



Reading This Might Save Your Ass

2006/2007 Edition

Health Care

Do You Have a Health Care Provider?

It's a good idea to see your health care provider regularly. If you're over 40, you should go at least once a year. If you're HIV+, you should see your provider on a regular schedule, preferably every 3 months. Talk about diet, exercise, smoking and cancer prevention. In addition to HIV/AIDS, heart disease and cancer are the number one and two concerns for men over 40.

If you are sexually active, it's important to get tested for STDs. If you have new partners, get an STD check every 3 months and an HIV test every 6 months.



Good Provider Checklist

- ❑ Is your health care provider open to questions?
- ❑ Does your provider take a medical history, including a sexual history?
- ❑ Do you trust your provider?
- ❑ Does your provider seem comfortable discussing sensitive issues like sex and drug use?
- ❑ Does your provider explain the available choices for treatment (or non-treatment) of an STD?

Coming Out To Your Provider

❑ There are benefits to being open about your sexuality with your provider. S/he can give you better advice and support you in your health care choices. Think about the benefits.

❑ You may also decide that you want a provider who is gay (or gay friendly). The Gay and Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA) has a list of gay providers in the Bay Area and can be reached at 415-255-4547, or at www.glma.org.

SF Public Health Clinics

SF CITY CLINIC (STD CLINIC)
356 7th St. • 415-487-5500
Online STD testing at www.stdtest.org

COLE STREET YOUTH CLINIC
555 Cole St. • 415-751-8181

HAIGHT ASHBURY FREE MEDICAL CLINIC
558 Clayton St. • 415-487-5632

MISSION NEIGHBORHOOD HEALTH CENTER
240 Shotwell St. • 415-552-3870

TOM WADDELL CLINIC
50 Ivy St. • 554-2940

Magnet

4122 18th Street • 415-581-1600
Magnet is a center for Gay Men's Health and can provide valuable information, as well as STD and HIV testing. www.magnetsf.org



Fucking

One of the great things about being alive is having sex. But like many things in life, there are other aspects to consider. If you are sexually active, get tested for STDs every 3 months. Get tested whether or not you have any symptoms so you can detect any possible 'silent' infections.

Fucking without a condom is the easiest way to spread HIV. Play it smart. Hopefully the people you have sex with will be honest and will know their HIV status ... but they might not know or they might not want to tell you. Aside from HIV, you can also get many STDs, including gonorrhea, chlamydia, syphilis, hepatitis, warts, parasites and herpes.

Sucking

There has been a lot of confusion about how safe sucking dick is. It's really difficult to say exactly how safe it is for HIV, but research shows that it's very, very low risk. We can't say that it is 100% safe, but we know the risk is very low. While sucking dick may be safe for HIV, there is still some risk of getting one of many STDs, including gonorrhea, chlamydia, syphilis, hepatitis, parasites, and herpes.

Spit or Swallow?

Not getting cum in your mouth should reduce your risk of getting an infection. If you do take a load, it probably doesn't matter if you spit it out or if you swallow.



Rimming

The risk for transmitting HIV from rimming is very low. But rimming can be a high risk for transmission of STDs with someone infected with hepatitis A, herpes, shigella and intestinal parasites. Getting vaccinated against Hepatitis A can help reduce your risk.

Watersports

There is little risk of STD infection and no risk of HIV infection from playing with urine. It is possible that Hepatitis A can be spread that way so avoid getting urine in your mouth. Getting vaccinated to prevent Hepatitis A can reduce your risk.

Fisting

There is some risk of not only STD infections from fisting, but also hepatitis C. Since the blood vessels in the rectum are close to the surface,

damage can easily occur and go unnoticed. Avoid too much alcohol or drugs if you fist or get fisted. Any damage to the rectum can increase the risk of HIV when you get fucked, so you might want to fuck before you get fisted. To be extra safe, it's a good idea to wear a rubber glove and remember to use lots of lube.

Sharing Toys

Sharing toys can be fun and they are easy to keep clean. A good idea is to put condoms on your toys, replace the condom between each user, and use lots of lube. There is some risk of hepatitis, herpes, warts, and parasites if the toys have been shared with another person.

Mutual Jerking Off

The greatest risk here is getting caught, if you do it in public. Getting cum on you won't transmit HIV or STDs - that can happen only if the cum gets inside of you.



Counseling

When you need someone to talk to, sometimes it is helpful to talk with someone other than friends or family. Consider finding a counselor or mental health professional. In private sessions, you can have a chance to discuss how healthy sex fits into your life, how to have fulfilling relationships, or how to feel good about your body. Also, these professionals can work with you on emotional challenges and developmental issues, such as coming out, depression, grief, anger, stress, and relationship issues.

