

It's not who you are, it's what you do.



Condoms! I've never used them before... I wouldn't know what to do with them.

Condoms can protect you from STI's and HIV.

Other forms of birth control don't offer this protection. It's never too late to learn how to use condoms.

He would tell me if he had something, wouldn't he?

Trust does not protect you from STI's. In fact, people don't always know if they are infected. You can protect your own health by using a condom when you have sex.

I have sex with women. Am I at risk?

Regardless of who your partner is, there can be risks with sexual contact.



Where can I get more information?

PHONE

Contact your public health nurse, community health clinic, doctor, or pharmacist.

The Facts of Life Line at **947-9222** in Winnipeg or toll-free in Manitoba at **1-800-432-1957**.

AIDS/STD Info Line at **945-2437** in Winnipeg or toll-free in Manitoba **1-800-782-2437**.

WEB

www.hivwisdom.org

focuses specifically on HIV and older women (U.S.).

www.hivoverfifty.org

is the website from the National Association of HIV Over Fifty (U.S.).

www.cwhn.ca

offers information about Canadian women's health, including HIV.

www.serc.mb.ca

links to many reliable sites about all aspects of sexuality.

BOOKS

Our Bodies, Ourselves

by the Boston Women's Health Collective

The New Ourselves Growing Older

by Paula B. Doress-Worters and Diana Laskin Siegal

Women's Sexual Passages

by Elizabeth Davies



Women of all ages are at risk for getting HIV.

I don't have to worry about getting pregnant anymore. Why do I need to use protection?

Safer sex is about more than just preventing pregnancy. It's about protecting yourself from sexually transmitted infections (STI's) like HIV.

He's a nice man with a good job... he can't give me anything, can he?

Anyone can get STI's and HIV. You can't tell who has HIV or STI's by the way they look or the work they do.



Loving SAFELY

A guide to preventing HIV for women over 40



The message that only young people are sexual is simply NOT TRUE!

Why are women over 40 at risk for getting HIV?

- Many women, for different reasons, find themselves involved with new sexual partners.
- Women may not feel safe or comfortable talking with their partners about safer sex. This is especially true for women who became sexually active before HIV became an issue.
- The vagina changes with age, making the vaginal walls thinner and more prone to tiny tears during intercourse. HIV can then pass more easily into the bloodstream.
- Many doctors do not think they need to talk about sexual health with their patients who are over 40.

What is HIV? What is AIDS?

- **HIV** (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is a virus that weakens the immune system, which fights disease.
- **HIV** lives in blood, semen, and vaginal secretions. One of the most common ways people get infected with HIV is through unprotected sexual intercourse.
- **AIDS** (Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome) develops when people with HIV get sick with certain types of life-threatening diseases.

How do I know if I have HIV?

A blood test is the only way to find out if you are infected with HIV. You have the right to get confidential and anonymous testing.

People with HIV are living longer because of drug therapies. It is important to get tested so treatment can start as soon as possible.

Make sure your doctor knows that you are concerned about sexually transmitted infections and HIV.

**Don't wait for your doctor to ask.
Get tested!**



Believe it or not, with a little practice, SAFER SEX CAN BE FUN!

How do I talk to my partner(s) about safer sex?

Talking about safer sex can help build trust between you and your partner. It may not be easy to talk about safer sex. It's OK to admit to your partner that you feel uncomfortable.

Just before sex may not be the best time to talk about your concerns. To bring up the topic in casual conversation,

Try: "I read a pamphlet about women and HIV and I didn't realize that people our age needed to worry about it...."

Or: "This is kind of embarrassing. Before things go any further there are some things we need to talk about...."

Or: "I am concerned about HIV so I always carry condoms."

How can I practise safer sex?

- Remember intercourse is not the only "real sex". Hugging, kissing, touching, and massage are fun and safe ways to be intimate with your partner. Many couples find that these activities are an important part of a satisfying sexual relationship.
- Condoms are not just for men. You can use a female condom.
- Male latex and female condoms offer protection against HIV and other STI's. HIV can pass through lambskin and novelty condoms.
- Use only water based lubricants such as KY jelly. Oil based lubricants, like vaseline or hand lotion, can damage latex condoms.
- You can get all types of condoms at drugstores and some community health centres - no prescription needed.
- To use condoms effectively, read the instructions.



CONDOMS can protect you from HIV and STIs!