

Sex is a normal part of life and should always be with the consent of all parties. This document offers strategies to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 during sex. Decisions about sex and sexuality need to be balanced with personal and public health. During this extended public health emergency, people will and should have sex. Consider using harm reduction strategies to reduce the risk to yourself, your partners, and your community. For the latest COVID-19 information and from the Vermont Department of Health, [visit our website](#).

## 1. Know how COVID-19 spreads.

- **You can get COVID-19 from a person who has it.**
  - The virus spreads in the saliva, mucus, or breath of people with COVID-19, even from people who do not have symptoms.
- We still have a lot to learn about COVID-19 and sex.
  - The virus has been found in the semen and feces (poop) of people with COVID-19.
  - We do not know if COVID-19 can be spread through vaginal or anal sex.
  - We know that other viruses like the one that causes COVID-19 do not easily spread through sex. This means sex is not likely a common way that COVID-19 spreads.

## 2. Have sex only with people close to you.

- **You are your safest sex partner.** Solo masturbation will not spread COVID-19.
- **The next safest partner is someone you live with.** Having close contact – including sex – with only a small circle of people helps prevent spreading COVID-19. Have sex only with consenting partners.
- **You should limit close contact** – including sex – with anyone outside your household. If you do have sex with others outside of your household, have as few partners as possible and pick partners you trust. Talk about COVID-19 risk factors, just as you would PrEP, condoms and other safer sex topics. Ask them about COVID-19 before you hook up.
  - **Do they have symptoms, or have they had symptoms in the last 14 days?** Most people with COVID-19 have symptoms, but asymptomatic spread is possible. Fever, cough, sore throat, and shortness of breath are symptoms to ask about. Note that asking about symptoms is not a perfect way to know whether someone has COVID-19.
  - **Have they been diagnosed with COVID-19 using a PCR test?** People who have recovered from COVID-19 at least 10 days from the day their symptoms began and who have not had fever for at least one full day (without fever reducing meds) are likely no longer infectious.
- **Consider taking a break from in-person dates.** Video dates, sexting, “Zoom” sessions, or chat rooms are less risky ways to keep seeing people.

- **If you decide to have sex outside of your circle of contacts:**
  - Closely monitor yourself for symptoms.
  - Take precautions interacting with people at risk for severe COVID-19 illness such as people over 65 years of age or those with serious medical conditions.
  - Be vigilant with face coverings and hand hygiene to minimize risk to others.

### 3. Take care during sex.

- Kissing can easily pass the COVID-19 virus.
- Rimming (mouth on anus) might spread the virus.
- Wear a cloth face covering or mask.
- Masturbate together, while using social distance and face coverings.
- Condoms and dental dams can reduce contact with saliva, semen, vaginal secretions, or feces.
- Washing up before and after sex is more important than ever.

### 4. Skip sex if you or your partner are not feeling well.

- **If you feel unwell, or even start to feel unwell,** avoid kissing, sex, or any close contact with others.
- **If you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19,** avoid close contact with anyone outside of your household for two weeks.
- **If you or your partner have a medical condition that can lead to severe COVID-19 illness,** you may also want to skip sex.
  - These medical conditions include lung disease, moderate to severe asthma, heart disease, diabetes, obesity, kidney disease, liver disease, cancer, or a weakened immune system.

### 5. Prevent HIV, other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and unintended pregnancy.

- **HIV:** Using condoms, taking pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and having an undetectable viral load all help prevent HIV. For more info visit the CDC HIV/STD page, [here](#).
- **Other STDs:** Using condoms helps prevent other STDs. For more info visit the CDC condoms page, [here](#).
- **Get tested and treated for STDs.** Find and then visit a local Planned Parenthood of Northern New England site for all your sexual health care [here](#). College students can visit their campus's health clinics.