Useful Mental Health Numbers

(Don't be discouraged if there's a waiting list. Some of these programs are very popular.)

AIDS HEALTH PROJECT/REACH
415-476-3902
SAN FRANCISCO SEX INFO LINE
415-989-7374

In A Crisis

HIV/AIDS NIGHTLINE
415-434-2437
SF SUICIDE PREVENTION
415-781-0500
LYRIC TALKLINE (YOUTH)
415-863-3636



Drinking and Druging

If you party, party in moderation. It is easier to do things outside of your comfort zone when you've had too much to drink or you're high on drugs. You are also doing some potential damage to your immune system and your health in general. If your routine becomes unmanageable, you might want to consider discussing your drug use with your healthcare providers or contact one of the agencies listed below.

DRUG LINE • 415-362-3400
(24/7 DRUG CRISIS LINE)
NEW LEAF • 415-626-7000
STONEWALL PROJECT • 415-502-1999

Crystal Methamphetamine

Crystal is also commonly referred to as Speed, Tina, Ice and Meth. Crystal use and abuse is still very much a part of the gay community. Its use is directly tied to increases in STD and HIV infections. It can be hard to make good decisions about personal risk while

you're using. Repeated use can cause permanent damage to the brain and the comedown ("crash") can leave you severely depressed for many days. For more information on crystal methamphetamine, check out www.ltwaker.org.

If you or a friend needs help, it is available. If you want to stop using crystal meth, call to find out about the Positive Reinforcement Opportunity Project (PROP) at 415-740-6273 or visit www.PROPSf.org.

Poppers (amyl nitrates)

While poppers can increase the power of an orgasm and for some men make it easier to take it up the ass, scientists have shown that poppers can depress the immune system and make it easier to get HIV. If you use poppers, get frequent HIV and STD checks.

You should know that HIV medications can pump up the potency of many drugs, including Viagra. If you take HIV medications you might want

to cut back on the amount of drugs that you use in order to avoid an overdose. Using poppers with drugs for impotency may drop your blood pressure and cause strokes or heart attacks.

Alcohol

Alcohol is the most commonly used and abused drug. Since drinking alcohol is legal and socially acceptable, it's hard to avoid. In fact, gay bars are one of the main places where men can meet each other. In small doses, alcohol is safe as long as you keep your wits about you. It's very easy to forget to use a condom when you've been drinking. Heavy drinking can cause permanent damage to your brain, heart, and your liver.

Marijuana

After alcohol, marijuana is the most commonly used drug. Though it does have many medicinal uses, especially for people living with HIV/AIDS, it's hard to think straight when you're high. When you smoke marijuana, you may be less inhibited

and have more risky sex. If you use marijuana, make it a point not to forget to use a condom or take your HIV medications on schedule.

GHB

In fairly small doses, GHB is relatively safe but it's very hard to determine how much is too much without putting yourself at risk for an overdose. In addition, GHB should never be taken when you are drinking alcohol. The combination of the two drugs may cause you to stop breathing permanently.

Ecstasy—X

Chemically, ecstasy is very much like methamphetamine. Like speed, it has many of the same risks of causing brain damage when used too frequently and it causes the same crash when you come down off the drug. It definitely lowers inhibitions and puts you at risk for unsafe sexual behaviors.

Cocaine

Cocaine also leads to risky sexual

behavior and can be very addictive. When snorted or injected, cocaine can seriously damage the heart or cause a stroke, both of which are potentially fatal.

Ketamine—K

There's a fine line between how much ketamine will get you high and what will send you over the edge. Take too much and you won't be able to function, sexually or otherwise.

Heroin

Heroin is not frequently used during sex because it often makes the user sleepy and it is difficult to cum when you're high on it. Heroin is extremely addictive and fatal overdoses are not unusual. It's often difficult to know how much is too much until it's too late.

HIV medications can pump up the potency of many of these drugs. If you take HIV medications you might want to cut back on the amount of drugs that you use in order to avoid an overdose.

Making Your Dick Work For You

Getting the Most Out of Sex

Let's face it: sex is about pleasure. Think about ways of creating pleasure (or even increasing it!) while decreasing the risks.

Starting Out

Before you go out, decide in advance what's OK and what's not OK for you sexually. Pack the gear that you'll need to keep you and your partners safe and healthy. Have some key phrases that you can use to communicate to your partner what you are willing and not willing to do. Communicate with your partner about what you both can do to lower any risk. Make decisions on what risks are acceptable and what risks are not, then **STICK TO YOUR GUNS!**

Gear

You might want to try different types of condoms and lube to find the



best fit for you. There are many kinds of condoms out there, so experiment to find the ones you think feel best. Then, make sure you keep condoms around, pull them out and have them ready before the action starts. It's easier to talk about condoms when they are right in front of you.

