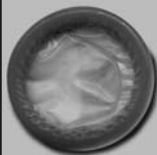


sex talk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

wildfact

SexTalk week is here! Stop by the UA Mall on Feb 8th from 10am-1:30pm for your chance to win some big prizes, pick up give-a-ways, and of course get your FREE condoms & lube!



Q Can STDs be transferred by kissing?

A. First the good news: most sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) just aren't that good at spreading by way of mouth-to-mouth contact. The "bugs" most likely to be transmitted through kissing include respiratory infections like colds and flu, mono (it's the "kissing disease," after all), and oral herpes.

Of these, the herpes simplex virus (aka oral herpes, HSV-1, or cold sores) is probably the one most people are worried about. The truth is, there's a very good chance that you have already been exposed to it, since most people first come into contact with HSV-1 as children by way of social kissing.

Studies have shown that by adulthood, 90% or more will carry – and shed – the virus without any visual symptoms, such as fever blisters or cold sores. In other words, HSV-1 is unavoidable, and probably not worth worrying much about – if all you are doing is kissing.

Oral sex is a different story. As you may have heard, it's true that both oral (HSV-1)

and genital (HSV-2) herpes can be transmitted through oral sex, whether you are the giver or receiver. In fact, up to 50% of new genital herpes infections are caused by HSV-1. To minimize your risk, avoid skin-to-skin contact. That means using a condom if oral sex involves a penis, or using a thin square of latex (aka dental dam) to cover the clitoris, vulva, anus, or genital region. Both condoms and dental dams are available at the Campus Health Pharmacy. In fact, our pharmacy may very well have the best deal you'll find on condoms: a bulk pack of 100 is only \$14.99. Flavored dental dams are only \$1.

As expressions of intimacy go, kissing is low on risk but big on effect. It can be romantic, sensuous, and thrilling. Best of all, it feels good – so go ahead, kiss away!



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SEXTALK!



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

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