

HIV and women who have sex with women

HIV risk from sex between two women is low.
But check out these specific HIV prevention facts and tips to ensure you stay safe.

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Sources:
www.avert.org/fact-sheet-sources



Women who have sex with women

As a woman who has sex with women, you may not always identify as a gay woman, a lesbian or bisexual.

You may have already had a sexual experience with a man and you may continue having sex with men.

Is HIV a risk during sex between women?



HIV transmission is a risk between women through fingering/fisting, oral sex and sharing sex toys.



The risk of a woman transmitting HIV to another woman during sex is lower than sex involving a man because less bodily fluids are exchanged.



Access regular sexual health check-ups for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV testing.

If you also have sex with men, remember that unprotected sex with a man is higher risk. *See our HIV transmission fact sheet.*



Safer sex for women who have sex with women



Sex is safer when none of your partner's bodily fluids (vaginal secretions, breastmilk or blood, including menstrual blood) have a chance to enter your body.



Ensure your partner's fluids do not enter your vagina, mouth or any cuts.

Safe fingering

Wash your hands before and after sex.

Use plenty of lube for fingering/fisting, especially for the anus.

Use latex gloves, especially if you have a cut or sore on your hands.



Safe oral sex

(risk of HIV transmission is minimal)

- ✓ Avoid oral sex if you or your partner have a cut or sore in/around the mouth, or if the receiving partner is menstruating.
- ✓ Use a dental dam (or a condom cut open) between the vagina/anus and mouth to prevent STI or HIV transmission.

Using sex toys safely



Wash sex toys before and after use and between partners.



Use a new condom every time sex toys are shared.



Use sex toys carefully to prevent drawing blood.

Know your rights

You have the right to:

- ✓ refuse sex
- ✓ have sex with women
- ✓ practice safer sex.

HIV prevention facts



Use a condom every time you have vaginal, anal or oral sex.



Avoid sharing needles, syringes and other injecting equipment with anyone if you take drugs.



Take HIV treatment if you're a new or expectant mother living with HIV, as this can dramatically reduce the risk of passing HIV on to your baby during pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding.



Ask your healthcare professional if the blood product you are receiving (a blood transfusion, organ or tissue transplant) has been tested for HIV.



Take PrEP – a course of HIV drugs – which if taken consistently prevents HIV infection through sex.

Take precautions if you're a healthcare worker, such as:



wearing protection (like gloves and goggles)



washing your hands after contact with blood and other bodily fluids



safely disposing of sharp equipment.

Do you need more information?

Check out our other factsheets to stay safe and healthy.



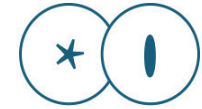
HIV transmission



HIV testing



Emergency HIV treatment (PEP)



HIV & safer sex



Condoms & lubricants



HIV & sexually transmitted infections



HIV & pregnancy



HIV & breastfeeding



HIV & mixed-status couples



HIV & male circumcision



HIV & men who have sex with men



HIV & harm reduction from injecting drugs



HIV & sex work



HIV & occupational exposure



HIV & having a baby