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Just for Guys

Sex

Freud is famously quoted to have once said that all men think about sex every few seconds, or was it minutes. Whatever it was and if he did say that then he was quite a foolish bloke. I can only suppose that he noticed a phenomena that is well known to anyone who studies peoples habits and wonders about what drives them. Sexual considerations and instincts seem to be an integral part of so much that we do that we end up not even realising that it is happening. Take cars, for example. We all know the words used to describe a new sleek car have more than a passing similarity to the way we would describe a sexually attractive woman. Yet logically how can a car, a tin box on wheels driven by a set of cleverly connected guns, ever be "sexy".

Why should black underwear be any sexier than white. Or red cars than gray ones. I've even heard computer hardware described in loving terms! It is so important to us, that the ad men recognise it as a major selling point for almost anything from beer to bog roll. It is easy to see why we sometimes have clouded judgment, or are reluctant to admit that we need information or have a problem. What should be a simple intuitive act with a few social rules thrown in has become surrounded by myth, secrecy and misinformation

Sex for men takes many forms. Sex can be enjoyable with a woman, with more than one woman, on your own, or with another man (or men etc. etc). This of course is a matter of personal preference and generally what happens in private between two or more consenting adults is their affair. Unfortunately for us in this pleasure seeking world, anything that's this much fun can bring it's own problems.

"If you put your rod in enough ponds you will eventually catch something"

This old fisherman's saying (told to me by an old fisherman) may be true... but it is also true that you catch one fish from one cast. "Doing it"

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unprotected one time is probably the commonest way to catch something you didn't want.

Most sexually transmitted diseases are spread in this way because people are unprepared or off their guard, such as after drink. There has been so much publicity lately about HIV and aids that we are in danger of forgetting that there are loads of much more common things out there waiting to be caught. Here is a list of a few that are available to anyone regardless of gender, colour, orientation or age; chlamidia, syphilis, herpes, genital warts, gonorrhoea, and trichomonas vaginalis. (cool names, eh?) You may or may not know if you catch one of these, although there are some symptoms worth looking out for, which should send you off to your G.P. or special clinic like a bat out of hell. Rather than having a list of symptoms to remember for each one you need to report any change in appearance in your pants area like spots, rashes or blisters, any change in sensation like pain, itchiness or burning, or any change in output, like blood in urine or semen, discharges of any sort or having to go to pee more or less than usual. Remember these: **sensation, output, appearance**. SOAP is quite a good mnemonic as it's when you're washing and bathing that the opportunity arises to examine yourself, I hope it will remind you.

You can reduce your chances of catching most things to almost zero by using condoms. Used for this purpose they are contraception rather than contraception, although they do of course prevent pregnancy as well. They are not 100% safe, notably many people catch genital warts from others despite taking precautions. Warts need treating at a special clinic, to stop them spreading to others, they are caused by a virus which is difficult to kill. You can have a sexually transmitted illness with no symptoms or signs at all, or they can come and go, even though the infection doesn't come and go too. Details of local clinics are in the directory under "sexual health" You can go without an appointment to any clinic, even outside the area where you live. What happens there is strictly confidential, no one will be told about your visit, even your doctor or your family unless you specifically give your permission. Of course you may be asked for details of contacts so that others can be traced and treated, but you are not compelled to give them. Any contacts you do name will not be told the source of the information, nor will anyone else. As if these diseases aren't enough there are other things

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which can affect our sex lives alarmingly, both physical and psychological. Check out the **STI** section for more info.

Sex - premature ejaculation

Premature ejaculation is the most common sexual problem for men. It is a lack of control over ejaculation so that it often happens sooner than the man or his partner would want. How soon depends on the individual. Some men ejaculate as soon as foreplay starts; others lose control when they try to insert their penis, while some ejaculate very quickly after penetration. Whatever the case, premature ejaculation can create tension between a man and his partner.

Occasionally losing control is normal

Premature ejaculation is only a problem if it happens all the time. It's important to remember that most men occasionally reach orgasm sooner than they'd like. For example, it is normal for a man to ejaculate quickly the first time he has sex. It is also normal if a man hasn't ejaculated for a long time. The occasional loss of control doesn't mean the man has a sexual problem.

The causes are psychological

There doesn't seem to be any physical cause for premature ejaculation. Although the exact cause is unknown, it is suspected that the problem is psychological. Some factors include:

- Depression or anxiety, particularly about performance
- Feeling anxious about rejection
- Expecting failure
- Feeling afraid of harm (some men have an irrational fear that penetration can cause injury to the penis)
- Negative sexual experiences in childhood
- Religious beliefs

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- Stress
- Problems within the relationship.

