



Let's Start a
Conversation...

PrEP & PEP

Sexual
Self-Confidence

TransSex

U=U

SEX

UAL Health + Pleasure

a community magazine by  **AMIDACARE**
in partnership with The Ali Forney Center, Callen-Lorde,
Housing Works, Iris House, The LGBT Center, and SAGE



What's your *P*LEASURE?

“I find pleasure in an affectionate guy - someone who loves the touch and feel of skin. I love to give and receive massages from head to toe... I'm exploring the foot fetish world and started my own blog about my feet. In less than a year, I gained almost 2,000 followers. My goal? 10,000.”

Romano, 32, HIV+, African-American, Gay Man

“Pleasure to me is about reciprocating love and affection. I can't [have sex] with a selfish person. I need the feelings and the sex to be mutual. If I can't do it to you, you can't do it to me.”

Kristen, 35, African-American, Transgender Woman

“Good sex is when me and my partner reach the point that we feel like we are one person, so physically and figuratively connected that we can't distinguish one from the other. When we're both mutually focused more on pleasing the other than ourselves, we can agree that it was good sex.”

Chris, 28, HIV-, Caucasian, Straight Man

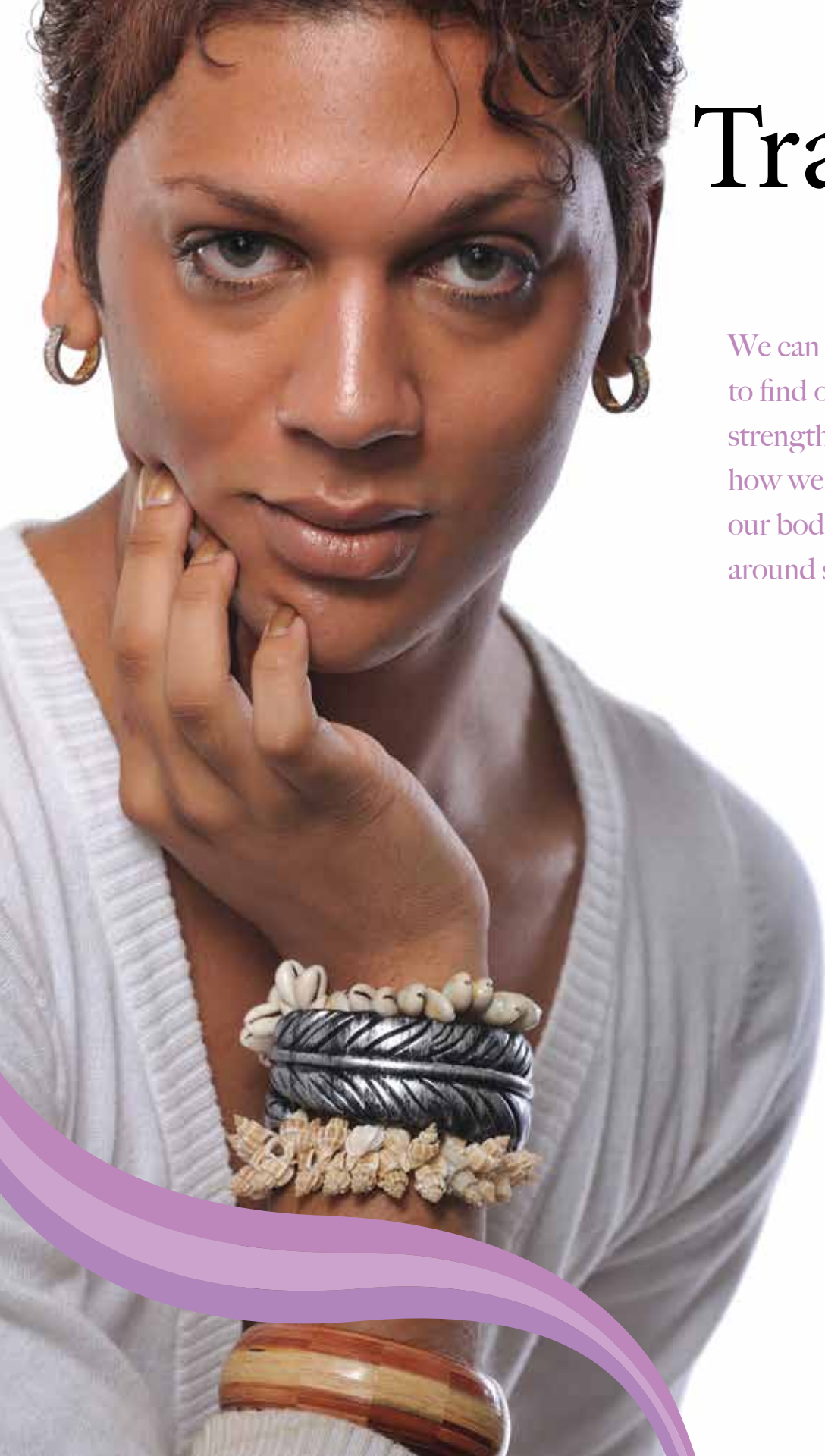
“Like most women, I can't orgasm from penetration alone, so get your fingers busy. “

