

# sex talk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

## wildfact

Students do not need insurance to be seen at Campus Health – you just need to be enrolled for at least one unit of credit.

## Q What food is the best aphrodisiac?

A. Aphrodisiacs (named for Aphrodite, the Greek Goddess of beauty, love, and fertility) are substances believed to arouse sexual desire, improve performance, or heighten sexual experiences. Since the beginning of history, humans have sought items, particularly foods, to kick off or boost intimate encounters. The term “horny” likely began in cultures that ingested the ground-up horns of rhinoceroses and reindeers. It is clear from the amount of “spam” in our email inboxes that the market for aphrodisiacs is still very strong. Men and women continue to look for ways to fuel sexual desire and enhance performance by sniffing scents or eating particular foods and substances, sometimes of an unusual nature.

While trying to spice things up in the bedroom, many people look for help in the kitchen. Among foods thought to have sexually stimulating properties are edible items shaped like men’s or women’s genitals: asparagus, bananas, cucumbers, ginseng root, peaches, oysters, clams, or foods that feel sensuous in the mouth: honey, strawberries, chocolate.

Few scientific studies exist to give credence to the effect of alleged aphrodisiacs, but there are a few foods that do cause changes in the human body: spicy foods (curry, chilies, etc.) may feel stimulating because they cause sweating and increased heart rate which are symptoms that occur during sex.

There are many nutritional supplements which claim to have sex-enhancing properties, yet research is weak in supporting most claims and fraud is rampant in the industry. If you believe that certain foods get you in the mood or improve your self confidence, then by all means, utilize them to enhance your experiences. You may be getting some psychological “lift” from the fare, whether scientifically proven or not. When it comes down to it, the most powerful sexual tonic is your brain. To improve your sex life, you may get better results by being well rested, lighting some candles, and communicating with your partner about exactly what “turns you on.”



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.