A variety of treatments

Seeking help from a doctor or sex therapist is a good idea. The different treatments for premature ejaculation include:

- The Masters and Johnson method - named after the famed sex researchers, this technique involves learning to control the sensations prior to orgasm. The idea is to repeatedly bring yourself close to orgasm, then stop and rest. If you do this often enough, you will learn to recognise your 'point of no return'. These exercises can be done alone or with a partner.
- Kegel exercises - these exercises are designed to strengthen the pelvic floor. To identify the muscles of your pelvic floor, stop yourself from urinating in mid-stream. This is the action you need to practice when your bladder is empty. Tightly contract the muscles and hold for 10 seconds. Repeat 10 times, three times a day.
- Psychotherapy and counselling - with the guidance of an experienced sex therapist, the underlying anxieties about sex can be explored and eased.
- SSRI antidepressants - a common side effect of these drugs is to retard ejaculation

Things to remember

- Premature ejaculation is the most common sexual problem in men.
- Occasionally losing control is normal.
- There are a variety of treatments to choose from including exercises, therapy and drugs.

Where to get help

- Your doctor
- Sexual health clinic
- Sex therapist

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Erectile dysfunction

Erectile dysfunction (impotence) is the failure to get an erection, or keep an erection long enough for satisfactory lovemaking. It isn't a disease, but a symptom of some other problem, either physical, psychological or a mixture of both. Contrary to popular belief, the majority of cases have physical causes, with only one in ten cases of impotence being caused by psychological problems. It is normal to experience the occasional bout of impotence. Unless it persists, there is no reason to be concerned.

Most cases are physical in origin

The four main causes of impotence include:

- Physical illness - there are many diseases that interfere with functioning of the penis by either reducing blood flow or affecting the nerves. Some of these diseases include heart and blood vessel diseases, diabetes, multiple sclerosis and alcoholism. When the impotence is caused by a physical illness it usually develops slowly. Most causes of impotence are physical. Some prescription drugs, like narcotics, sedatives and blood pressure medication can give you impotence as a side effect.
- Psychological factors - a man's sexual drive or performance can be affected by stress, such as problems at work, relationship difficulties or financial worries. Psychiatric conditions and feeling depressed or anxious about poor sexual performance can also result in a failed erection. Only one in ten cases of impotence are caused by psychological factors.
- A combination of physical illness and psychological factors - physical problems with maintaining an erection may cause the man to feel anxious about lovemaking, which makes the problem worse.
- Unknown - in a few cases, neither physical nor psychological causes can explain the loss of sexual functioning.

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Occasional impotence is normal

Don't worry about the occasional failure to get or keep an erection. Occasional impotence is normal. Some of the causes include drunkenness, anxiety and tiredness. In fact, one of the most common causes of impotence in middle aged men is lack of sleep.

A variety of treatments

It is important to see a doctor. You need to find out whether your impotence stems from physical or psychological causes so that you can get the proper course of treatment. The treatments for impotence include:

- Changing your prescription drugs if they are the cause
- Psychotherapy and counselling
- Oral medications such as Viagra, Cialis and Levitra
- External vacuum devices to create blood flow
- Injections directly into the penis
- Hormone therapy
- Penile prosthetic implants.

Things to remember

- Most cases of impotence are physical in origin.
- It is normal for a man to experience occasional bouts of impotence, perhaps from tiredness or drunkenness.
- If the failure to get or keep an erection persists, there are a variety of treatments available.

Where to get help

- Your doctor
- Sexual health clinic
- Family planning clinic

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Checking yourself for testicular cancer

Why self-examine?

Things can go wrong with your testicles slowly, quickly or very fast indeed.

A few conditions that affect the testicles are serious, but most are not so being obsessed or frightened for no good reason is undesirable.

Knowing what your testicles normally feel and look like makes good sense so that changes can be spotted and advice sought quickly if needed. Getting the balance right is the name of the ball game!

Signs to watch out for:

- A lump in one testicle
- Pain and tenderness in either testicle
- Discharge or pus from the penis
- Blood in the sperm at ejaculation
- A build-up of fluid inside the scrotum
- A heavy or dragging feeling in the groin or scrotum
- An enlargement of the breasts with or without tenderness
- An increase in size of a testicle (one testicle is normally larger than the other but the size and shape should remain more or less the same).

