

# Things Every Woman Should Know

 POSITIVE, ACCURATE SEXUAL HEALTH SUPPORT

*Sexuality is a big part  
of your life; live it safely  
and to the fullest!*



## How to keep your **Vulva & Vagina** Healthy & Happy

The vagina keeps itself healthy & clean with the mucous in the cervix and the acid/alkaline balance. A healthy vagina is slightly acidic, keeping many kinds of bothersome germs under control.

<b>Do's</b>	<b>Don'ts</b>
Wear cotton underwear and pantyhose with a cotton lining..	Don't douche – your vagina naturally cleans itself.
Wipe from front to back & wash your hands BEFORE & after going to the washroom.	Don't wear thongs or g-strings (if you must, only wear for short period of time).
Change tampons, pads and panty liners regularly (don't use panty liners with dry weave or plastic lining – they irritate).	Don't have bubble baths, use perfumed soaps or feminine hygiene sprays.
If choosing to have safer sex use latex, lubricated condoms or a female condom.	Don't share towels, washcloths, underwear or bathing suits.
Have regular Pap tests and do your Kegel exercises regularly.	Don't wear tight or restrictive pants.
Give your vulva pleasure through masturbation or with a partner.	Don't wear underwear to bed, especially if it's synthetic material.
Be careful when trimming, shaving or removing pubic hair – the skin on your vulva is very sensitive.	Don't use Vaseline, oils or lotions as lubricant, or put them inside your vagina.
Pee soon after sexual activity and pee when you have to pee – don't hold it!	Don't have sex in the sand, dirt or under water.
Use water-based lubricant.	Don't put food, flavoured condoms or flavoured lube inside your vagina.
Your Vulva is beautiful & unique; treat her nicely & with respect.	Don't be afraid to examine and admire your Vulva.

# Healthy Relationships

## Qualities to look for

### Someone who...

- Is respectful and kind
- Is comfortable with themselves
- Listens to what you have to say
- Doesn't twist your words
- Takes responsibility for their own behaviour and feelings
- Shares common interests with you
- Has a sense of humour
- Enjoys other friends and interests
- Enjoys the fact that you have other friends and interests
- Can be intimate and romantic without sex
- Respects your values
- Is genuine and honest
- Can show affection in front of others
- Supports your goals and activities
- Encourages independence
- Is flexible
- Can say no
- Is realistic about finances
- Enjoys their personal time and space
- Does not have a problem with drugs or alcohol
- Is not afraid to have fun in life
- Appreciates you just the way you are

# Healthy Relationships

## Qualities to watch out for

### Someone who...

- Is violent, mean or hurtful
- Thinks that they are too good for you
- Is constantly offering to take care of you
- Always wants to do things their way
- Doesn't want to talk about what is bugging you
- Does not compromise
- Has too much "charm" or is too good to be true
- Attacks your behaviour and/or your personality
- Is sneaky or manipulative
- Makes plans without consulting you
- Expects you to give up your family and friends to be with them
- Belittles you and things that are important to you
- Puts you on a pedestal
- Tells you what to do, say, eat etc.
- Wants to know where you are and who you are with at all times
- puts you down or pulls you down
- constantly blames other people and does not take any responsibility
- uses silence as a punishment
- Is jealous
- Is not comfortable with themselves
- Makes you do things you do not want to do
- Tries to rush the relationship
- Lies or twists the truth
- You feel you can rescue, change or fix
- Threatens suicide if you talk about breaking up
- Has ever hit you – no matter how sorry they were afterwards
- Has ever threatened to hit you
- Does not listen to you, talks over you, pretends not to hear you
- Tries to make you feel guilty if you resist their sexual advances
- Puts you down when you are feeling good

# **Masturbation is Okay!**

**Masturbation is a safe way for people to discover what they enjoy and what gives them pleasure.**

**Masturbation is often the fastest, easiest way to have an orgasm.**

**Also, many people have the most intense orgasms when masturbating.**

**Masturbation is physically good for your body.  
Orgasm helps with menstrual cramps, insomnia, relaxation & stress relief.**