Olivia, 33, HIV-, Asian-American, Bisexual Woman

“I like freaky, rough sex, but all but one of the guys I've ever slept with have stuck to plain, vanilla sex. I want a man to spank me, tie my hands together, and whisper something dirty in my ear while we have sex.”

Dana, 25, African-American, Straight Woman

Understanding your own sexual pleasure through masturbation can help improve the sexual pleasure that you enjoy with partners.



TransSex and PLEASURE

We can use our experiences to find our self-confidence, strength, and bliss through how we interact with our bodies and others' around sex.

Sex can be as varied as imagination permits. It need not be just one-on-one, penis-in-vagina intercourse; sex can include toys, multiple people, role play, BDSM, and almost any part of the body. Buttocks and belly, nape and knees, toes and thighs – all can be eroticized and stimulated. And sex can teach us so much.

But trans and gender-nonconforming people have complicated relationships with our bodies. We often spend years or decades tormented by dysphoria, despising those same parts that most people use for sex. Our community has high rates of trauma, and many have done sex work or had survival sex. It can be difficult to experience pleasure.

Many of us use hormones and surgeries to alter our bodies, though it takes time to relearn those bodies as we change. Gradually, numbness and swelling decline. Nerves and tissues must heal.

Different genitals require different techniques to “get off.” We may be more aroused than before, able to orgasm easily and quickly and ready to go again immediately. Or our orgasms may require that we be “in the mood,” and they may take additional time and stimulation. And there may be hidden maintenance needs, such as regular – sometimes daily – dilation for post-op transgender woman.

Still, being trans* of any variety involves questioning how we relate to our genitalia, and many of us make it our life’s mission to creatively explore our body, identity, and sexuality. Maybe all of us – transmasculine, transfeminine, or nonbinary – can use our experiences to find our self-confidence, strength, and bliss through how we interact with our bodies and others’ around sex. Maybe, instead of pain, we can have pleasure.

Enjoy. Be playful. Have fun.

TransSex Tips

Sex as someone trans*

- Speak up about what you like (and what you don’t)!
- Patience: It may take time to relearn your body.
- Your expectations may or may not match your experience.
- You have the right to say NO.

Sex with someone trans*

- Not sure what someone trans* likes in bed? Ask!
- Not sure where they are comfortable being touched (and where they are not)? Ask!
- Patience: Trans* people may have body trauma.

Consent Counts! And Have Fun!

