SEXWISE

The David and Lucile Packard Foundation

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/sexwise/



SEXWISE

INTERNATIONAL PLANNED PARENTHOOD FEDERATION

BBC WORLD SERVICE

Contents

Introduction 1
Before you start 2
Calendar of events 3
Menstruation 4
Changes that affect boys & girls during puberty 6
Changes that affect girls 7
Changes that affect boys 7
Key Facts 9
What to take with you 9
Male contraceptives 10
Female contraceptives 11
Other methods 13
Emergency contraception 13
Sterilisation 14
Good places to go 15
Travelling companions 16
Choosing an exciting place to visit 18
Foreplay and intimacy 20
Vaginal sex 20
Orgasm 21
Hazardous zones 22
Your safety 23
Risks when travelling 24
HIV/AIDS 27
Frequently Asked Questions 29
Checklist 31
The female body 31
The male body 32
Virginity 34
Pregnancy 35
Abortion 36
Female Genital Mutilation 37
Male circumcision 38
Dry Sex 39
Acknowledgements 40
Contacts and information 41

Introduction

Why use this guide?

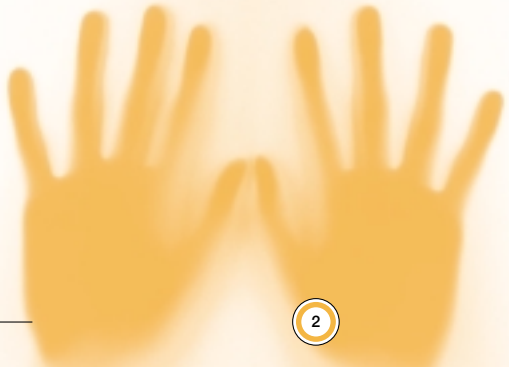
SEXWISE provides you with:

- basic information you need about your sexual well being
- advice to develop your understanding about your sexuality
- SEXWISE is written in the form of a travel guide. It is about your sexual safety and well being and describes how to be prepared for your own journey, and be wise about sex. This guide will assist you to make decisions based on informed choices.

At the end of this **SEXWISE** guide there is a checklist of more facts and people to contact if you want more information.

Before you start

The importance sexuality has in your life will change at different times, and you may not always be sexually active or want to be. SEXWISE is for individuals. You may have a regular partner, husband or wife, or be on your own. Whatever your starting point, your experience is an individual one. You may not actually know where you are going until you get there, but exploration can be part of the experience. Love, emotions, physical feelings and insecurities all play their part. Not everyone feels the same and we all mature at different stages, physically and emotionally. External influences can also have a strong effect on your sexuality and how you feel, which in turn can affect your self-esteem.



Calendar of events

The changes that take place during puberty happen gradually to every young person, usually after the age of 8, and vary according to individual. Puberty is the transition into woman/manhood when the sex organs grow and develop and the body becomes ready and able to reproduce. During puberty your body changes rapidly, and this can be a disturbing as well as exciting journey. These changes can make you feel proud and happy but they can also make you feel confused or embarrassed, or all of these things. This is a time when your friends and family, your peers and others may try to influence how you should behave, what you should look like, and what sort of people you should be with. These are all important choices for you to make. This process can involve you in discussion, seeking out information and, on occasion, asking yourself some difficult questions.

Menstruation

Girls are born with thousands of potential or immature eggs in each of their 2 ovaries (see checklist). After puberty, one mature egg is released every month. This is called ovulation and happens around 14 days before a 'period' is due. If the egg is not fertilised by sperm (see checklist) it will die. The womb gets ready for a possible pregnancy every month and its lining becomes thick and soft. When your body knows that fertilisation will not take place, the lining and the egg pass out of the body through the vagina as a period. The egg can't be seen as it's much too tiny. The menstrual cycle is from the first day of the period until the day before the next period starts. The cycle varies and can be as short as 21 days or as long as 40 days. You can use either sanitary towels or tampons to catch the blood during menstruation. You can use a diary to work out when your period is due. Not all women have regular periods.*