**And it's good exercise.**

**The majority of both males & females masturbate.  
Some people use toys or other sexual aids to masturbate. Some do not.**

**Masturbation is a natural behaviour & an individual choice.  
It is not something to feel ashamed about.**

**Many people incorporate masturbation into sexual activities they enjoy  
with a partner.**

**Even if you choose to abstain from sex, you can still enjoy masturbation.**

**Basically, masturbation is normal, natural, fun, safe & good for you.**

**So ENJOY YOURSELF!**

# I ♥ MY CERVIX

Dear Friend,

This is your cervix writing.

I know you must have forgotten I existed until you received this letter (with the vagina and clitoris always hogging all the attention). I bet you wouldn't even recognize me if you saw me – me, your very own cervix!

Well, that is exactly why I have some ideas for you on how to show me some love. They've been helping women screen against cervical cancer for decades, and right now there are a few easy ways you can take care of yours truly (or, for you people out there without a cervix, how you can make sure your partners, friends and family stay healthy too).

## **Top Three Ways to Love Your Cervix** (or the cervix of someone you love)

### **1. Get a Pap Test.**

I know, I know, this seems obvious. But think about it – when was your last Pap test? Start taking care of this, this very moment. It is very important, you owe me a Pap test once every three years once you turn 21 years of age, unless your health care provider has told you otherwise. If you do not have a regular health care provider you can contact your Community Health Department.

### **2. Have Safer Sex.**

Yes I know, of course you are having safer sex. But seriously when I say safer I mean using protection every single time you are sexually involved! Add HPV and cervical cancer to the long list of reasons to have safer sex and remember – your cervix cannot protect you, so please protect your cervix!

### **3. Get information on the HPV Vaccine.**

You may have heard about the HPV Vaccine in the media. It can protect me from the types of Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) responsible for 70% of cervical cancer cases and not to mention some strains which cause genital warts. To find out if this vaccine is for you, ask your health care provider or your Community Health Department. You can also read about it at [www.sexualityandu.ca](http://www.sexualityandu.ca).

**Love Always,  
Your Cervix**

**Xoxo**

# WOMEN STUFF

Many girls and women wonder about what they see on their underwear. They want to know if it is normal.

What they see on their underwear is usually yellow, white or clear. Or sometimes when they wipe themselves after urinating (peeing), they notice something clear and slippery. This is called cervical mucus. This is a *normal* secretion. It is sometimes called discharge. It is the sign of a healthy vulva. There may also be an odour which may change depending on where a woman is in her menstrual cycle.

There is another type of secretion called lubrication, which makes the vagina feel slippery and wet. There is also a fluid which comes from the urethra of some women when they are sexually aroused. It is called female ejaculate.

When vaginal secretions are a different colour or have a different odour, it may be the sign of an *abnormal* secretion or infection.

## Normal Vaginal Secretion

### Mucus

During a women's menstrual cycle, mucus is made in the cervix. At certain times this mucus is slippery, wet and stretchy. This happens before an egg is released from an ovary (ovulation), making it easier for sperm to swim through the cervix and fertilize the egg. When she notices this mucus in her underwear or when she wipes, she knows she is fertile – it is easier to get pregnant. Later in the cycle the mucus usually gets dry and sticky, making it harder for sperm to swim through the cervix. If she is on a hormonal method of birth control she will only have the dry, sticky discharge because she will not be ovulating.

### Lubrication

This fluid is produced by the glands near the opening of the vagina during sexual arousal. For some this happens quickly and easily, for others it may take longer. Sometimes it happens when you least expect it. Some women lubricate a lot, some a little. If there is not a lot of lubrication it may make penetration with a finger, penis or sex toy uncomfortable or even painful. Many women find a water-based lubricant, such as Astroglide, helpful, and many women who lubricate a lot still use water-based lubricant because it feels good. If you are not using condoms you can also try a little olive oil. It's natural and doesn't have artificially ingredients. Just remember a little lubricant goes a long way.

