

SEXtalk)))

Answers to Your Questions about Sex and Relationships

Have a ??? Email sextalk@u.arizona.edu

factoid

92% of UofA students wear a seatbelt when driving
(Wellness 200, n=856)

- Q. *I have a burning sensation after I have sex with my boyfriend. I don't think it is a bladder infection because it goes away after a day or so. I don't know what it can be. I was hoping that I could get some information on what it can be.***
- A.** You are probably right; it doesn't sound like a bladder infection which would come a day or two after sex and might include an urgent need to urinate, burning when you urinate, blood in the urine, and a fever. If you feel you have a urinary tract infection (UTI) you should visit a medical provider and have a urine culture done. If the culture is positive for bacteria you should be treated with an antibiotic.

Your discomfort after sex could be due to several possibilities:

- **Irritation from intercourse.** Having sex involves friction that can irritate the tissues in the vulva (external genitalia) and vagina. Intercourse changes the balance of pH in the vagina (semen is alkaline and the vagina is normally acidic). It is common to experience minor discomfort or irritation for a day or so after intercourse, particularly if intercourse was prolonged or occurred several times.
- **Reaction to sexual lubricants, spermicide, or latex condoms.** Nonoxynol-9 (n-9) is the spermicidal lubricant used in many condoms. It is more common to have a reaction to n-9 than to latex. Campus Health sells many condoms without n-9 as well as polyurethane (thin plastic) condoms. Flavored or scented sexual lubricants might also cause irritation.
- **Bacterial infection.** Many vaginal infections start with a burning or itching feeling and a possible change or increase in vaginal discharge. It is normal for a woman to have some vaginal discharge. If you notice a change in the color, consistency, or odor of the discharge, it could be an infection. Don't try to self-diagnose a persistent problem. The only way to be sure it isn't a bacterial infection is to be examined and tested by a medical provider. You can make an appointment at the Campus Health Women's Health Clinic by calling 621-4512.

Resources: Women's bodies, Women's Wisdom, Christiane Northrup, M.D., 1998; Faye Libbey, OGNP

Sex Talk is written by Lee Ann Hamilton, M.A., C.H.E.S. & Melissa McGee, Ph.D., M.P.H., health educators at the University of Arizona Campus Health Service. Send your questions to "Sex Talk" c/o Health Promotion & Preventive Services, 200 W. Old Main or E-mail to sextalk@u.arizona.edu. "Sex Talk" appears every Monday. Paid by Campus Health Services.