

How to have oral sex



FAST FACTS

- Oral sex is using your mouth and tongue to stimulate your partner's genitals or anus.
- Like all sex, different people enjoy different things.
- There is very little risk of HIV infection from oral sex but other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as [herpes](#), [gonorrhoea](#) and [syphilis](#) are easily passed on.
- Using a condom or a dental dam helps to protect you from STIs.
- Avoid oral sex if either of you has sores around your mouth, genitals or anus, or and cuts, bleeding or infection in your throat or mouth.

'Going down', 'rimming' and 'blow jobs' are some of the many ways of describing oral sex. But what's the best way to do it?

Whether you are thinking about having oral sex for the first time or just want some more information - read on for tips on how enjoy safe oral sex

What is oral sex?

Oral sex involves using your mouth or tongue to stimulate your partner's genitals or anus.

Many people enjoy oral sex as part of their sex life but it is a very personal thing and not everybody likes it or chooses to do it. Different people like to give or receive oral sex in different ways. There are a whole variety of ways to lick, suck and stimulate someone. You may decide not to have oral sex at

all, or you may enjoy experimenting with your partner to find out what gives you both pleasure.

It is important to talk to your partner so you can understand what you both enjoy and what you would prefer to avoid.

Top tips for oral sex

It can take a while to work out what makes someone feel good. The best thing to do is to keep communicating with your partner. Ask them to tell you what feels nice and let them know when you are enjoying something.

If you're happy and comfortable with someone, oral sex can be a great way to get physically closer and learn what turns each other on. If you find you aren't enjoying something you can stop at any time you want, and the same is true for your partner.

How do you give a man oral sex?

A man's penis does not need to be erect for you to start oral sex (a blow job) but you may want to use your hand to arouse him first. If you hold his penis during oral sex, you can control how deep it goes into your mouth. You can move your hand allowing the penis to go as far into your mouth as you are comfortable with.

A man's penis is highly sensitive, so be gentle at first and slowly work up to a faster pace. You can try different tongue, mouth and head movements to see what works best but never use your teeth unless asked.

When you give a man oral sex you can stop at any time and it's up to you to decide if you want to let him ejaculate (or cum) in your mouth. Of course, if he's wearing a condom this isn't an issue, and it means you will both be protected against [sexually transmitted infections \(STIs\)](#).

How do you give a woman oral sex?

Before you begin giving a woman oral sex, she may enjoy it if you spend some time kissing and touching her upper thighs and the area around her vagina first, to help her get aroused.

The whole genital area is sensitive, but for most women the clitoris (with its 8,000 nerve endings) is the most sensitive part. Gently part the outer lips of the vagina and look for the vaginal opening, and the hooded clitoris just above it.

Start off softly, using a relaxed tongue to make slow movements and work up to faster movements with a firmer tongue. You can experiment moving your tongue in different ways and try different rhythms – taking cues from your partner to find out what she enjoys most.

How do you give oral-anal sex (rimming)?

Performing oral sex on your partner's anus (also known as rimming) can be part of any sexual relationship, whether gay, bisexual or straight.

If you are concerned about hygiene, ask your partner to wash first. You could also bathe together as part of foreplay.

Before you begin, your partner may like it if you gently kiss and touch the area around the anus including the perineum (the area of skin between the genitals and the anus). You can then focus on the anus, circling your tongue around the outer area and finally inserting your tongue. Remember to listen to your partner and do what they enjoy, whether that's licking, sucking or gently probing.

If you are giving oral sex to a woman, don't move from the anus to the vagina as this can transfer bacteria and cause infection.

Can I get HIV and STIs from oral sex?

The risk of HIV transmission from oral sex is very low unless the person receiving oral sex has an STI or sores on their genital area, or the person giving oral sex has sores in their mouth or bleeding gums. If the person living with HIV is on medication and has undetectable levels of HIV then there is no risk of passing the virus on.

However, other STIs can easily be passed on during oral sex, in particular [herpes](#), [gonorrhoea](#) and [syphilis](#). Certain infections and viruses that are found in faeces (poo) can be passed on through oral-anal sex, this includes hepatitis A and E.coli.

Knowing you have taken precautions to keep you and your partner safe can help make you more relaxed during oral sex. There are simple ways to protect you both:

- Do not brush your teeth straight beforehand as you may make your mouth or gums bleed.
- Use an [condom](#) if you are giving oral sex to a man or a dental dam for oral sex on a woman or oral-anal sex. A dental dam is a thin, soft plastic cover that acts as a barrier. If you don't have one you can cut a condom lengthways from bottom to top to make one piece of material that can be used instead. Hold one side of the dam against your partners vagina / anus and lick the other. Never turn the dam over, just use one side.
- If you are having oral sex during your or your partner's period, using a dam is even more important because menstrual blood can carry bacteria and viruses just like other blood.
- Avoid getting semen (cum) in your mouth.

Avoid oral sex altogether when the risk of passing on any virus or infection is highest, for example, if you have:

- sores around your mouth, genitals or anus
- any damage to your gums
- a throat infection
- had any recent dental work.

Be aware that you may not know if you or your partner has an infection as infections can be passed on even if there are no obvious signs or symptoms. If you do have sores around your mouth, genitals or anus, you should get them checked out by a healthcare professional as they may be a sign of an infection.

Should I have oral sex?

Deciding whether to have oral sex is a very personal choice. Only you and your partner can know if you are ready to experiment with oral sex. Think about whether it feels right, and whether you are both comfortable with the decision.

Talking to your partner about protection before you start having oral sex will help make things easier. This may feel embarrassing but taking responsibility for protecting yourself and your partner is an important part of having sex. If you find it too awkward to talk about then you may not be ready to have oral sex just yet.

You should never give or receive oral sex just because you feel forced into it. Don't be pressured into any sex act by comments like "it doesn't mean we've had real sex - you'll still be a virgin", or "if you don't want sex at least go down on me", or "it's not as risky as having intercourse". If one of you isn't comfortable with the decision it can ruin the whole experience. Oral sex should be fun for both of you.

Our article '[Am I ready for sex?](#)' will help you work out what is right for you.

HELP US HELP OTHERS

Avert.org is helping to prevent the spread of HIV and improve sexual health by giving people trusted, up-to date information.

We provide all this for FREE, but it takes time and money to keep Avert.org going.

[Can you support us and protect our future?](#)

Every contribution helps, no matter how small.

[PLEASE DONATE NOW](#)

Photo credit: ©iStock.com/roundhill

Last full review:

31 March 2020

Next full review:

31 March 2023



Sources:

[NHS 'Sex activities and risk'](#)

[Terrence Higgins Trust 'Oral sex and HIV'](#)

[Sexwise 'Oral sex and sexually transmitted infections'](#)

✓ NAM 'Oral sex'

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) 'Oral sex and HIV risk'

NHS 'Fun with less risk'