Checking Your Gear

You might have to slow things down for a few seconds to check your gear, but check from time to time during sex to make sure the condom did not break. And remember, **LUBE, LUBE, LUBE.**

Don't forget, you are half of the party. Don't depend on your partner to provide protection or good judgement in all sexual situations. You must be responsible for your own protection.

What To Know About STDs

HIV

HIV is the virus that causes AIDS. Getting fucked without a condom is the most common way to get HIV. Both tops and bottoms can get it. Using a condom and lots of lubrication is the best defense. There is no cure, but there are a number of treatments which have improved the health of people living with HIV/AIDS, although they do not work for everyone, nor can everyone tolerate the side effects.

STDs such as gonorrhea, chlamydia, herpes and syphilis increase your risk of getting HIV and if you are HIV positive, it can also increase your viral load. Getting frequently screened and treated for STDs can reduce the risk of HIV.

Herpes

Herpes is a very common viral infection that causes itching, tingling, redness, pain, blisters, and ulcers,

usually around the dick, butt and mouth. Herpes is transmitted by skin-to-skin contact, so avoid the area of an outbreak in a partner who has herpes. It often becomes chronic and most people experience a few outbreaks a year. Condoms can reduce but not eliminate risk. There is no cure, but medications can help speed healing time, reduce the frequency of outbreaks, and prevent the spread of herpes.

Warts

Certain viruses cause warts so small you can't see them; others are visible and painless, and appear on the dick, butt or mouth. They are transmitted through skin-to-skin contact and are very common. Using condoms reduces but does not eliminate the risk. They can be treated by freezing with liquid nitrogen, using chemicals, or surgery.

STD Check List

- ❑ THROAT SWAB FOR GONORRHEA AND CHLAMYDIA
- ❑ URINE TEST FOR GONORRHEA AND CHLAMYDIA
- ❑ RECTAL SWAB FOR GONORRHEA AND CHLAMYDIA
- ❑ BLOOD TEST FOR SYPHILIS
- ❑ ORAL OR BLOOD TEST FOR HIV
- ❑ GENITAL, ORAL AND SKIN EXAMINATION BY A MEDICAL CARE PROVIDER
- ❑ BLOOD TEST FOR HERPES TYPE-2

Have you been tested lately?

It is recommended that you get an HIV antibody test every 6 months if you are HIV negative and engaging in ANY type of sexual risk behavior. If you need more information, call (415) 502-TEST or log on to the web site: www.aids hotline.org

Hepatitis

Hepatitis A, B and C are liver infections caused by different viruses. Symptoms may include fatigue, poor appetite, fever, nausea, vomiting, and jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyeballs), and are potentially very serious. Hepatitis can be transmitted sexually.

There are effective vaccines for Hep A and B but not for Hep C. To reduce risk, get vaccinated against Hep A and B.

Gonorrhea

Gonorrhea is a bacterial infection that may or may not cause symptoms: a sore throat, pain during bowel movements, burning when urinating, or thick discharge (pus) from the dick or butt.

You may also carry it and not know it. The bacteria can be passed by oral and anal sex. Condoms can help reduce the risk. It is easily curable with antibiotics. Frequent screening by your doctor can detect silent infections that you may be unaware of.

Chlamydia

Chlamydia is caused by a bacterial infection in the dick, butt, or throat. You may or may not have symptoms, which include burning when peeing, a clear or white drip from the dick or butt, or pain. It is curable with antibiotics. Condoms and frequent testing can reduce the risk.

Syphilis

Syphilis has become more common in the gay and bi community. It can cause a painless sore on the dick or in the mouth or butt, which goes away and later becomes a body rash, often on the palms and soles. Syphilis is transmitted through direct sexual contact with the sore or rash. Condoms can help reduce but not eliminate the risk. Syphilis is treatable with antibiotics. An easy blood test can tell if you're infected. Getting frequent check-ups by a doctor will reduce the risk of developing the complications of syphilis: paralysis, damage to blood vessels,

blindness, and death. For free testing go to www.STDtest.org

Parasites

Parasites, such as giardia and amoeba, can cause upset stomach and diarrhea with bleeding. They can be treated with antibiotics. Exposure to shit through rimming and drinking contaminated water are the most common ways they're transmitted.

Shigella

Shigella is caused by a bacterial infection and can be treated with antibiotics. Its symptoms include stomach cramps, bloody diarrhea and fever. If someone has shigella, the bacteria is present in shit, and you can get it even if he looks clean, so wash with soap and water before, during and after all sex and "ass play."

Special thanks to Photography: Duane Gramer Design: Ben Synstaelen Edited by: Aaron J. Cohen

