

sex talk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

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Campus Health sells Plan B (Emergency Contraception) for \$35. All students, male or female, over age 18 can purchase Plan B.

Q My boyfriend is uncircumcised and I heard that STDs stick on the foreskin. Should I be worried?

A. Interesting question! Let's start with the basics and work our way through some facts.

The foreskin, also known as the prepuce, is a retractable fold of skin that covers the tip of the penis (glans). It protects the glans, keeps it moist, and sensitive to stimulation. The act of removing the foreskin, known as circumcision, has been around for thousands of years and is practiced heavily in certain cultures. In the U.S. approximately 60-79% of men are circumcised.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) don't necessarily stick on foreskin; however, some studies suggest that being circumcised reduces the risk of infection of HIV transmission in male to female vaginal sex. The World Health Organization recommends male circumcision as an effective prevention method in countries that have high heterosexual HIV rates and low circumcision prevalence.

Other research studies suggest that circumcision is not the only answer to STD prevention. People still need to protect themselves from infection, regardless of circumcision status. Circumcision is a hygienic practice, because it helps prevent

bacteria from collecting around the head of the penis. Practicing good hygiene (i.e. pulling back the foreskin and washing around the tip of the penis) and safer sex (lower risk activities, limiting partners, etc.) will also help prevent STD infection.

To answer your question, if your boyfriend is faithful, doesn't inject drugs, and does not currently have an STD – you have little to worry about. However, if he is having sex with other people outside of your relationship or is sharing drugs, then you are vulnerable. To lower your risk, use a condom every time you have sex and get tested regularly for STDs. Condoms are the second best method of STD prevention next to abstinence and an STD test will allow you to get the appropriate treatment if you are infected. You can purchase condoms and get STD testing at Campus Health for a reasonable price.

For more information about STDs and male circumcision visit www.cdc.gov/std or www.health.arizona.edu

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