

# Making Sex Feel Good

Sex can be fun, meaningful and pleasurable. But it can also feel frustrating, confusing or even painful. This doesn't mean that something is wrong with your body. Sometimes our past experiences, the lack of sex education we receive and our own life circumstances can interfere with our sexual pleasure. The messages we learn about sex from our culture, religion, communities and peers are often contradictory, which can also affect our exploration of our sexuality.

Sex means different things to different people. It can include fantasizing, masturbating alone or with a partner(s), vaginal or anal intercourse with dildos, a penis, fingers or other toys. It's not just about genitals – having sex is about your whole body, including your mind. Below are some suggestions for how to make sex feel better.

## SEX MAY NOT FEEL GOOD BECAUSE YOU:

- Are not turned on
- Don't know what to do or are worried you won't be a good lover
- Are not sure you are ready to have sex
- Are worried about how your body looks, if your body is "normal" or sexy
- Are worried people might make fun of you or tease you
- Are high or drunk
- Are being forced to have sex or have been sexually assaulted or abused before
- Are confused about whether or not you like men, women or both
- May be worried about getting pregnant or getting someone pregnant
- Are worried about getting sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- May be concerned about people finding out, including family or friends
- Are not feeling satisfied in your relationship or don't feel like you can talk to your partner about what feels good and what doesn't
- May feel pressured to have sex or to have an orgasm
- Are physically and/or emotionally tired, or stressed out
- Feel like it's over too fast or it takes too long or it hurts
- May be suffering from depression, anxiety or other illnesses
- Are on medications, like anti-depressants, which can lower your sex drive
- Don't have any privacy or place to have sex

## APPRECIATING YOUR BODY

- Many of us, especially girls and women, are taught to feel ashamed and embarrassed about our bodies
- Everyone's body is unique: our genitals, for example, vary in size, shape, colour, and smell. You may be intersex or transgendered and on hormones. Women may have experienced female cutting and men may or may not be circumcised. Despite what we see in the media, there is more than one kind of sexy body.
- Look at your body and body parts in the mirror. Figure out what you need to do to love your body and be with others who love it too.

## FINDING OUT WHAT FEELS GOOD

- Everyone likes to be touched and played with differently
- Masturbation means using your hands or toys on yourself while alone and with a partner(s). It is a healthy way to learn what makes your body feel good. It's easier to tell your partner(s) what you want if you know what feels good for you.
- Try touching yourself all over, in different areas, using different speeds or levels of gentleness to get a sense of what you might like
- Looking at sexy magazines or movies and using fantasy is another way to explore what you like and don't like sexually
- The most sensitive part of a woman's genitals can be her clitoris. It is the small bump at the top of her vulva, not inside the vagina, which is why many women can't have an orgasm through penetration with a finger, dildo or penis alone.
- The most sensitive part of a man's genitals can be the head (top part) of his penis

## TIPS FOR MAKING SEX MORE PLEASURABLE

- If you are nervous, feel guilty or worried, or you're high or drunk, you may have troubles getting or keeping an erection or your vagina may not lubricate (get slippery) and can tighten up. Spend some time getting in the mood. This can include kissing, giving/receiving massages, talking dirty, lighting candles...or anything else that makes you feel sexy
- Move at the speed that works for you...slow, fast, whatever feels good
- Communicate! Talking to your partner about what feels good isn't always easy. Avoid criticizing. Instead, talk about what feels good for you and encourage your partner to do the same. Be appreciative when your partner tries new things.
- Use lube! Whether it's used on a penis, a vagina, an anus or a sex toy, lube can make things feel even better. You can get lube at a pharmacy in the condom section or sex toy stores. Some sexual health clinics give free samples.
- If you are having the kind of sex that makes it possible to get pregnant and you don't want to be pregnant, use a condom or visit a sexual health clinic to talk about birth control options for you or your partner
- Everyone who is having sex – straight, gay, bisexual or otherwise, is at risk for sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Consider using a condom, dental dam and/or latex glove to reduce your risk
- If you have been sexually abused or assaulted in the past or are suffering from depression or anxiety, counseling is available and can help a lot

## REMEMBER

- It's never too late to start exploring your body and sexual pleasure
- Try and have sex only with partners that make you feel good about yourself, respect you, and are willing to talk about and listen to what feels good for you
- If something doesn't feel good, listen to your gut – it's your right to say no.
- For more info on sex and sexual pleasure visit:
  - Planned Parenthood Toronto: [www.ppt.on.ca](http://www.ppt.on.ca)
  - Good for Her (woman and queer positive sex toy store): [www.goodforher.com](http://www.goodforher.com)
  - Come As You Are (woman and queer positive sex toy store): [www.comeasyouare.com](http://www.comeasyouare.com)