

sextalk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

factoid

87% of UA students who drink do so only in places they know they will be safe. (2005 Health & Wellness Survey, n=2036)

Q. I have genital herpes. I have already had sex with my partner but have not told him that I have an STD. How do I tell him?

A. You can't change the past, but there are still ways to handle the situation positively. First, make sure to find a time to discuss your STD status sooner rather than later. It is your responsibility to let your partner know about this in order to decrease the risk of infection for your partner and the possible spread to others. After all, wouldn't you want to be told?

The American Social Health Association (www.ashastd.org) gives a few helpful pointers:

- 1) Pick a time when both of you will be in reasonably good moods and relaxed for this conversation. Choose a place with few, if any, distractions.
- 2) Start out on a positive note ("I'm really happy with our relationship..."). This will put your partner in a positive mind set, and he/she may respond more agreeably than if you start out saying something like, "I have really, really bad news..."
- 3) Your delivery can influence his acceptance of, and reaction to, what you say. If you are calm and collected talking about your STD then he may be too. If you act like it's the end of the world, he might agree that it is.
- 4) Allow a conversation to take place, rather than doing all the talking yourself.

Talking about STDs is never easy, but telling your partner that you have one only becomes harder with time. Because of this, being open and up front prior to intimacy is always the best route. You might say something like "Before we take it a step further, we need to talk about some things like STDs and contraception. The reason I'm bringing this up is that I have herpes – you need to know about it, and we need to decide how best to protect ourselves..." (www.goaskalice.columbia.edu)

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



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