

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 so that vaginal sex is more enjoyable for both partners.
- Having sex without a condom puts you and your partner at risk of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV.
- Condoms are the best form of protection against unplanned pregnancy and STIs.
- For condoms to work effectively they need to be in place before the penis touches or enters the vagina.
- Discussing safer sex is an important part of having sex.

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, sexual intercourse and just sex) the penis goes into the vagina.

If you watch movies or look at pornography you may have a very unrealistic idea of what sex is like.

There is no one right way of having vaginal sex. It can be a very gentle, intimate experience or a passionate, adventurous one and many other things in between. You can try having sex however you and your partner would like to.

How do you have vaginal sex?

What is foreplay?

Sometimes called heavy petting, foreplay helps to get both people sexually aroused (or turned on) and ready for vaginal sex. It can involve kissing, stroking, caressing, rubbing, touching or [oral sex](#). Foreplay should be enjoyable for both partners. Some people choose to stick to foreplay and not have penetrative sex.

If you are both ready to have vaginal sex, the more aroused you both are, the easier it will be for the penis to enter the vagina. You'll know you're getting aroused when the vagina begins to moisten and the penis becomes erect, getting bigger and harder.

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 an external [\(male\) condom](#). This can be done by either of you. 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 an internal [\(female\) 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, one of you can use your hand to gently guide the penis into the vagina. Take your time, and don't worry if it takes a few goes to get it in properly – especially when you are still 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 - take it slowly, be gentle and make sure you are both comfortable.

Remember that just because you started something doesn't mean you have to continue. You or your partner can pause or stop at any time if you are not comfortable with what you are doing.

Will I orgasm?

When you are very aroused, tension builds up in your body, the sexual pressure is then released in a sudden pleasurable rush called an orgasm, coming or climaxing. For women the most sensitive part of their body is the clitoris, a small bump just above the opening to the vagina. It is full of nerve endings and very sensitive to touch. Many women need their clitoris to be stimulated to have an orgasm. You can try different positions for vaginal sex that allow you to move your bodies in a way that rubs the clitoris. Some people choose for them or their partner to touch the clitoris during penetrative sex to stimulate it.

For most men the action involved in thrusting the penis in the vagina stimulates the nerve endings in the penis and causes them to orgasm.

Don't worry if you don't have an orgasm straight away or even at all. It takes time to get to know what works for you and for your partner. Both men and women can enjoy vaginal sex even if it does not make them climax.

What is the best position for vaginal sex?

Different people enjoy different things and there are many possible options. One common position is the 'missionary position', this involves the woman lying down, with the man lying or sitting on top. Alternatively, the woman can be on top, you can both lie on your sides or you can have vaginal sex from behind (where the woman's back is turned towards the man).

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

You may also want to experiment with sex toys or having [anal sex](#) or [oral sex](#). 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. After a while you might find certain movements, positions and ways of touching that lead to one or both of you having an orgasm. 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.

After sex

If you are using an [external \(male\) condom](#), you should hold on to the condom when the penis is withdrawn to make sure it does not come off. Do not wait too long to withdraw, the penis should still be erect so that there is no risk of the condom slipping off or semen leaking out.

Sex myths and sex facts

If a woman is a virgin, will she always bleed the first time she has sex?

NO. Some women do bleed the first time they have sex and others don't. Both are normal. The hymen is a thin piece of skin partially covering the entrance to the vagina. If it hasn't broken before, it

normally breaks the first time a woman has vaginal sex, but other things can make it break including strenuous exercise and using tampons. 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.

Can I get pregnant the first time I have sex?

YES. It could be your first time, you might have your period, you could be in the bath or standing up - however you do it, if you have unprotected sex you can get pregnant.

Can a virgin pass on STIs?

YES. Even if someone has not had penetrative sex they may have had oral sex or may have contracted an STI through skin to skin contact.

If I wash after sex can I clean the semen away?

NO. Going for a wee or trying to clean inside your vagina will not remove all the semen and will not stop you getting pregnant.

Can my partner withdraw his penis before he cums to make sure I don't get pregnant?

NO. The 'withdrawal' or 'pull-out' method won't always stop pregnancy. This is because some semen (cum) can leak into the vagina before ejaculation.

Will it always hurt?

NO. It can take time to get used to how sex feels. Some women find it a little uncomfortable or painful at first, but the pain should not be intense. If you are finding painful you should stop. Taking things slowly, making sure you are both fully aroused and using a water-based lubricant can help make penetration more comfortable and pleasurable. Don't use oil-based lubricants like baby oil or Vaseline because they can make the condom break. If you continue to have pain during sex it may be a sign that you have an illness or infection so it is worth visiting a health clinic to get checked out.

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

Having vaginal sex without using a condom, puts you and your partner at risk of an unwanted pregnancy and [sexually transmitted infections \(STIs\)](#) including [HIV](#).

While there are many different types of contraception to prevent pregnancy only condoms will also protect you and your partner from sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV. Remember that not all STIs have obvious symptoms, so either of you may have an STI and not know it.

If one of you has HIV, is on medication and has an [undetectable](#) viral load it will be impossible to pass on HIV during sex. If your partner has HIV but you don't, you may want to consider taking [pre-exposure prophylaxis \(PrEP\)](#) to prevent HIV infection, but be aware that it only protects against HIV, not other STIs.

The responsibility for protecting against pregnancy and STIs should be shared between you both. It's a good idea to talk to each other about protection before you start having sex. Being safe should help you both feel more relaxed and make sex more enjoyable. If you find it too difficult or embarrassing to talk about safer sex, 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.

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. You can also be tested for other STIs.

If you are having sex, it's a good idea to get tested for HIV and other STIs regularly. This will help keep you and any partner you have healthy.

Should I have vaginal sex?

Deciding whether to have sex is a very personal thing. You may think that everyone around you is having sex but that simply isn't true. Some don't enjoy it, others choose not to, and some decide to wait. It's important that both people are enthusiastic about having sex and that no one feels pressured or forced into doing anything they don't want to do. Talk to your partner and keep communicating to make sure you have their consent. If you and your partner are keen and relaxed, sex can be a very pleasurable experience for you both.

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. You may also find it helpful to read some of the [personal stories](#) people have shared with us about sex including first time sex.

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