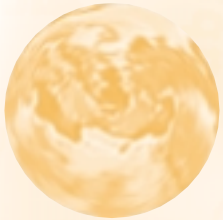
Changes in hormone levels before or during your period can affect your mood. You may feel energetic and sexy or moody, tearful and angry around ovulation and/or just before your period is due. Your breasts may become sore or a bit larger and you may get spots on your face. Some women may be more prone than others to the physical sensations related to their menstrual cycle, and these reactions may also change over the course of a woman's life. Women release eggs in this way until they reach the point in their lives known as the menopause. This usually occurs when women are in their late 40s and 50s. After this time, menstruation no longer takes place and women do not become pregnant.

If you suffer bad period pains or have any other concerns seek advice from a doctor you trust or your Family Planning Association (FPA).

* **If you are concerned, contact your doctor or Family Planning Association (FPA)**

Changes that affect boys and girls during puberty

- your height, weight and muscles develop
- your sex organs grow
- you become fertile
- your voice deepens
- the glands in your skin become more active and can give you spots
- your sweat glands develop increasing the quantity and smell of sweat
- hair starts to grow under your arms and around your genitals
- you may experience rapid mood swings
- you may begin to be attracted towards members of the opposite or same sex
- you may feel more sexually aware



Changes that affect girls

- your breasts develop and may feel painful as they grow
- your nipples begin to stand out
- your hips get rounder
- your sex organs develop, the ovaries start to produce ova or egg cells
- later in puberty, menstruation starts

Changes that affect boys

- your chest and shoulders develop
- hair starts growing on your face and may grow on your chest
- your penis and testicles grow larger
- your testicles drop into the scrotum and start to produce sperm
- you may have erections without warning
- you will experience your first ejaculation when liquid called semen comes out of your penis (this can happen when you are asleep and is sometimes called a wet dream)



Key Facts

The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) has Family Planning Associations (FPAs) in most countries around the world, and is dedicated to providing sexual and reproductive health information and services to all people who want these services and information. Similar services are provided by a number of other public and private organisations. Choose the services that you can afford and which best suit your needs. All individuals have the right to freedom of choice, confidentiality, and access to sympathetic and accurate information and support.

What to take with you

Being prepared will help you to have more safety, choices and therefore enjoyment. If you are sexually active, sex should be pleasurable, but it needs serious thought too. If you want to avoid pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), you will need to use a barrier method of contraception. Increasingly, people are using condoms. They may also be available in different shapes and colours which can help to make using them more fun. Here is a list of contraceptives that you can use to avoid pregnancy. Some of

these will also offer protection against STIs. If you have any questions, concerns or difficulties about contraception, consult your FPA or doctor.

Male contraceptives

condom: condoms protect men and women, are made of thin latex rubber, some condoms are lubricated with spermicide
how it is used: fits over erect penis before intercourse
advantages: usually easily available, no physical side effects, protects against STIs and HIV(see HIV)
disadvantages: has to be used properly to be effective, can interrupt sexual activity



Female contraceptives

oral contraceptive: Pill containing hormones that stop the ovaries releasing an egg each month
how it is used: usually taken for 21 days followed by a break of 7 days or in 28-day cycles; a woman may choose to stop taking the pills at any time if she wishes to try to get pregnant.
advantages: easy to use, may decrease menstrual pain, may prevent some forms of cervical cancer
disadvantages: must be taken daily, no protection against STIs/HIV, women who take the Pill and smoke are at higher risk of developing thrombosis (blood clots) and heart problems

hormonal injection: like the Pill these injections contain a hormone
how it is used: an injection once every three months, two months or monthly to prevent ovulation
advantages: once injected, no further action is required until the next injection
disadvantages: must be injected by medical personnel, may cause irregular or absence of menstrual bleeding, no protection against STIs/HIV

