

SEXtalk)))

Answers to Your Questions about Sex and Relationships

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

factoid

Approximately 15% of women have a urinary tract infection during their lifetimes; many have more than one

(Mayo Clinic Health Oasis, 1999)

- Q.** *Recently, my boyfriend and I who are both virgins tried to engage in intercourse. I sat on him but he was so big and it took a long time for him to completely go all the way in. I just sat there and then I got up because it hurt too bad. I also got a bladder infection, will I be okay?*
- A.** Sexual intercourse can be a less-than-enjoyable experience for some first-timers. Factors that can contribute to a painful first-time experience for women include vaginal tissue that is unaccustomed to stretching; tearing or stretching of the hymen; and lack of vaginal lubrication. For many, the “first time” is fraught with anxiety -- stress over the possibility of pain, nervousness about sexual performance, or worries about not being ready for intercourse. If anxiety is due to this last reason, pay attention to these feelings and don't do anything that makes you uncomfortable. It may help to talk with your partner and/or a trusted friend or counselor about your fears and concerns regarding sexual intercourse.

If anxiety is due to the potential pain factor or concerns about performance, there are several tips that can help. Open communication before, during and after intercourse creates intimacy and allows you and your partner to explore the experience together. Talk about the potential of pain beforehand and create a plan of what you two will do if and when pain occurs. Strategies might include gradual penetration, slower thrusting, or pulling out and switching to other positions or sexual activities such as oral sex or manual stimulation. Also, consider using a water-soluble vaginal lubricant. Nervousness may prevent you from becoming fully sexually aroused -- a vaginal lubricant will add wetness to ease penetration.

As for your infection, urinary tract infections (UTIs) are caused by bacteria entering the urethral opening near the vagina through thrusting motions of intercourse, poor hygiene, or from wiping the genitals from back to front after defecation. Other risk factors include use of diaphragms and spermicide, and repeatedly ignoring the urge to urinate (“holding it in”). If you experience a frequent need to urinate, a burning sensation when urinating, lower pelvic pain, or blood or pus in the urine, call your health care provider immediately. UTIs should be treated early and generally respond well to short-term antibiotic use. To prevent UTI's, always wipe from front to back, wash genital and rectal areas thoroughly each day and after intercourse, urinate as soon as you feel the urge and always after sex, and drink plenty of non-caffeinated and non-alcoholic fluids.

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.