

sextalk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

factoid

80% of UA students either didn't have sex, or had sex with only one sexual partner during the past school year. (2003 Health & Wellness Survey, n=1792)

Q. I have a small penis. Is there a way for me to increase its size? I have been trying many products to enlarge my penis, but nothing changes. What can I do?

A. Every year, we receive questions from men about the size of their penis, wanting to know the best technique/pill/tool for increasing its size. And every year, our advice remains the same – there is no product, short of surgery, that will change what nature gave you, so learn to relax and appreciate the penis you have.

The Kinsey Institute, well known for its research in sex, gender, and reproductive issues, reports that the average length and width of a man's erect penis is between 5 - 7 inches (length) and 1.25 - 1.6 inches (width), respectively. Greater variation in size exists among men when the penis is flaccid (limp). In fact, erections are thought of as "the great equalizer" since those with a small flaccid penis will undergo a larger percentage volume increase during erection than those who have a large flaccid penis.

Concern about penis size is common among men given the unrealistic standards of comparison they're confronted with through art and media. Men's magazines and erotic books and movies regularly portray male genitals in *larger-than-life* dimensions, leaving most men feeling inadequate.

Men concerned with size are usually afraid they won't be able to satisfy a partner. The good news – "bigger is better" is really just a myth. In heterosexual intercourse, penis length is relatively unimportant since it is the first one-third of the vagina that has the most nerve endings and is most responsive to stimulation. Penis width is insignificant since a woman's vagina can adjust to fit a penis of any circumference. With anal intercourse, sensitivity is intense regardless of the size of the penetrating penis.

What matters most is how a man uses his penis, and the caring and passion he shows his partner during sex. Sometimes a large penis can be a drawback as it may lead a man to think that all he has to do is *show up* in order to satisfy his partner. Men who are truly "good lovers" concentrate on giving their partners stimulation and pleasure in many different ways beyond intercourse. This kind of skill and attention can be achieved no matter what size the penis is.

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

SexTalk is written by Lee Ann Hamilton, M.A., CHES & Melissa McGee, Ph.D., MPH, health educators at The University of Arizona Campus Health Service.