Laura A. Jacobs, LCSW-R is a trans- and genderqueer-identified psychotherapist, activist, speaker, and author in the NYC area, and currently serves as Chair of the Board of Directors for the Callen-Lorde Community Health Center in Manhattan. www.LauraAJacobs.com



Sex after 50

Plenty of Older Adults Are Having Sex

Lots of people, including some health care providers, mistakenly assume that older people are not having sex. But the truth is that adults age 50 and over are not all alike. Many are sexually active. Yet even the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) – by recommending universal HIV testing only up to age 64 – reinforces the myth that all older people abstain from sex. This mistaken belief leads some medical professionals to omit testing older patients for sexually transmitted infections – or to confuse symptoms of STIs for signs of the aging process itself.

Sex May Look Different With Age

Older adults want sexual intimacy as much as anyone else, but what they do to fulfill that need could change over time. Menopause, prostate issues, erectile dysfunction, or other medical conditions could cause people to change what they do for sexual pleasure. While some might not want or be able to do the same sexual activities they

did in younger years, that doesn't mean they've lost interest in being touched. Kissing, hugging, cuddling, caressing, massage, and holding hands could be ways for older adults to be sensual and connect. Many others continue to have oral, anal, and vaginal sex. Since it might not be as easy to find sexual partners, some older adults could find themselves taking more risks, including paying for sex.

Talk to Your Doctor

If you are sexually active as an older adult, it's important to tell your doctor what you're doing. If necessary, you can be tested for STIs including HIV, hepatitis C, or others. Simply being older doesn't protect against these illnesses. Even if you've never been tested before, it's crucial to know your status so that you can be treated if need be.

— **Thomas Weber**

Director of Care Management Services
SAGE

HIV & New Yorkers Age 50 & Older*

- Half of all people living with HIV in New York State are age 50 and older – a ratio expected to climb to 70% by the year 2020.
- In our state, nearly one in every five new HIV diagnoses (19%) is made in an adult age 50 and older.
- The older you are, the less likely you are to have been tested, even once, for HIV.
- More than 80% of HIV infections in older adults occur through sexual contact.
- Health care providers rarely discuss sexual health with older patients, missing a crucial opportunity to test for and treat HIV and other STIs.

* **Source: ACRIA (2017)**

Real Talk

About PrEP and PEP

Honest conversations about sexual pleasure have been key to discussions about PEP and PrEP. PEP is an emergency 28-day regimen taken within 72 hours of exposure to keep a person HIV-negative, while PrEP is a non-emergency daily pill that serves the same purpose.

Historically, people have been afraid to talk about having or wanting to have sex without a condom. However, demonizing condomless sex has not been effective in stopping the spread of HIV. Worse, our community has felt shame and stigma about our sexualities. PEP and PrEP have helped us acknowledge that there can be physical and emotional reasons why a person might want to have sex without a condom.

Since the crisis of the epidemic, HIV has been used to further rob LGBTQ individuals of sexual pleasure. In our clinic, our patients are more

open with their medical providers about their needs and desires, including the desire to have condomless sex if they want. With PEP and PrEP, patients don't fear judgment and don't allow fears of an HIV diagnosis to keep them from entering the clinic in the first place. These treatments have empowered our patients to feel in control of their sex lives. This hasn't been possible over the last 30 years, in which individuals labeled as "at risk" for HIV infection were told that there was only one way to have sex.