## **Female Ejaculation**

Often when women masturbate or participate in sexual activity with another person it feels good to stimulate their G-spot. This is a small section of tissue located approximately a half finger length inside the front wall of the vagina. When stimulating the G-spot women often feel the urge to urinate and fear they will urinate if they allow their body to relax and have an orgasm. Some women do release fluid when they have an orgasm, but the fluid, even though it comes out of the urethra is not urine. It is clear, has no odour and does not stain. There is often a lot of fluid and it may squirt out.

## **Abnormal Vaginal Secretion**

In a woman's vagina there is usually a healthy balance of bacteria and yeast. Sometimes this balance gets upset. This may be caused by such things as douching, pregnancy, antibiotics or birth control. When this happens, the discharge may be a different colour and odour. She may have itchiness, redness or a burning sensation when she urinates. It is probably a good idea to see a doctor if it persists to get treated. If she has a sexual partner, they to may need to get treatment.

## **Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)**

A woman can contract an STI if they are sexually involved with a partner who is infected. Some common STIs are chlamydia, gonorrhea, HPV and Herpes. While many women do not get any symptoms of an infection, some women will notice an abnormal discharge or odour, burning when they urinate, swelling, irritation, bumps or redness. It is important to see a doctor if you have any of these symptoms and get treatment. Her partner may also need treatment.

If a woman is infected with HIV or Hepatitis B, these viruses will be found in her vaginal fluid and secretions and her blood, including her menstrual blood. The only way to find out if you have either of these viruses is to get a blood test. If you are infected you can pass these viruses to your sexual partner.

Condoms offer good protection against STIs.

## **Unusual Spotting or Bleeding**

Sometimes a woman may have some spotting (light bleeding) when she is not menstruating. This may happen during ovulation or when your body is getting used to a new form of birth control. If it happens frequently or after intercourse you should see a doctor.

# Yeast Infections

A yeast infection (vaginal Candidiasis) is a common fungal infection caused by overgrowth of the naturally occurring yeast *Candida*. Most women develop a yeast infection at least once in their life. A yeast infection can be transmitted sexually, but it is not usually considered an STI. Sometimes men will develop signs of a yeast infection on the head of their penis after having intercourse with a woman with a yeast infection. This may be itching, red dots on the tip of the penis, dry peeling skin or burning during urination.

## Causes of a Yeast Infection

- Pregnancy
- Use of antibiotics or other prescriptions
- Sexual activity
- Poorly controlled diabetes
- A weakened immune system
- Genital moisture retention caused by tight fitting clothing

## Signs and Symptoms of a Yeast Infection

- vaginal itching
- swollen and/or red vulva and/or vagina
- thick, white, clumpy discharge resembling cottage cheese
- burning of the external genitalia when urinating
- pain during intercourse due to vaginal dryness and irritation

## Treatment

Yeast infections can often be treated with creams or vaginal suppositories bought at pharmacies without a prescription. There are many brands and types of treatments. A doctor can also prescribe an oral medication. Some women prefer natural methods which are prescribed by homeopaths and naturopaths such as change of diet.

Yeast infections can increase the risk of acquiring and transmitting HIV.

## Helpful Hints to Prevent Yeast Infections

- wear cotton underwear and avoid tight fitting clothing
- keep your vulva clean and dry, use mild soaps and plain water
- wipe from front to back to avoid bringing bacteria into the vaginal area
- avoid using bubble baths, oils and hygiene sprays
- avoid douching, it can irritate the vaginal lining
- avoid using deodorant tampons and pads
- eat balanced meals and try to stay away from foods high in sugar

# Pelvic Exams

## What is a pelvic or gynaecological exam?

A pelvic exam is a way for your health care provider to examine your female organs (vulva, vagina, cervix, fallopian tubes, ovaries & uterus) and check for any gynaecological problems. A Pap test specifically looks at the cells on your cervix to see if there are unhealthy changes in the cells.