Female condom: a loosely fitting sleeve of polyurethane that lines the vagina completely

how it is used: before intercourse it is placed securely into the vagina

advantages: protects against some STIs/HIV

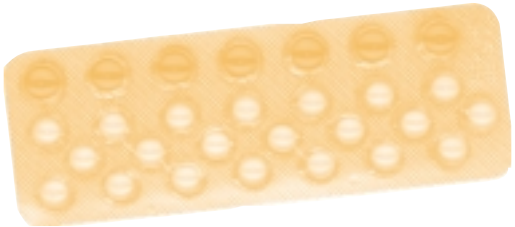
disadvantages: can interrupt sexual activity, have to learn how to use it

intra-uterine device (IUD): a small piece of plastic with copper wire around it

how it is used: inserted into the uterus (womb) of the woman by a medical professional

advantages: long term protection from pregnancy

disadvantages: can increase risk of inflammatory disease, offers no protection against STIs/HIV, not recommended for those who have never had a child



Other methods

periodic abstinence

how it is used: a couple has sexual intercourse in the time that the woman is least likely to become pregnant i.e. just before or after menstruation

advantages: no physical side effects

disadvantages: difficult to predict menstruation and ovulation, especially when you are young, no protection against STIs/HIV

withdrawal

how it is used: a man withdraws his penis from his partner's vagina before he ejaculates

advantages: no physical side effects

disadvantages: not safe or effective since sperm can be present in pre-ejaculatory fluid, does not protect against STIs/HIV

Emergency contraception

what is involved: Medical professionals or FPAs may provide emergency contraceptive pills within 72 hours after unprotected intercourse (i.e. sex without any method of contraception) or an IUD can be inserted within 3 – 5 days of unprotected intercourse. Emergency contraceptive pills are the same as other oral contraceptives, but are taken in higher doses. Emergency contraception prevents pregnancy by

either stopping or delaying an egg from being released from the ovary or by stopping a fertilised egg from becoming implanted in the uterus.
advantages: only contraceptive method that can be used after having unprotected sexual intercourse or in the event of contraceptive failure.
disadvantages: not as effective over time as other contraceptive methods (2% failure rate for each use); side effects may include nausea, dizziness, vomiting, headaches, soreness in the breasts and cramping; does not protect against STIs/HIV.

Sterilisation

Vasectomies for men and sterilisation for women are medical options either for health reasons or as a permanent contraceptive. If people choose them as a form of contraceptive, they usually do so when they are completely sure they do not want to have any or any more children. These are surgical interventions with permanent consequences and you should not consider them without professional medical advice from a doctor you trust or from your FPA.

Not all of these methods may be available in your country. Check with your doctor or FPA. **(see contacts)**

Good places to go

None of us can tell exactly how we will enjoy our experiences, or where they will take us. This is also true when it comes to partners, sex and pleasure. These experiences will include exploration, understanding your own and/or other people's bodies. A good way to begin to be active is to explore your own body. This can increase your confidence about understanding how your own body looks, feels and responds. If you have never looked at your body before, find a place where you won't be disturbed and use a mirror to examine your body, including your genitals. Masturbation is another form of exploration for men and women, it means playing with your genitals, massaging and rubbing them. You may have been told that masturbation will damage you, but there is no medical proof for this. No harm can happen to you by doing it.

Travelling companions

Sexual relationships between men and women are called heterosexual relationships. Sexual relationships between partners of the same sex are called homosexual relationships. Homosexuals are men *or* women who are sexually attracted to people of their own gender. Homosexuality remains illegal in some countries. Sexuality can be complicated and you need time and consideration to understand it. It is clear that homosexuality is based upon individual need, and there is no agreement about whether people are born or, choose to be, homosexual. What is evident is that homosexuals have to make decisions just as heterosexuals do about how they create relationships with other people.

Many people do not understand homosexuality and how people can be different from themselves. This lack of understanding can generate an atmosphere of fear, judgement and punishment. Some of us are scared of differences. Many people believe that sexuality should be determined by cultural beliefs and practices. These attitudes do not always cater for people who are different from the 'norm' and can create an environment which encourages persecution of homosexuals.

Most sexual practices, whether between people of opposite or the same sex, usually involve touching, excitement and affection. Sexuality can be as much about emotion as physical acts. A positive relationship between partners can have a direct influence on the sexual relationship and the feelings of intimacy between each other. However others may have no regular partner and still enjoy active sexual relationships. Sex and love are not the same. However, for many people love and sex go together.