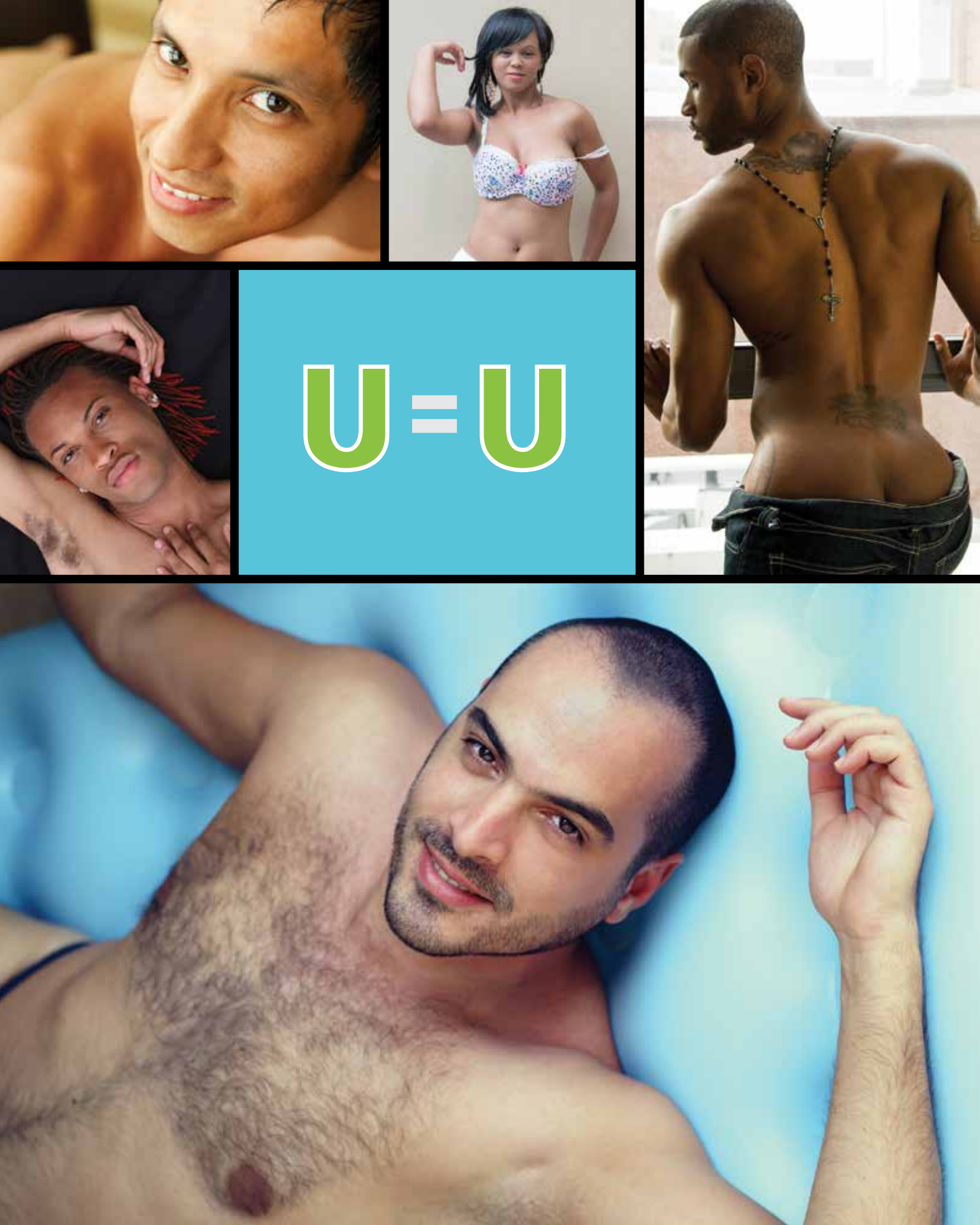
As we look to future strategies like injectable PrEP, it's crucial that we avoid letting ourselves be ruled by the same decades-old fears. We must challenge ourselves to ensure that these interventions reach those whose communities are experiencing the burden of new HIV infections, such as young people of color. Everyone deserves pleasure!

— Jesus Barrios and Sam Wilburn
Co-Supervisors, Prevention Outreach
Callen-Lorde Community Health Center

HOW TO GET PEP & PrEP in NYC

Call 311 or visit www.nyc.gov/health to find the nearest NYC Sexual Health Clinic where PEP or PrEP is available to the uninsured or those on Medicaid.





U = U

Undetectable = Untransmittable!

