



FINDING THE WORDS

A GUIDE TO TALKING WITH A HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL ABOUT YOUR SEXUAL WELLNESS GOALS

What types of health care professionals can I talk to about sexual health?

- Primary care providers (PCPs), family doctors, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, pharmacists, health educators, mental health professionals, and certain specialists can all address sexual health concerns and wellness goals.

How do I bring up sexual health with my health care provider?

- I want to be as healthy as possible, and I know a big part of that is sexual health. What can I do to make sure I'm enjoying sex safely?
- I know I'm here for a check-up, but can we talk about my sexual health for a minute? I have some questions.
- Do we have time to discuss my sexual health? I want to make sure I'm protected and able to reach my future goals.

Questions you might want to ask your health care provider about your sexual health:

- Should I be concerned about sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or HIV? If so, which ones?
- How often should I be tested for STIs? Should my partner(s) get tested too?
- How can I protect myself from STIs and HIV? Are there any vaccines or preventative measures I can take?
- I've heard PrEP can protect you from HIV. Is that something I should consider?
- What are my options for preventing pregnancy?
- What are the side effects of different contraceptives?
- Where can I find affordable sexual health products and services?
- Having sex hurts. What's the problem?
- I am not interested in sex or finding it pleasurable at all. Why is that?

Questions your health care provider might ask to understand your needs:

- What sex were you assigned at birth? Do you still identify with that gender now?
- Are you sexually active? If so, what gender do your sexual partner(s) identify with?
- What parts of your body do you use to have sex? What parts of your partner's body interact with yours?
- Do you use any form of protection during sex, such as condoms or diaphragms? If so, do you use protection 100% of the time?
- Have you ever been tested for STIs, including HIV? If so, which ones? Were any of them positive?
- Have you or your partner(s) ever been treated for an STI, including HIV? If so, which ones?
- What are your family planning goals? Are you interested in contraception?
- Are you aware of your options for preventing HIV, like PrEP?
- Do you know your vaccination history? Would you like to know which vaccines are important for sexual health?
- Is sex always consensual and enjoyable for you and your partners? Or are you having any difficulty performing sexual intercourse?
- Have your sexual partner(s) ever forced you to do something you didn't want to do?
- Have you ever exchanged sex for money, services, or other products?

Remember, a health care professional who respects you and your sexual health will not judge you or assume anything without asking. If you are not feeling respected, it is okay to find a different health care provider.