It is important to understand the consequences of deciding to have sex with someone. It can be wonderful, but you can feel guilty and disappointed afterwards if you think you didn't make the right decision and didn't feel ready. People decide to become sexually active for many different reasons; sometimes it is because of pressure from their partner or because their friends are having sex, or because they feel it is a way to assert themselves. Some people decide they want to wait until they get married or know someone well. Having sex can be a decision you make on the spur of the moment, and it is not always a simple choice. But never forget that you can say 'no' to having sex. And whether you say 'yes' or 'no', think about the possible consequences, as well as the pleasure. Some people actively choose to abstain from having sex.

Choosing an exciting place to visit

Good communication helps you to achieve sexual satisfaction. The starting point is yourself and giving yourself permission to explore and enjoy your own sexual feelings. Your partner won't know your wishes and concerns unless you can and want to tell them. For example;

- You may want to be touched and caressed by your partner before having sex
- You may want sex less or more often than your partner
- You may / may not want to have a baby
- You may not know as much as your partner about safer sex
- You may know more or less than your partner about safer sex
- You may have more or less experience than your partner
- You may not want to have penetrative sex
- You may not want to have sex

Desires can be addressed through communication between you and your partner about your mutual needs and wants. This might be quite hard to do at first. Providing the sex is taking place between consenting adults and no-one is being subjected to activity they do not want take part in; from a health perspective, there is no 'correct' way to have sex. There are many ways to show your feelings for each other, and your body will let you know what you like. Sometimes kissing is enough.

You can gain sexual satisfaction in lots of ways, many of which do not involve penetrative sex. This is worth considering in an age where we are increasingly conscious of 'safer' sex. Your sexual desires may include mutual masturbation, oral sex (which is caressing your partner's genitals with your lips and tongue), being vigorous or gentle with each other, having penetrative sex (vaginal or anal) or having sex without penetration. What you can do with each other will probably be determined by your values and attitudes, but actually it is as endless as your own imagination. Remember to protect yourself and your partner, **and don't do anything you don't want to do, be sexwise, and have a good time.**

choosing an exciting place to visit

Foreplay and intimacy

Kissing, stroking and cuddling, known as 'foreplay', arouses both men and women. This caressing can be relaxing and stimulating. Most men can have an erection and be aroused quite quickly. Putting on a condom can be part of this foreplay. **Foreplay usually helps women to be aroused so that their vaginas are relaxed enough to allow a penis to enter them easily and without pain. When a woman is sexually excited her body will produce a natural lubrication that exists to assist penetration.** **(see also Dry Sex)**

Taking the time to have foreplay can be extremely stimulating. It also provides a way to build physical and emotional trust between people. This trust can grow towards creating an atmosphere between partners that is full of pleasure and intimacy. This intimacy can be an important part of a sexual and emotional relationship. Knowing someone really well can be very exciting.

Vaginal sex

This is probably the most practised sexual activity between heterosexual couples. This form of penetrative sex, known as 'sexual intercourse', where the penis enters the vagina, is the principal way of becoming pregnant. Sexual intercourse can be difficult, especially if it is your first time or you are nervous. Once the penis is inside a vagina that is aroused and moist enough, one or both partners can move their pelvis, so that the penis goes backwards and forwards with changes of rhythm. This can last anything from a couple of minutes to over an hour. It usually ends with a climax of sexual excitement called orgasm. There are many, many different ways to have penetrative sex, and with exploration you will find what suits you and your partner best. So be prepared for a journey with lots of excursions to new places. In this way, you will find what suits you and your partner best.

Orgasm

Both men **and** women feel sexual desire and need. But the ways they achieve satisfaction can be different. Sex is about arousal, and this may include orgasm which creates highly pleasurable sensations for men **and** women. Reaching an orgasm with a partner can take practice and understanding.

When the penis and the clitoris are sufficiently stimulated, orgasm will occur. An orgasm consists of a series of muscular contractions in the sex organs. These are felt as a throbbing or pulsating sensation, which spreads through the whole body, causing a feeling of intense pleasure followed by

one of relaxation. At the moment of the man's peak excitement, semen will come out of his penis.