Here's some hot news we all can celebrate: a person with HIV taking antiretroviral treatment (ART) that keeps the virus suppressed to an undetectable level cannot pass HIV to sexual partners. The science to support this finding is solid. Every day more public health experts like those at NYC's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) join the campaign to let people know that Undetectable equals Untransmittable – or “U = U.”

As a person with HIV, I believe the best reason to start and stay on ART is that effective treatment controls the virus and keeps us healthy. Now we also know that staying undetectable frees us from the fear of transmitting HIV to others. This news can liberate us from self-imposed stigma, change how others view us, eliminate shame, and give us confidence to enjoy healthy, sex-positive lives that include having children if we want and having sex without fear of putting partners at risk. In fact, the

safest sex partner in town may be a person with HIV who has the virus under control! The fact that Undetectable = Untransmittable also provides important new encouragement for HIV testing and early treatment.

Housing Works and DOHMH are so excited about U = U that we hosted a dance party to celebrate! Will you help spread the word about U = U? Tell people with HIV or at risk of the virus, as well as your health care providers. Above all, help us fight for the policies and funding to ensure that every person with HIV has access to good HIV care and the supports they need to achieve and maintain an undetectable viral load – to protect their own health and to end AIDS. And remember to celebrate!

Stay on treatment. Stay undetectable. Have fun.

— **Charles King**
President and CEO
Housing Works

Now we know
that staying
undetectable
frees us from the
fear of transmitting
HIV to others.



Latex in the House

Condoms & Dental Dams & Lubricants

Latex barriers that help prevent pregnancy, HIV, and other STIs can also be pleasurable. Did you know that adding a drop or two of water-based lubricant into a condom helps transfer sensation to the head of the penis, especially with the type of condom that has a large pouch at the tip? The lubricated pouch rolls around the head of the penis, providing additional stimulation.

Techniques such as “cheeking” are pleasurable ways to put on a condom. The condom is placed inside the cheek and maneuvered orally onto the penis. This is also great way to help maintain an erection.

Gloves and finger cots can protect tender genital tissue from rough calluses or hangnails and also protect against infections. With the proper amount of lubrication, gloves or finger cots feel slick and smooth to areas that are being penetrated.

Female condoms, also called “internal condoms,” are inserted into the vagina before sex. In addition

to protecting against STIs and pregnancy, they can also increase sexual pleasure. During vaginal sex, the female condom’s outer ring rubs against the clitoris, while the inner ring stimulates the head of the penis. This friction leaves both partners feeling satisfied. Female condoms are also very wide and come with ample lubrication, creating a warm, natural feeling that users love.

Dental dams are another great way to protect yourself during sex. These thin sheets of latex cover the vagina or anus during oral sex and protect against orally transmitted STIs. Although it can be difficult to find dental dams in stores, you can easily make one yourself out of a male condom. Simply unroll the condom, use scissors to snip off the tip and the rim around the base, and cut the condom lengthwise. That’s it. You’ve got a do-it-yourself dental dam!

— Ken De Jesus
Director of Testing & Outreach
Iris House

What's your *P*LEASURE?

“Before transition, I couldn’t separate my sexuality from how much I hated my penis, and I just went blank when thinking about sex. Now I’m so much more confident and relaxed, and I get to have sex how I want... at least on those nights when I find the right person.”

Susan, 51, Caucasian, Transgender Woman



Boost your Sexual Self-Confidence

Sex can be unpredictable, so it's not unusual to have a sexual experience that shakes your confidence. For sex to go smoothly, so many factors are in play. Common mishaps – from not getting hard to spilling the lube or elbowing your partner in the face – can lead to bungling and awkwardness between the sheets.

Instead of getting discouraged by these unavoidable situations, why not embrace the insecurities that can come up by preparing for potential challenges? Take time beforehand to think of likely obstacles to good sex, and imagine how you might handle an uncomfortable situation. A big part of being sexually confident is feeling ready to react appropriately when things don't happen as planned.