## When should I have my first pelvic exam?

In Ontario, Pap tests are recommended at age 21 if you are sexually active. Sexual activity includes vaginal, oral and anal sex, as well as digital intercourse or sharing of sex toys. Unless your health care provider suggests otherwise you should have an exam every three years. However, when you should have your first pelvic exam and how often you have an exam will depend on factors such as: your family history, your sexual history, whether or not you use birth control and what type of birth control you use.

There are other important reasons to have a pelvic exam. These may include:

- Unexplained pain in your lower belly or around the pelvic area where your vagina is
- Vaginal discharge or wetness on your underwear that causes itching, burns or smells bad
- No menstrual periods by age 16
- Vaginal bleeding that lasts more than 10 days
- Missed periods, especially if you are having sex
- Menstrual cramps so bad that you miss school or work

## Will I need a pelvic exam if I'm a virgin?

Even if you are a virgin (you've never had vaginal intercourse), you may need a pelvic exam for any of the above reasons. If you have a pelvic exam you are still a virgin.

## What should I do before the exam?

When you make your appointment, be sure to let the receptionist or nurse know that this is your first pelvic exam. They can answer your questions and help explain what to expect so that you will not be worried. Do not have sex, use vaginal creams, or douche 24 hours before the exam. Do not schedule the appointment during your menstrual period. If your cycle is irregular and your appointment turns out to be during your menstrual period, phone the day before and ask the receptionist if you should reschedule.

## What kinds of questions will my health care provider ask me?

Your health care provider may ask you questions about:

- Your general health, allergies and medications you are taking
- Your menstrual period, such as: how old you were when you first got it, how long it lasts, how often it comes, how much you bleed, the first day that your last period started (LMP), if you have cramps, and at what age your breasts started to develop
- Whether or not you have had sex or been sexually abused
- Whether you use any form of contraception
- Whether you are in a relationship
- If you have vaginal itchiness, an unusual discharge or odour from your vagina

## Before the exam

- If you find it comforting your mom or friend can stay with you during the exam
- A female nurse will also be in the room
- After you have given your medical history (they may also take your blood pressure and weigh you) you will be asked to put on a gown
- You will need to remove all your clothes (except your socks) including your bra and underwear
- **A breast exam is often done as a part of this routine check-up – if it is not you should ask why**

## What happens during the exam?

- Your health care provider will explain the steps of the exam and ask you to lie down on the examining table. You will be given a sheet to put over your stomach and legs.
- You will be asked to move down to the end of the table and either place your feet in stirrups (holders for your feet) or place your feet together.
- With your knees bent, you will be asked to let your knees fall to each side allowing your legs to spread apart.

This is usually the part when most women feel shy and embarrassed, this feeling is normal. Remember that this exam is routine for health care providers and their only concern is for your health.

There are 3 parts to this exam. Sometimes not all parts of the pelvic exam are necessary.

## The External Exam

- Your health care provider will first look at your vulva (clitoris, labia, vaginal opening and rectum) to ensure everything looks normal

## The Speculum Exam

- The speculum is an instrument made of metal or plastic, some say it looks like a duck bill. Your health care provider will place the speculum into your vagina (they will use lubrication). After it is inserted it will be gently opened so that your health care provider can see your vagina and cervix (the opening to your uterus). If you like you can ask your health care provider for a mirror so that you can see what your cervix looks like.
- After checking your vagina and cervix, your health care provider will take a thin plastic stick that may have a small brush on the end, and gently wipe away some of the cells from your cervix. This is a **Pap test**, which detects early changes in the cells of the cervix before they become cancer. Most women have normal Pap tests. HPV could be one cause for abnormal cells on the cervix.
- If you are having abnormal vaginal discharge, your health care provider will take another sample to test for yeast and other causes of discharge
- If you ask (or they may ask you), your health care provider can take another sample to test for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). **They do not automatically test for STIs.** They can take a sample to test for chlamydia and gonorrhea (blood tests are necessary to test for other STIs).
- When all of these samples have been taken, your health care provider will close the speculum and gently take it out

## The Internal Exam

- The last part of the pelvic exam is done to check your female organs (fallopian tubes, ovaries and uterus). Your health care provider will insert one or two gloved fingers into your vagina. With the other hand they will gently apply pressure to the lower part of your abdomen. You may feel slight discomfort or pressure when they press in certain places, but it should not hurt. If you feel pain, it is important to tell your health care provider.