Nearly every woman can reach orgasm through stimulation of the clitoris alone, without penetration. Very few can reach it without the clitoris being aroused. Women also have orgasms through vaginal stimulation. One partner may reach orgasm before the other and orgasm may not occur every time you have sex. Emotions play as much a part in our sexual lives as our bodies, and our thoughts, feelings and desires contribute to our sexual excitement and satisfaction.

Hazardous Zones

We can all get into trouble at times – sometimes because things are not going as planned or because they shouldn't have happened at all. Being safe can sometimes seem unexciting, but being safe can help you not to become pregnant or making someone else pregnant. It can help prevent you getting ill, and it can help you to have the friendships and relationships that you want. It is good to feel safe, especially if you are in unknown territory.

There may be times when you are asked or even expected to have sexual contact with someone you don't want to have sex with. The person may be too demanding or even violent. You may not know

them. You may know them very well, or even be related to them. Often these people are in positions of power and may try to bully, blackmail or bribe you into having sex with them. This is called abuse. What they are doing to you could be illegal but may also be dangerous.

If you are in any trouble, seek advice from someone you absolutely trust and who will give you support. This could be someone inside or outside your own family. Remember, you are not to blame. Your sexual well being is not about enforced violence, nor payment. It is about trust and enjoyment. Saying 'Yes' may mean yes, but saying 'No' always means no.

Your safety

Coercion is any act – sexual or otherwise – that people are subjected to against their will. This includes being: **raped, abducted, physically attacked, forced into any form of prostitution, pressurised into being circumcised, married without your and your partner's consent**

While many of these practices are illegal they remain common in some countries. This does not make them acceptable. It is invariably women and young people who are subjected to sexual coercion. Having access to facts rather than fiction, education and taking part in discussions

can help you to take control of your own sexual and reproductive health.

Decisions made by other people about your sexual well-being may well be what they want but may not be right for you. You should have access to as much accurate and impartial information as possible before you make your choices. Real choice does not include coercion or intimidation. There are many traditions around sex, pregnancy and child birth that have been practised for many generations, but do not promote or support the health and well being of individuals, particularly women. Being Sexwise is about being informed and in control. It is also about being safe. This does not include being forced to do something that may harm you or anyone else – physically or mentally. If in doubt, seek support and advice from someone you trust or your FPA.

Risks when travelling

Travelling is fun, but there are risks. There is no such thing as completely safe intercourse (vaginal or anal) or oral sex. The two ways you can insure against unwanted pregnancy or Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), including HIV, are either by not having sex with anyone at all or by having safer sex. **(see choosing an Exciting Place to visit)**. You can have **safer** sex by using condoms. STIs are diseases that can be contacted through sexual contact with a person who has the infection, as they are carried either in a man's semen or in a woman's vaginal fluid. They **cannot** be transmitted through kissing, sharing utensils or drinks, insect bites, swimming pools or public bathrooms. Anyone who has unprotected sexual contact is at risk for contracting an STI, **not** just sex workers or people who have multiple partners or homosexuals.

Feelings of shame and fear are very common among people who become infected with an STI, and this may keep them from seeking medical attention. There is nothing to be ashamed of. STIs are infections and seeking medical attention as soon as you notice symptoms may help slow or stop the infection and may help you prevent spreading the infection to others.

The most common STIs are: genital warts, thrush, chlamydia, syphilis, gonorrhoea, trichomonas and HIV.

risks when travelling

a woman should seek medical help if any of the following signs are found

- a discharge from the vagina with an unusual colour, smell or quantity
- pain and burning sensation when urinating
- pain and itching around the vagina
- painful sexual intercourse
- sores/blisters around the vagina

a man should seek medical advice if any of the following signs are found

- a discharge from the penis with an unusual colour, odour or quantity
- burning feeling in the penis during and immediately after urinating
- sores, warts or blisters on or around the penis
- rash or bumps in the genital area or other parts of the body

what happens if you don't seek advice

- you may become very ill and you may become infertile

Your FPA or doctor will give you advice about testing for these infections.