Also, trying to blindly guess what a partner might want can lead to lackluster sexual experiences – a sure-fire way to kill confidence. Making an effort to communicate openly about likes and dislikes in the bedroom might feel awkward at first, but it's preferable to the painful silence and wasted time of an unenjoyable encounter.

Another way to increase your sexual confidence is to read up and learn about sex. Find out more about how your sexuality connects with your physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Learn about anatomy and technique, and ask for relationship advice. Be sure to give yourself some positive “self-talk,” and be kind and forgiving to yourself as you learn, stumble, and increase your skills.

Lastly, laughter is a powerful tool in sex – and life, in general. Your ability to laugh in a sexual context can cut tension, keep the focus positive, and heighten connection. Just make sure you're laughing with, and not at, someone.

At its core, sexual self-confidence is about holding yourself in esteem. Be sure that you support yourself. Make it a point to wake up each day and love being you.

— Erika Usui, MPH
Health Services Coordinator
The Ali Forney Center

What's your *P*LEASURE?

“My pleasure begins in my mind. I like when someone has a good game. It doesn't have to be romantic, but if it lacks imagination and self-confidence, I back out. Leather and role playing are good healthy ways for me to enjoy pleasure and keep it away from a routine...”

Miguel, 37, HIV+, Latino, Gay Man

No more SHAME!

Combating HIV Stigma

We've come a long way in the fight to end HIV/AIDS. Today, knowing your status and preventing HIV have become simpler than ever, and getting an HIV diagnosis is no longer a death sentence. But to end the epidemic, we need to talk about ending stigma.

Stigma is all around us when you're with a doctor and feel judged talking about the times you didn't use a condom, or someone on Grindr or another app asks if you're "clean," echoing the old prejudice that having HIV makes you dirty. And stigma still impacts the ways that people living with HIV access resources like housing and employment – and whether they feel safe in those spaces.

Stigma associated with HIV can cause shame and fear about how we have sex and can affect our ability to make safe, healthy choices. Such feelings can discourage us from getting tested often enough, talking with partners about sexual health, or taking HIV medications daily. At its worst, stigma contributes to higher rates of depression

and suicide among people living with HIV. It incites ignorance and violence toward marginalized members of our community. It can cause LGBTQ youth, people of color, and transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals to face disproportionately worse health outcomes.

It's our collective responsibility to combat stigma. We live in a time when an HIV-negative person taking PrEP can have sex with someone who is HIV-positive and undetectable, and the risk of transmission is almost zero. If we educate ourselves and others, challenge some of the ways we talk about sex, and stand up against sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and other forms of hate, we can help end stigma and, ultimately, end HIV/AIDS.

— **Anthony Albanese, MPH**
Director of HIV Prevention
The LGBT Center, NYC

Words Matter

Stigmatizing	Preferred
Unprotected sex	Condomless sex with (or without) PrEP
Victim, sufferer, infected, contaminated	Person living with HIV Survivor
Became infected	Contracted, acquired, or diagnosed with HIV
HIV infections	HIV transmissions Diagnosed with HIV
Promiscuous	Having multiple partners (avoids value judgments)



Talk to Your Doctor about...

Sexual Health

Enjoying sex also means taking care of your own sexual health, which benefits both you and your sex partners. Part of being sex-positive is talking to your health care provider about this topic and having routine checkups – even if you feel fine. Did you know that you could still have an infection, even if you feel fine?