## What happens after the exam is over?

Your health care provider will answer any questions you have and tell you when to make your next appointment. He or she will also talk to you about any medications you may need and tell you when and how you will get the results of the exam.

## What do the results of my Pap test mean?

Most often the results of your Pap test will be normal and your physician or nurse will not call you. If the results of your Pap test are abnormal your physician or nurse will call you. It may take several weeks before they have the results. Abnormal results mean one of two things:

- **Cell Changes** – Some of the cells on your cervix have changed or are abnormal. This is common for many women. Your physician may ask you to return for a Pap test earlier than usual (i.e. in 3 or 6 months). For most women the abnormal cells change back into normal cells on their own.
- **Cancer** – Severe cell changes on your cervix that need specialized treatment. Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) is the number one cause of cervical cancer. Many people will have this virus in their life, a small number of which will develop cancer. Most women will have no signs or symptoms that they have been exposed to this virus until they have a Pap test. Your physician will probably want you to have a colposcopy.

## What is a Colposcopy?

A colposcopy is an exam that looks at the cells of your cervix more closely. It is conducted by a gynaecologist and usually takes 10 to 15 minutes. The physician will use a special microscope to look at your cervix. The doctor will put a speculum in your vagina the same as when you have a Pap test and the cervix will be washed. The microscope is placed near the opening of your vagina, it will not go into or touch you. The doctor will take a close look at your cervix through the microscope and may also take a biopsy.

## What is a Biopsy?

A biopsy is when the physician takes a small sample of the cells on your cervix. This can be uncomfortable. You might feel cramps like when you have your period. You may also have some spotting or bleeding for a few days afterward. The biopsy will be sent to a laboratory for further tests. It may take several weeks for the results of the biopsy. Treatment will depend on the results of the biopsy. Cancer of the cervix can be treated with surgery, radiation, chemotherapy and other treatments.

## What else can you do?

- Always use a condom to help protect yourself from HPV.
- Avoid tobacco smoke – smoking and second hand smoke can cause mild cell changes on your cervix to progress to cancer.
- Always go for regular Pap tests – even if your results are normal.
- Talk to your physician if you have questions relating to sexual health.
- Take care of yourself! It is important to eat healthy, exercise and get enough rest.

# Important Things to Know Before, During and After Pregnancy

## Prior to Conception You Should:

- Eat healthy, exercise regularly and take your vitamins
- Take folic acid at least three months prior to conception (0.4mg per day)
- Stop drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes, using recreational drugs and some medications
- Make sure vaccinations are up to date (i.e. rubella)
- Lose weight if overweight – No dieting while pregnant!
- Make financial plans, job plans, housing plans and support plans
- Think about: Is this the right time to get pregnant?

## While Pregnant You Should:

- Continue to eat healthy, exercise and take your vitamins including folic acid
- Seek a Health Care Provider as soon as possible (i.e. midwife, obstetrician)
- Attend prenatal classes, read books, talk to other pregnant women and mothers
- Attend a breastfeeding support group
- Attend prenatal appointments
- Practice Kegel exercises
- Make sure you get enough sleep
- Have sex if you choose to, unless told otherwise by Health Care Provider
- If you have a partner discuss their possible role in labour or the possibility of using a Doula
- If you have a partner discuss your expectations with them for once the baby arrives regarding support, childcare and your relationship
- Enjoy your pregnancy – take photos, scrapbook, cast your belly

