

How to have vaginal sex



FAST FACTS:

- During vaginal sex the penis goes into the vagina.
- Foreplay is important. It gets you both sexually aroused and ready for penetrative sex. It makes vaginal sex more enjoyable for both partners.
- Having vaginal sex without using a condom puts you and your partner at risk of unplanned pregnancy, contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- Put a condom on an erect penis before it touches or enters the vagina.
- Discussing safer sex is an important part of having sex.

Sex can be a lot of fun and very pleasurable, but it's also normal to have questions and worries. You might be thinking about having sex for the first time and are not sure where to start. Or maybe you want more information on how to make it pleasurable and safe?

Whatever your situation here are answers to some common questions about vaginal sex.

What is vaginal sex?

During vaginal sex (also known as penetrative vaginal sex, vaginal intercourse, sexual intercourse and just sex) the penis goes into the vagina.

How do you have vaginal sex?

There is no one right way of having vaginal sex, but there are a few things that you should think about before you do it.

It's important that both people are enthusiastic about having sex and that no one is feeling pressured or forced into doing anything they don't want to do. Asking your partner and continuing to communicate as you progress is the best way to make sure you have their consent. It should also help make the experience more pleasurable for you both.

Vaginal sex works best when both partners are aroused. This is why foreplay is important.

What is foreplay?

Foreplay (sometimes called heavy petting) is about getting both people sexually aroused (or turned on) and ready for penetrative sex, through kissing, stroking, caressing, rubbing and touching. Sometimes people also have [oral sex](#) as part of foreplay. The more aroused you both are, the better sex is likely to feel.

You'll often know you're getting aroused from certain physical signs:

- for women, the vagina begins to moisten
- men get an erection, which means their penis will get bigger and harden.

Foreplay should be enjoyable for both partners and you may choose to not go any further than this stage. Many couples enjoy having foreplay for a long time before they move on to having vaginal sex.

If you are both ready to have vaginal sex, the arousal created through foreplay will help the penis enter the vagina more easily.

We spent ages on foreplay, kissing, fingering and lots of oral as it was both of our first times. When we did decide to have sex, we used a condom and lots of lube and he was very gentle, kept asking me if he was hurting me and how I felt. It did hurt a bit, but not as much as I was expecting.

- May

When should I put on a condom?

Once you are both aroused and ready to have sex you can put on a [male condom](#). This can be done by you or your partner. You can only put a condom on an erect penis and you should do this before the penis touches or enters the vagina.

If you are using a [female condom](#) it can be put in up to eight hours before sex.

How do you get the penis into the vagina?

When you are ready, it helps if one of you uses your hand to gently guide the penis into the vagina. Take your time, and don't worry if it takes a few goes to guide it in properly – this is very normal, especially when you are both getting used to each other's bodies.

Once the penis is inside, you can move your bodies so that the penis pushes into the vagina and then pulls partly out again. Do what comes naturally and feels good - being slow and gentle is a good idea to start with so you can make sure you are both comfortable.

He was very slow and rather than just pushing into me hard and fast, he took his time making sure I got used to his penis being inside me. He repeatedly asked me if I was ok or wanted him to stop. I told him no and I only felt slightly uncomfortable at first but then when he had fully entered me it felt amazing. He was slow and sensual.

- Ash

Remember that you can pause or stop at any point you want, the same is true for your partner. Just because you have started something doesn't mean you need to continue – stopping is actually very normal. If you are not feeling comfortable with what you are doing you have the right to stop! If your partner wants to stop respect their wishes.

Will it hurt - and will the woman bleed?

It can take a bit of time to get used to the sensation of sex, and some women can find it a little uncomfortable or painful at first. However, the pain should not be intense and if at any time the pain is too strong then you should stop. Taking things slowly, making sure the woman is fully aroused and using a good water-based lubrication (oil-based lubricants like massage oils or Vaseline can cause a condom to break) can help penetration feel more comfortable.

If it's a woman's first time having sex she may bleed a little. This is generally nothing to worry about. Though it's perfectly normal to bleed the first time you have sex, it's also perfectly normal not to bleed.

If you continue to bleed every time you have sex then it's a good idea to speak to a healthcare professional to check it's nothing to worry about.

What is the best position for vaginal sex?

There is no one best position and different people will enjoy different things. One common position involves the woman lying down, with the man lying or sitting on top (also called the 'missionary position').

However there are many different possible positions, the woman can be on top, - or you can both lie on your sides. You don't have to be facing each other - some people like having vaginal sex from behind - meaning the woman's back is turned towards the man.

It is easiest to choose a position you both feel comfortable with and one that you can get into easily if you are having sex for the first time. As you get to know each other's bodies better, you can experiment with different positions and work out what you both like.

After a while you might find certain movements, positions and ways of touching that lead to one or both of you having an orgasm (also called 'coming' or 'climaxing'). Don't be too concerned if this doesn't happen straight away or even at all. It takes time to get to know what works for you sexually - and for your partner - and sex can be enjoyable whether you climax or not.

You may want to experiment with sex toys, or having [anal sex](#) and oral sex as well as vaginal sex. Remember that if you do move from anal sex to vaginal sex you should put on a new condom to make sure you do not infect the vagina with bacteria.

What are the risks of pregnancy, STIs and HIV from vaginal sex?

Having vaginal sex without using a condom, even if it's your first time, means you run the risk of an unwanted pregnancy, and puts you and your partner at risk of [sexually transmitted infections \(STIs\)](#) including [HIV](#).

If you've had unprotected sex make sure you seek healthcare advice as soon as possible. You'll be able to access emergency contraception to prevent unwanted pregnancy, and if you are worried that you have been exposed to HIV, you can take post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) to prevent HIV infection.

While there are many different options for contraception, only condoms will protect you and your partner from sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV. Talking to your partner about protection before you start having sex will help things go more smoothly. Being safe will help you both feel more relaxed and make sex more enjoyable.

Though you might find bringing up the subject of [safer sex](#) embarrassing, it's an important part of having sex. If you find it too difficult to discuss using protection then it could be a sign that you aren't ready to start having sex just yet. That's fine - remember that there are lots of ways to enjoy being together and to explore your sexual feelings until the time is right.

Deciding whether to have sex is a very personal thing. The main things to consider are whether it feels right, and whether you and your partner are both sure. Our article '[Am I ready for sex?](#)' will help you think about this.

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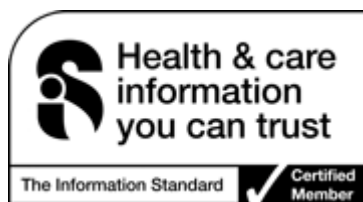
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Sources:

[NHS Choices 'Does a woman always bleed when she has sex for the first time?'](#)

[WHO \(2014\) 'Guidelines on PEP for HIV and the use of CTX for HIV-related infections \(pdf\)'](#)

[WebMD 'Sex: Why Foreplay Matters \(Especially for Women\)'](#)