Do you always have to say yes to sex with your partner?

Fast facts: Sexual consent

Taking part in any kind of sexual activity with someone else should involve giving and getting agreement. This is also known as sexual consent.

Consent requires a clear and enthusiastic yes. If someone seems unsure, stays silent, doesn’t respond, or says “maybe,” that isn’t consent.

You should always ask for consent and give consent every time you have sex.

You always have a right to say no to any form of sex or sexual activity - it doesn’t matter who the other person is, what your relationship is, what you’ve done with them or others in the past. It is the same whether you’re having sex for the first time with someone, or if you’re in a long-term relationship.

Consent is an ongoing process - you might agree to sex earlier on and then change your mind - you might agree to one type of sexual activity but not to another - everyone has the right to do this.
Giving your consent and getting your partner’s consent may feel a bit awkward but ultimately sex is about communication and can and should be a positive and pleasurable experience when it’s based on mutual consent.

You should not assume that your partner will want to have sex just because you’ve had sex in the past. Similarly, if you feel pressured to have sex or feel too afraid to say no – that’s not OK, and may be a sign of an unhealthy relationship.

Sex is only one aspect of a good relationship and having sex is not proof of love or guarantee fidelity. If your partner doesn’t want to have sex remember that they are saying no to sex, not to you.

Explore this issue

**Sexual consent**

What’s sexual consent? How do I get it? How do I give it? And how does it work ‘in the moment’?

**Healthy relationships**

All relationships should be based on respect, honesty, trust and communication.

**6 things you need to know about sexual consent**

Am I ready for sex?
Advice about how to decide when you're ready to have sex for the first time.