Sometimes there are no immediate physical signs to show you that you have an infection, therefore, it is always better to protect yourself and of course your partner/s by using a condom. If you are worried about having an STI contact your FPA or doctor for advice. It's Sexwise to have safer sex.

HIV/AIDS

HIV (Human Immuno-deficiency Virus) is a virus that breaks down your immune system. AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is what follows when the body has become infected with HIV and the body is not able to fight off a whole range of infections and conditions it becomes prone to. HIV **cannot** pass through **unbroken skin**, through **a latex barrier**, i.e. a condom, **and it cannot live long outside the human body**. The virus **cannot** be transmitted through **casual contact, kissing, masturbation, shaking hands, from toilet seats** or **using the same cutlery**. **Nor** can it be caught **from insect bites.**

There are two main ways in which HIV is passed on from one person to another. One is when semen or vaginal fluid from an infected person enters another person's body during penetrative sex (vaginal or anal). The other is from blood stream to

blood stream i.e. when an infected person's blood gets inside another person's body. For this reason, drug users who share contaminated needles for injections are at risk, as are people who have blood transfusions when the equipment is not properly sterile or the blood is infected. Women with the virus can pass it on to their baby during pregnancy, at birth or via their breast milk.

When the virus enters the body a person is referred to as HIV positive. A person may be HIV positive without knowing it. Possible signs and symptoms of HIV/AIDS are; more than 10% loss of weight; fever for longer than a month; fatigue and night sweats. People can be infected (i.e. be HIV positive) for many years before they develop AIDS. One of the ways to avoid becoming HIV positive is to know the difference between fact and fiction. One of the many myths about HIV/AIDS is that you may be cured by having sexual intercourse with a virgin. This is not true. Dangerous myths about AIDS include the idea that you can be cured. As yet there is no cure for AIDS. HIV is not prejudiced, and does not only effect certain groups of people. It is a virus that may be passed on by unprotected sex with a person who has the virus and by other **risky behaviours**. It is a virus that can affect us all, but it is avoidable.

If you are at all concerned and want further information see contacts.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can you get pregnant if it's the first time you've had sex?
Yes, if both partners are fertile and you are not using contraception

Can you get pregnant if you have sex when you're having a period?
Yes

Can you get pregnant if you have sex standing up?
Yes

If you wash straight after sex, will you still get pregnant?
Yes

Will my testicles explode if I don't ejaculate?
No

Can you run out of sperm by ejaculating too much?
No. Each testicle produces about 200 million sperm every day

Do men become ill if they don't ejaculate regularly?
No.

Is it safe to have anal sex?

Some people (men and women) enjoy having sex by inserting the penis in the anus. Anal sex, like vaginal sex, increases the risk for STIs and using a condom is the best way to prevent infection. It is safer to use a condom.

Is it true that the sex drive is greater in men than in women?

No. But, boys often learn that they should be sexually active, have many partners, and begin at an early age. Girls are taught not to be sexually active and not to have sex until marriage. These ideas can become part of our way of thinking and then may seem like 'natural' differences between men and women.

Is there a link between oral sex and HIV/AIDS?

It is a low risk route of transmission, the HIV is killed by the acid in the stomach. It could be transmitted through an exchange of sperm to blood (from someone who is HIV positive) through a fresh cut in the mouth or lips, or if their sperm was to come into contact with someone's eye where there are many blood vessels.



Checklist

Here is a brief tour around the sexual and reproductive organs of the body.

