

sex talk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

factoid 45% of UA undergraduate students who are single or dating have never had vaginal intercourse. (2008 Health & Wellness Survey, n=1,250)

Q. How do you stay healthy sexually?

A. Reading SexTalk Mondays in *The Daily Wildcat* is a great place to start. And while this column tends to address specific concerns on sex and relationships, your all-encompassing question nods to the many factors that create a state of sexual well-being. Here are six essentials:

1. **Foster healthy relationships** – Note that the word “sexual” did not precede “relationships” here. The reason? Cultivating positive relationships is the foundation for everything that comes later. Want another reason? Consider this: When two people are open and honest with each other, anything is possible.
2. **Get consent and talk about it** – Good sex comes from being comfortable with yourself, but you can’t be comfortable unless you and your partner are on the same page. Talking about sex upfront can be daunting, but seeing how your partner responds is a great way to gauge their interest in you.
3. **Get tested if you are sexually active** – Yes, you can have a sexually transmitted disease without signs or symptoms, so getting tested is the only way to know without a doubt. Testing is available at Campus Health and in the Tucson community through Planned Parenthood and the Pima County Theresa Lee Health Center. Added bonus: knowing your STD status may actually help you sleep better.
4. **Practice safer sex** – Like Woody Allen once said, “Don’t knock masturbation – it’s sex with someone I love.” Only abstinence and masturbation are truly “safe” sex – if you are including a partner, start with communication, then be sure to use condoms, latex dams and contraception to reduce your risks.
5. **Know your body** – If something does not seem right, it probably isn’t. That sore, growth or discharge that seems out of the ordinary, probably is. Get checked out as soon as signs and symptoms show up, since the faster you treat a sexually transmitted infection (STI), the better.
6. **Know your resources** – The UA Campus Health Service (CHS) has doctors and nurses to serve you right on campus. At CHS, you’ll wait less, spend less and get quality, confidential care that you can bill to your Bursar’s account. Services include general health, Women’s Health, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), and a full service pharmacy. Appointments can be made by calling 621-9202.



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

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