

sex talk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

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Need stress relief? Come to Campus Health on Thursday, October 16th from 12-1pm for a FREE Stressbusters back rub!

Q How soon can I take a home pregnancy test? How accurate are they?

A. As soon as your period is one day late, you can take a home pregnancy test (HPT) and get very accurate results. HPTs work by screening for the presence of hCG, a hormone produced during pregnancy, in the urine. Most HPTs sold at pharmacies and other retail stores claim to be 99% accurate after the first day of a missed period. However, research indicates that early use (in the first days after a period is late) may be too soon to detect lower levels of hCG and will often render very faint results on the test strip.

Though most women will produce enough hCG to yield an accurate test as soon as their period is late, there are several steps to increase your confidence in the results: read and follow the instructions carefully, make sure the test isn't expired, wait a week after your period is late to test, take the HPT first thing in

the morning, and wait 10 minutes to read the results.

If you prefer someone else to determine whether you are pregnant or not, the presence of hCG can be determined through blood tests available through your health care provider. Blood tests, though more costly, have the benefit of determining if you are pregnant as soon as 6-8 days after ovulation—that's over a week sooner than a home pregnancy test should be used.

HPTs are available from the Campus Health pharmacy for just \$7.99. If you get a negative result, it's probably a good idea to test yourself again a few days later. If your test is positive, you'll want to make an appointment with a doctor or nurse practitioner right away to confirm the results. For more information on pregnancy testing or to discuss your options, contact Campus Health's Women's Health Clinic at (520) 621-9202.



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

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