## After Delivery You Should:

- Rest (sleep when baby sleeps)
- Continue to eat healthy and exercise
- **Breast feed if possible – it provides essential nutrients to baby (and it's free)**
- Seek help early with breastfeeding issues/concerns/questions
- Try not to have a fixed schedule
- Take help from family & friends (cleaning, cooking, childcare, groceries etc.)
- Learn to let go of other priorities (i.e. messy house). Make baby first priority
- If you have a partner try to make time for them and your relationship
- Be open and honest about your needs with support people
- Let your Health Care Provider or Partner know if you are experiencing more than baby blues
- Keep doing your Kegel exercises
- If you have a partner resume sexual activity only when you are ready and comfortable
- Consider birth control options – you can get pregnant while breastfeeding

## Vulva: An Owner's Manual

What's a Vulva? The Vulva is the entire external female genitals – inner and outer labia, clitoris, clitoral hood, mons and urethral and vagina openings. This part of our anatomy gets called lots of funny names: Vajayjay, muff, “down there,” and often it gets confused with the vagina – the stretchable passage that leads to the cervix and uterus and is involved in menstruation, pregnancy and delivery.

Because women's genitals, unlike men's, are hidden, they can seem mysterious, confusing and even shameful. Let's eliminate the mystery – every woman has a vulva. It can be the source of much pleasure and it is a good idea to get to know Her and all Her wonders.

Don't be shy! Get to know your body! Look at your vulva! Stand or sit over a mirror and take a good look. Examining the vulva is healthy; it gets you familiar and comfortable with your unique body and all its parts.

**Labia:** The word labia means lips in Latin. The outer labia are two folds of skin and fatty tissue that are covered in pubic hair after puberty and sometimes cover the rest of the vulva. They can be large or small, short or long and, even like breasts, two different sizes. They can be sexually sensitive and swell during arousal.

The inner labia are also sensitive and can swell when a woman is turned on. These are the folds of skin that go from the clitoral hood to below the vaginal opening. They can vary in colour from pink or purple to brownish black depending on the colour of a woman's skin. Like women's nipples, women's inner labia can change colour as women mature. Both nipples and inner labia also often change colour during pregnancy. Sometimes the inner labia emerge from the outer labia and sometimes they are tucked up inside.

**Clitoris:** The clitoris is located beneath the point where the inner labia meet and has its own hood to protect it. The clitoris may seem and look small (the size of a pea) but this is because the majority of the clitoris is hidden beneath the skin of the vulva. When a woman becomes aroused the clitoris actually becomes stiff and swollen just like a penis (but not as large and visible). But unlike the penis, the clitoris is designed only for pleasure.

The clitoris is the pleasure centre of the vulva. It does not have a central role in intercourse and reproduction like the vagina. The clitoris is there to make women feel good! Each woman's clitoris will have a different sensitivity level. It is filled with thousands of nerve endings. This allows it to be the cause of intense pleasure but for some women it can be too sensitive to touch directly. Often stimulation around the clitoris is enough for great pleasure and orgasm. It is important women communicate to their partners how they like to be touched.

**Masturbation:** Touching, caressing, stroking etc. one's own genitals to feel good, with or without orgasm is called masturbation. Everyone seems to know that boys

and men masturbate – but girls and women do it too! There are many ways for girls and women to masturbate: rubbing the clitoris, inserting fingers or other objects into the vagina (never food please!), using a vibrator or shower head, rubbing against pillows or other objects etc. etc. Masturbation is perfectly normal. It is also normal not to masturbate. Masturbation can be fun and feel good and it can help women get to know their own bodies and what feels good for them. This can allow them to help their partners please them better. Masturbation also carries no risk of pregnancy, STIs or HIV – so lay back and enjoy!

**The Vagina, the Hymen and Virginity:** The Vagina is the stretchable passage that leads to the cervix and uterus and is involved in menstruation, pregnancy and delivery. It is often called the birth canal because it is the way the fetus is pushed out of the body during childbirth. It is also the way menstrual fluid leaves the body and where the penis is inserted during heterosexual intercourse. The vagina often has a piece of skin or tissue at the opening that is called a hymen. Some girls are born with hymens that totally cover the vaginal opening, some have so little hymenal tissue that it seems they have no hymen at all and others are in between. The hymen can stretch open or tare at first sexual intercourse, during masturbation, when inserting a tampon or during some activities such as sports. Sometimes it may bleed. Many people and cultures believe that if the hymen is not intact and if the vagina does not bleed at first intercourse the woman was not a virgin. However, this is problematic for women who were born with little or no hymenal tissue and therefore many people believe virginity does not rely on the hymen and bleeding but on whether or not a person has engaged in sexual activity.