Tests (also called “screenings”) that can be done in most medical offices could determine whether you have:

- Syphilis
- Gonorrhea
- Chlamydia
- Some types of herpes
- Some types of human papillomavirus (HPV)
- Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)
- Hepatitis viruses A, B, and C
- Scabies
- Crabs
- Trichomoniasis

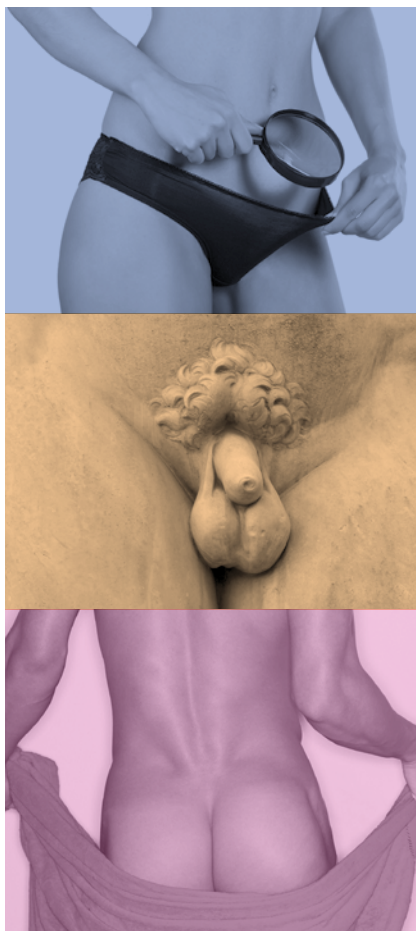
Many of these infections have no symptoms in the early stages. Despite the lack of symptoms, if you have sex during this period of time, it is possible for you to transmit the infection. Sometimes, symptoms don't appear until quite a while after the infection took place. Symptoms will vary, depending on which part of the body is involved, such as the mouth, anus, genitals, skin in the pubic area, or other areas.

Proper condom use can reduce the risk of HIV infection. However, some infections on the list, like HPV, crabs, and scabies, can spread from one person to the next even if a condom is used. Vaccinations can protect you against some of the other infections on this list, so be sure to talk to your doctor about safer sex and how to stay sexually healthy.

At your next visit, ask your health care provider about a sexual health screening – even if you feel fine. It can help you stay healthy and prevent illness.



Taking care of your *junk* Exams and Tests for Sexual Health



Even the word “genitals” makes some people giggle. But keeping your genitals healthy is no laughing matter. Even though we keep our genitals covered in public, everyone has them, and they should be checked at times by a health care professional.

Human beings have internal and external genitals. For some people, the external genital is a vulva, and internally, they have a vagina, uterus, and ovaries. For other people, external genitals are a penis, scrotum (testicles), and internally, the prostate gland. Our genitals have many functions. They help us urinate. Of course, they make it possible for the human race to reproduce. They also play a role in sexual pleasure.

For some people, the genitals they were born with do not conform to their gender identity. They may choose to affirm their true gender identity by changing how they present themselves, seeking hormonal and other therapies, and in some cases, undergoing Gender Confirming Surgery (GCS).

You can't always tell just by looking whether your genitals are healthy. Professional exams and tests of sexual health, administered by your doctor or primary care provider (PCP), are recommended.

While talking to your doctor, here are some exams to consider:

- Testicular exams
- Prostate exams – depending on your age and other medical factors
- Breast exams
- Anal and vaginal pap exams

Exams should be specific to your age and the types of internal and external genitals you have. Talk with your PCP about which ones are right for you. The more you know, the more comfortable you may become. Professional checkups can reassure you that your sexual organs are healthy.

— **Eric Leach, NP**
Director, Medical Management/Health Services
Amida Care

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Crystal Meth PLAY SAFE

Crystal meth use is on the rise in NYC, especially by gay and bisexual men in party and play (PNP) activities popularized by apps like Grindr and Scruff. Research shows a clear link between sex and crystal meth use, as well as a connection between crystal meth use and HIV transmission.