The female body

Ovary: There are 2 ovaries, each about the size of an almond, which produce the eggs, or ova

Womb, or uterus: About the size and shape of a small, upside-down pear. It is made of muscle and expands when a baby grows inside it

Fallopian tube: 2 tubes leading from the ovaries to the womb

Bladder: Sac of muscular, fibrous tissue holding urine

Urethra: Tube which carries urine from the bladder

Vagina: tube about 8 cm long from the cervix to the vulva, where it opens between the legs. The vagina is very elastic so it can easily stretch around a man's penis, or around a baby during labour

Anus: Opening at the lower end of the bowel which is kept closed by 2 muscles

Cervix: The neck of the womb. It is normally all but closed, with just a small opening through which blood passes during menstruation

Clitoris: sensitive organ at the top of the female genitals, only the tip is visible. During sexual excitement, the clitoris enlarges and hardens and can be the focus of orgasm

The male body

Penis: Organ made up of spongy tissue which when aroused, fills with blood making it stiff and hard. The average length of the penis is around 12 to 19 cm when erect

Urethra: Tube which carries urine from the bladder, and semen (including sperm) through the penis

Glans: Helmet-shaped head of the penis, most sensitive area of the penis

Foreskin: Skin that covers and protects the glans and must be pulled back for cleaning to avoid infection

Circumcision: Removal of the foreskin is done by a procedure called circumcision, and is performed on some babies and boys as part of a cultural tradition or religious practice or for medical reasons (see Male Circumcision)

Sperm: tiny tadpole-shaped cells, which when joined with an egg cell from a woman, fertilise and form a new cell i.e. a foetus

Semen: the liquid in which the sperm swim. Sperm are needed to fertilise an egg in the woman to make a baby. Sperm is ejaculated in the semen along the urethra. The urethra usually carries urine, but during ejaculation urine cannot enter the sperm. On average, one teaspoonful of semen contains 300 million sperm

Erection: The hardening of the penis resulting from sexual arousal

Ejaculation: The release of semen through the urethra. It may occur as a result of sexual activity, including masturbation.

Scrotum: Bag containing the testicles

Testicles: Soft round organs that produce sperm

Anus: Opening at the lower end of the bowel which is kept closed by 2 muscles

Bladder: Sac of muscular, fibrous tissue holding urine

Virginity

A **virgin** is someone who has not had sexual intercourse. Women have a membrane called a hymen surrounding the vaginal opening. Some people believe that the hymen is the only proof of virginity. This belief can cause a lot of unhappiness and anxiety to a woman who has no hymen, but is a virgin. The hymen can be stretched and/or torn by exercise, sports or the use of tampons. A woman can still be a virgin without a hymen.

Having penetrative sex for the first time can be frightening. When either or both partners is a virgin, the need for gentleness and understanding is very important. The hymen is not a wall that needs to be battered down. Nor is it the case that blood must be present to prove that virginity has been lost. Some people want to protect their virginity because it enables them to feel more in control of their sexuality. Some women and girls will protect their virginity by allowing men to have anal sex with them (remember, safer sex means using a condom). The first time you have penetrative sex can be painful or sore whether you are a male or female. **You can become pregnant the first time you have sex**. Do not have sex if you do not want to.

Pregnancy

In order for an egg to become fertilised, it has to come into contact with the man's sperm. At the moment of the man's ejaculation, the sperm travels from the testicles into the penis and then spurts from the penis, up into the top of the woman's vagina. The sperm travels towards the womb usually meeting the egg in the fallopian tubes. Fertilisation occurs when a sperm joins with the egg. If the fertilised egg is implanted in the uterus, the woman becomes pregnant. The egg settles down in the womb and starts to grow and approximately 9 months later a baby is born.

Early signs of pregnancy may include: missed menstruation, breast enlargement and tenderness, nausea and vomiting, a metallic taste in the mouth, fatigue and dizziness. Pregnancy can be confirmed by a simple test which can be done by your FPA or at a medical clinic. (see Contacts) Confidentiality and privacy are yours by right – you can request these from a health professional whenever you want it.

There are several risks associated with pregnancy at an early age. These include physical risks such as; premature birth, prolonged period of labour and/or low birth size and weight; psychological risks such as; fear, guilt, depression and/or rejection by your family, partner, school

and/or society and social risks such as; being forced into a relationship or marriage you don't want, being expelled from school and/or economic dependence on parents.