**Discharge and Health:** During puberty the vagina starts to produce a discharge that can be white or clear. This is the self-cleaning aspect of vaginas - aren't they wonderful! Discharge carries germs and other unwanted stuff out of the body. When women are ovulating or aroused the vagina produces a different discharge that is slippery and clear. This is also a natural lubricant.

The vulva has a characteristic scent, but if it's healthy the smell is not unpleasant. Some people really like the smell of vulvas. If your vulva smells bad, fishy or has any other strong unpleasant odour see a health care provider. An unpleasant smell can be a sign of an infection. In an effort to eliminate smells from the vagina many women use douches and feminine deodorants. However, vaginas are self-cleaning and DO NOT need help with this process. Douching and perfumes can actually disturb the natural balance inside the vagina and cause irritation and inflammation. Simply wash the vulva with a warm wash cloth – no need to wash inside the vagina.

**Your vulva and vagina should not be mysterious to you if you are a woman. Pay them some attention – they are wonderful parts of anatomy – both strong and delicate, and they deserve to be taken care of properly and with respect!**

# Things Women Should be Aware Of

Did you know...

- It is the Woman's decision to avoid a pregnancy, continue with a pregnancy or end a pregnancy (even if she is married).
- A Woman has three choices when she becomes pregnant. She can parent, give the child up for adoption or have an abortion (for support and information call Planned Parenthood Waterloo Region at 519-743-9360).
- Women have the right to decide if and when they engage in sexual activity, and what type of activity this is. This is true even if you are married, living with a partner, in a relationship or dating.
- Sexual Assault is any unwanted sexual act forced upon an individual. This includes but is not limited to: kissing, touching, oral sex, vaginal sex or anal sex
- It is not ok for another person to engage in sexual activity with you if you are drunk, on drugs, passed out or asleep (if you think you have been sexually assaulted you can call the Sexual Assault Support Centre of Waterloo Region at 519-571-0121 or the Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence Treatment Centre at St. Mary's Hospital at 519-749-6994).
- A Woman does not need permission from a spouse, partner, parent or guardian to use any form of birth control.
- Wherever you are nobody has the right to say or do anything sexual to you that you do not want – this is Sexual Harassment.
- It is your choice to be in a relationship, date or engage in sexual activity with someone of the same sex.
- A woman cannot lose her job or be demoted because she is pregnant.
- You have the right to informed consent. This means you have all the information about what someone is going to do, before they do it. When you go to a physician they must give you all the information about all your options before you make a decision.

**“NO” Means “NO”**

**“Not Now” means NO**

**“Maybe Later” means NO**

**“I Have A Boyfriend/Girlfriend” means NO**

**“No Thanks” means NO**

**“You’re Not My Type” means NO**

**“#\*%! OFF” means NO**

**“I Want To Go Home” means NO**

**“Don’t Touch Me” means NO**

**“I Really Like You But...” means NO**

**“Let’s Just Go To Sleep” means NO**

**“Let’s Just Be Friends” means NO**

**“I’m Not Sure” means NO**

**“I’m Not Ready For This” means NO**

**“You’ve/I’ve Been Drinking” means NO**

**Talking to Children and Teens about Sexual Health  
SILENCE means NO**

**“ \_\_\_\_\_ ” means NO**

**If you have children or teens it is important to talk to them about sexual health and relationships.**

**Whatever your child's age, gender, ability, sexual orientation, faith or culture – it is never too late to begin talking!**

Using Books to help talk to your children about relationships, sex and sexuality is a good way to feel more comfortable and learn with your child.