Re-Charge, an innovative new harm reduction program for users of crystal meth, has been developed in a partnership between Housing Works and GMHC. The Re-Charge program does not aim to kill the party. It was designed to be inclusive, nonjudgmental, sex-positive, and affirming. Woof! Re-Charge helps people play safer while using crystal meth, and it offers support if and when

someone might like to stop using. Re-Charge is intended as a resource to party and play safely – and as a haven for slowing down, taking a break, or feeling better.

The Re-Charge program helps users of crystal meth to stick with their other health goals. It enables them to keep getting tested regularly, take their medications, and prepare for safer sex. Re-Charge provides those using crystal meth with access to HIV prevention like PrEP and PEP, and to housing, vocational training, and legal support. Re-Charge takes a holistic approach to combating shame and stigma.

For more information about Re-Charge, go to <http://recharge.support>

Harm Reduction Tips for Safer Meth Use

- Get on PrEP or make use of PEP.
- If you are HIV+, remember to take your meds. Use the alarm on your phone or whatever reminder works best for you!
- Eat something before you get high. You may not feel like eating later.
- Bring condoms and lots of lube with you. Lube is your friend. No one wants a laceration.
- Use your own mouthpiece or shatterproof Pyrex pipe. Other pipes can get too hot or give off toxic fumes. Avoid using broken or cracked pipes that can cut or burn you and spread infection.
- Drink water, use lip balm, and chew gum. Stay hydrated. Water is good, and Gatorade

(or anything with salt) is even better. Keeping your mouth moist reduces cracks, blisters, and the risk of infection.

- Get support. Join a program like Re-Charge. Drop-in centers on Tuesday and Thursday evenings offer individual and group consultations.

Be aware: Protease inhibitors – especially ritonavir (Norvir) and cobicistat (Tybost), but also other drugs in this class – can interact with crystal meth in ways that bring on dangerous side effects or overdose.

— Elizabeth Koke
Director, Advocacy Communications & Marketing
Housing Works



Warning: The use of recreational drugs can be hazardous to your health.

Alcohol and Poppers



Two Martinis and a Kiss

Alcoholic drinks serve as a social lubricant when taken in moderation. But they can reduce inhibitions and that could lead to risky behaviors of all kinds. So know your limits. Be aware that alcohol is a depressant and can impair sexual performance.

Poppers and Viagra Be Careful!

"Poppers," made from amyl nitrates and other chemicals, are inhaled as recreational drugs for the warmth and "head rush" that they induce. Used as club drugs and for sexual encounters, poppers are popular with LGBTQ communities worldwide because of their relaxing effect on involuntary smooth muscles, such as those in the throat and anus.

When poppers are used with medications like Viagra or Cialis, interactions can lead to dangerously low blood pressure and even death.

Stay safe! Don't mix these two. They don't get along.

Alcoholic drinks can reduce inhibitions and that could lead to risky behaviors of all kinds.



Warning: The use of recreational drugs and alcohol can be hazardous to your health.

What's your *P*LEASURE?

"I'm a gay man and have sex with men only, but I enjoy watching straight porn, especially when a man is giving oral sex to the woman."

Richard, 37, HIV-, African-American, Queer Man

"You should feel good after sex and never feel guilty for doing something that brings pleasure to life. Good sex is not necessarily between the legs, but between the ears, through the eyes, and by the mouth."

Johnny, 35, HIV+, Latino, Gay Man

"I prefer oral sex. It's easier, and very pleasurable."

Joe, 59, HIV+, Asian-American, Gay Man

"To me, good sex is a total package. It's kind to my mind, gentle to my soul, and rough to my body. My wife makes sure she does all three. That's why I married her. Living in NYC, I NEEDS all three."

Legacee, 32, HIV-, African-American, Lesbian

"Kink gave me a sense of control and strength I didn't have before. Even as someone submissive... I can be fucked or slapped or used, but I still (usually) get to decide when, how, and by whom... and I get to put all that other life nonsense aside and delight in being a purely sexual being. Remember: S & M is all about communication and respecting boundaries."

Robert, age 45, Caucasian, Gay Man