Abortion

Pregnancy may not always be good news. If you do find yourself with an unplanned pregnancy, the situation can be very upsetting. Abortion is a procedure to terminate unwanted pregnancy. The contents of the woman's uterus are extracted or the woman is given medication to induce an abortion. Abortion remains a contentious issue for many, but it is a personal decision for women. In most countries in Africa it is illegal to have one and in some countries it is allowed only under certain conditions, i.e. medical grounds and when the life of the mother is in danger.

Some people believe myths such as drinking herbal teas or large amounts of alcohol, doing excessive amounts of exercise or jumping, taking hormones, or inserting objects or herbs into the vagina or having very hot baths will bring on a spontaneous abortion i.e. a miscarriage. **These are not methods of terminating a pregnancy, they are ways to damage your health.** For your own sake, it's important

to act quickly and decide whether or not you want to have an abortion. This is a personal choice.

If an abortion is performed in un-safe conditions, the risks to a woman's health are significant and can be fatal. The procedure may damage the reproductive organs causing sterility, peritonitis and/or other serious medical conditions.

Abortion is illegal in some countries.

Female genital mutilation

(FGM) also known as female genital cutting and female circumcision

FGM is a traditional practice in some cultures. **FGM** is any procedure which involves the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or any other deliberate injury to the female genital organs. This procedure is explained within terms of cultural or religious practices, but remains a serious health hazard to those women who are subjected to it.

The immediate medical risks include severe pain, shock, haemorrhage, infection, urine retention and ulceration of the genital area. The long term consequences include cysts and abscesses, damage to the urethra, infection and infertility. Sexual intercourse may well be painful. Many suffer in silence, but may well have serious physical and

psychological reactions to FGM in any form. These significant health risks to women raise serious doubts about the cultural and religious significance and importance of continuing this practice. FGM is illegal in some countries.

Family Planning Associations are closely monitoring the risks to women's health that FGM causes. If you have any concerns about this issue contact your national FPA.

Male Circumcision

In order for this procedure to be safe, it must be performed in clinically hygienic conditions, with sterilised instruments and by practitioners who are fully aware of the health risks and pain association with this medical procedure. (see also checklist)



Dry sex

Dry sex is a sexual practice which involves penetrative vaginal sex where the woman has a dry vagina. Sometimes herbs are used to increase the dryness. Dry sex increases the risks of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. Dry sex can also make sex a painful experience for women.

There is a widely held belief that women who have moist vaginas are sexually 'immoral'. Women's vaginas become moist naturally in order to assist penetrative sex. Most women are able to produce this natural lubrication. Being 'ready for sex' does not mean that you are ready for sex with anyone, and not being 'ready for sex' i.e. *dry*, is very painful for the woman. (see also Foreplay and intimacy).



Acknowledgements:

BBC World Service Education and the International Planned Parenthood Federation would like to acknowledge the financial support of the Packard Foundation and the European Commission.

Contacts, addresses and information

This guide was produced as part of a major sex education project commissioned by the Education Department of the BBC World Service with its Arabic, French for Africa, English for Africa, Hausa, Portuguese for Africa, Swahili, Indonesian, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Spanish for Americas and Brazilian Language Services.
The International Planned Parenthood Federation and its member Family Planning Associations and offices in The Africa region, The Western Hemisphere region and The East and South East Asia and Oceania region.

The Sexwise guide was written by: Karen Merkel and Rupert Walder
Consultant to this guide: Doortje Braeken
Thanks also to: the UK Sex Education Forum
Designed by: Henry Iles < henry@fowey.demon.co.uk >
Typset by: Accent on type < accent@aot.co.uk >

For further information about this and other BBC World Service Education projects contact: Commissioning Editor, Education BBC World Service, Bush House, PO Box 76 Strand, London, WC2B 4PH, UK.
Tel: + 44 171 557 2295, **Fax:** + 44 171 240 3141,
E-mail: wsedu@bbc.co.uk

For further information about IPPF contact: IPPF, Regent's College, Inner Circle, Regent's Park, London, NW1 4NS, UK.
Tel: + 44 207 487 7900, **Fax:** + 44 207 487 7950,
E-mail: info@ippf.org

Copyright © BBC World Service (2000)

contacts list for one of 5 countries to be dropped in here...