It is important to read the books before reading them with your child or letting your child read them on their own. This way there will be no surprises and you can ensure you are communicating your values and beliefs.

### **Tips for Talking to Your Child about Sexuality**

1. Try to have an open and honest communication style.
2. Listen and stay calm
3. Accept that it may be awkward and embarrassing.
4. Educate yourself about sexual health and sexuality.
4. Reflect on your own upbringing and sexual health education.
5. Talk about feelings and emotions, as well as the facts.
6. Stay informed with the music, television and social media your child listens to, watches and uses.
7. Look for everyday opportunities to have a discussion.
8. It is never too late to start communicating with your child.
9. Ask your child questions to find out what they already know.
10. Normalize sexuality – it should be a healthy part of your life.
11. Use the correct language for body parts.
12. Repeat, repeat, repeat – we all learn best through repetition.
13. Have a sense of humour and have fun.
14. Use books!

**You don't have to know everything about sex and sexuality, you just have to start talking with your child and keep on talking – books can help start the conversation and keep it going.**

## **Sexual Health Internet Resources**

### **Administered by The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada**

[sexualityandu.ca](http://sexualityandu.ca)

[menopauseandu.ca](http://menopauseandu.ca)

[endometriosisinfo.ca](http://endometriosisinfo.ca)

[hpvinfo.ca](http://hpvinfo.ca)

[iwhp.ca](http://iwhp.ca) – International Women’s Health Program

### **Taking Charge of Your Fertility**

[tcoyf.com](http://tcoyf.com)

### **Ontario Midwives**

[aom.on.ca](http://aom.on.ca)

### **Menstruation**

[divacup.com](http://divacup.com)

[lunapads.com](http://lunapads.com)

### **Sexual Health Adult Retail Stores**

[comasyouare.com](http://comasyouare.com)

[goodforher.com](http://goodforher.com)

### **Sexual Assault Support Centre of Waterloo Region**

[sascwr.org](http://sascwr.org)

### **Sexual Health**

[the-clitoris.com](http://the-clitoris.com)

[beautifulcervix.com](http://beautifulcervix.com)

[womenshealthmatters.ca](http://womenshealthmatters.ca)

[acckwa.com](http://acckwa.com) – Aids Committee of Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo and Area

## **Books that may be helpful**

The Boston Women's Health Collective (2005). **Our Bodies Ourselves**. New York, NY: Touchstone.

Dodson, Betty (1996). **Sex for One: The Joy of Selfloving**. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press.

Livoti, Carol & Topp, Elizabeth (2004). **Vaginas: An Owner's Manual**. New York, NY: Thunder's Mouth Press.

Federation of Feminist Women's Health Centres (1991). **A New View of a Woman's Body: A fully illustrated guide**. Los Angeles, California: Feminist Health Press.

Love, Susan & Lindsey, Karen (2005). **Doctor Susan Love's Breast Book**. Da Capo Press.

Northrup, Christine (1998). **Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom: Creating Physical and Emotional Health and Healing**. New York, NY: Bantam Books.

Northrup, Christine (2006). **The Wisdom of Menopause: Creating Physical and Emotional Health and Healing During the Change**. New York, NY: Bantam Books.

Northrup, Dr. Christiane (2008). **The Secret Pleasures of Menopause**. Carlsbad, CA: Hay House.

Ogden, Gina (1999). **Women Who Love Sex: An Inquiry into the Expanding Spirit of Women's Erotic Experience**. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Womanspirit Press.

Rankin, Lissa (2010). **What's Up Down There? Questions you'd only ask your Gynecologist if she was your best friend**. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

Stewart, Elizabeth & Spencer, Paula (2002). **The V Book: A Doctor's Guide to Complete Vulvovaginal Health**. New York, NY: Bantam Books.

Squires, Elizabeth (2007). **Boobs: A Guide to Your Girls**. Emeryville, CA: Seal Press.

Waxman, Jamye (2007). **Getting Off: A Woman's Guide to Masturbation**. Emeryville, CA: Seal Press.

# PLANNED PARENTHOOD

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