more information.



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

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