How to check your testicles

Check your testicles monthly in the following manner:

- Do the self-examination lying in a warm bath or while having a long shower, as this softens the skin of the scrotum (skin sac that holds the testicles), which makes it easier to feel the testicles inside.
- Examine the scrotum, looking for any lumps on the skin or swellings inside.

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- Cradle the whole scrotum and testicles in the palm of your hand and feel the difference between the testicles. One is almost always larger and lying lower. This is completely normal.
- Examine each testicle in turn, and then compare them with each other. Use both hands and gently roll each testicle between thumb and forefinger.
- Check for any lumps or swellings as both testicles should be smooth except where the duct that carries sperm to the penis, the epididymis, runs. This lies along the top and back of the testicle and normally feels bumpy.

Testicular cancer represents only 1 per cent of all cancers in men, but it is the single biggest cause of cancer-related deaths in men aged 15 to 35 years in the UK.

Currently, about 1500 men a year (around 1 in 400) develop the disease in the UK. Unfortunately, the number of UK cases has trebled in the past 25 years and is still rising.

Although testicular cancer is rare, it is not at all uncommon to find a lump in your testicles. There are many conditions that can be easily confused with testicular cancer, and most of them are not anything like as serious.

If you have performed a self-examination and found a lump, you are advised to go to your doctor for further examination; but before you go you might like to read more about testicular lumps and bumps.

FAQs

What is the average penis size?

The first thing to say is that there is a massive variation in the size of the un-erect penis for both boys and men. In the same way that everybody is a different height, weight and build, the same applies for penis size.

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Everybody develops at a different rate, everybody is different. To give you some guidance though, research has shown that whatever the size of the un-erect penis, over 90% of them grow to between 14-18 cm (about 6 inches) when erect. And remember, a boy's body doesn't stop growing till he's around 20 years old.

What is circumcision?

Circumcision is an operation carried out on some boys and involves removing the piece of skin called the foreskin that covers the tip of the penis. Most circumcisions are done on boy babies when they are just a few weeks old, but this operation is sometimes performed at a later stage of life for medical reasons. In the UK it is usually only done for religious reasons and is most common amongst Jews and Muslims. It is nothing to worry about and in fact nearly half the men in the world have probably been circumcised - so don't feel like you're the odd one out. Circumcision of women is a practice that takes place in some parts of western and southern Asia, the Middle East and Africa. It is widely considered to be dangerous and is illegal in Britain and in many other parts of the world.

I have spots on my penis and it itches. Is this normal?

If you have had sex without using a condom recently then it would be advisable to visit your local NHS Sexual Health (GUM) clinic, GP, nurse, Young Persons' Sexual Health, or Family Planning clinic as you may have picked up an STI. Lots of boys have normal lumps and bumps in their penis, or it could be that it is something simple like an allergy or an irritation. But if you have concerns, or there are any changes in your genitalia you should seek advice from a doctor or clinic. Remember that medical people see problems like this every day so there is nothing to be embarrassed about.

Is it normal for my penis to smell fishy and have white things behind the head of the bell end?

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No it's not normal, but this can happen from time to time, so make sure you wash behind the foreskin when you bath or shower. Doing so will prevent any smegma from building up. If you are washing carefully and the symptoms don't go away, make an appointment to see the doctor, or visit your local NHS Sexual Health (GUM), Young Persons' Sexual Health, or Family Planning clinic.

What is sperm?

Sperm is produced in a boy's testicles and released during sexual activity. Every time a man ejaculates (cums) he produces up to 100 million sperm - but it only takes one of these to get a girl pregnant, and that can happen even before the boy cums! If you are having sex always use contraception - and remember that only condoms can protect against both pregnancy and STIs.

Is it normal to get an erection when you wake up in the morning?

Yes, most boys will have a hard on when they wake up in the morning and they can get one when they're not expecting it during the day too. This is just a normal part of growing up and sexual development

Is it normal to have one testicle smaller than the other?

It is common to have one testicle smaller than the other, or one hanging down lower. No one has a perfect body so don't worry about what is supposed to be 'normal'.

Why is it harder to ejaculate when you have sex a second time in the same evening?

If you have sex a second time straight after the first it can take longer for a boy to 'cum' or reach orgasm. This is just a natural part of the body's workings. If you are worried about this then just take longer breaks after each time you have sex. Whether it is the first, second, third or tenth time you have had sex that day, though, always use a new condom to protect against unplanned pregnancy and STIs.