



Student Wellness Centre

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UNIVERSITY OF
SASKATCHEWAN

When to have sex is a personal choice that people make depending on their own attitudes, morals, and beliefs. Having sex before they are ready can lead to feelings of guilt or regret, unwanted pregnancy, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Many people, especially women, are taught that their first time having sex will be unpleasant. This doesn't have to be the case! Being comfortable with yourself, with your sexuality and sexual boundaries, and having a good partner makes the sexual experience positive!

Finding a Good Partner

Stay Safe

During the first dates, meet in public places. Always let someone know where you are going and make sure to have your own way of getting home. Remember that you're under no obligation to fulfill your date's expectations. If you do not want a second or third date, just say no thanks. Consider using Safe Walk for your trip to and from your date, or use Virtual Safe Walk to share your GPS location with a friend while you are out.

Be Yourself

Let your personality come through! Show your true self and be honest about yourself and your interests.

Choose activities that allows for conversation such as going for coffee, having a picnic, skating, or a walk. Watching a movie or TV does not provide that opportunity. Drink in moderation so your partner gets to know you, not the drunk you. That opens the way for trust, respect, and communication. All of which are essential for a healthy sexual relationship!

Ask Questions and Listen

This shows that you are really interested in what the other person has to say. It also allows you to get to know your partner and to decide whether or not you feel comfortable with them. **Warning:** if the person you are with does not also listen when you speak, maybe you should move on.

Physical Intimacy

Physical intimacy is not just about sexual intercourse. Cuddling, talking, kissing, masturbation, massages, and oral stimulation all contribute to sexual expression and intimacy. Consider the options, and think about what you're ready for ahead of time.

When Are You Ready for Sex?

- What are your moral viewpoints on sex? Why do you want to have sex?
- Do you respect and trust your partner? Are you able to talk openly with your partner? Are you confident enough to clearly express your desires or to say “no” to sex when you are feeling uncomfortable? Low self-esteem often contributes to poor decision making about sex.
- Are you aware of how STIs are transmitted and are you confident that you and your partner will do what you can to prevent possible STIs and pregnancy?

Sex is a personal decision. It is something that you should discuss with your partner, yourself, and maybe your doctor, but not with the rest of the world. You should not feel pressured when deciding for yourself. There is less harm in waiting than in rushing into a sexual relationship too soon.

Not everyone at USask is “doing it.”

In 2019, 27% of students reported that they had no sexual partners in the last 12 months. Do not worry about what everyone is doing anyway. Independence is a sign of maturity; having sex is not.

Physical Intimacy, or Not

Remember: It is okay to wait as long as you want before having sex. The decision is yours to make, and is yours to live with, so make sure it is the right decision for you.

Abstinence is a range of behaviours from celibacy (choosing not to have a sexual partner) to anything but sexual intercourse.

If You Have Chosen Abstinence

- Talk to your partner about what each of you want,
- Make a decision about sexual activity that is right for both of you, and
- Decide what intimate activities you do and do not want to do.

Perfectly Good Reasons to Not Have Sex (Abstinence)

- Choosing to wait until marriage for religious or personal beliefs,
- Lack of sexual attraction (asexual),
- To avoid pregnancy or STIs,
- Lack of trust in your partner or future of the relationship, and
- You do not feel ready.

Advantages of Abstinence

- Very effective at preventing pregnancy* and STIs**,
- It can be started at any time in your life,
- Encourages people to build relationships in other ways, and
- Allows you to wait until you are emotionally ready to engage in sexual activities.

*Pregnancy could occur if there is genital-to-genital contact or ejaculation near the vaginal opening.

**To avoid STIs, abstinence means refraining from oral, anal, and vaginal sex and other intimate activities. Some STIs can be spread by direct skin-to-skin contact.

Disadvantages of Abstinence

- It might be too restrictive for some couples,
- If you get caught up in the heat of the moment, you might not have birth control or a barrier with you.
- Alcohol and drug use may make practicing abstinence more difficult, when judgment is impaired and inhibitions are lowered.

Just in case: If you choose abstinence you may want to have a condom available if you do get caught up in the moment. If you have vaginal sex and

do not use birth control or ejaculation occurs around the vaginal opening, take **emergency contraception** to prevent a pregnancy.

Choosing to Have Sex: Keep These Thoughts in Mind

Alcohol

Drink responsibly and do not have sex under the influence. Consider following Canada's low-risk drinking guidelines. 40% of University students have done something that they later regretted as a result of alcohol. Do not have sex that you will regret.

Getting and Giving Consent

You need it and need to give it.

Remember that
“no,” “not yet,”
“I don’t think so”
means NO.
Neither
intoxicated
consent nor

coercing someone into consenting is consent. Sex without consent is **sexual assault**, a criminal offense. On the other hand, an enthusiastic “Yes” is pretty sexy! Think about how you will ask for consent and how you can give it.



and

Preventing Pregnancy

When engaging in heterosexual sexual intercourse there is always a chance that you or your partner could become pregnant. Are you willing to take this risk and have you considered what you would do if there was a pregnancy? Choose a contraception that is right for you. Health practitioners at the Student Wellness Centre are able to help you make that decision.

Preventing STIs

If you or your partner has had sex before, get tested for STIs before you begin a new sexual relationship and protect yourself by using condoms and dental dams.

You should also discuss:

- How many sexual partners you both have had?
- How often do you get tested?
- Have either of you had unprotected sex?
- Have you ever used injection drugs and shared needles?

Myth: once people have had sexual intercourse, they will not be willing to choose abstinence.

Fact: many people deliberately choose to become abstinent after being sexually active. Choose what is best for you.

Safer Oral Sex

Intimate oral sexual acts involve:

- Mouth to penis,
- Mouth to vagina, and
- Mouth to anus.

Do not have oral sex if either you or your partner is on treatment for an STI or having an outbreak of symptoms such as herpes. Oral sex is less risky than vaginal and anal sex, but that does not mean it is risk-free. STIs can spread from the genital or anal area to the mouth and from the mouth to the genital or anal area. Use a barrier to help prevent STIs. Barriers allow your mouth to have contact with the penis, vulva, or anus of another person without sharing bodily secretion.

Condoms

Use well-known brands and check the expiry date. Store condoms at room temperature in a cool, dry place. If you travel, take condoms with you as quality condoms are not available everywhere. Use them correctly every time you have sex. Use non-lubricated condoms and for variety, try flavoured ones. Try putting a drop of water-based lube inside the condom for increased sensation.

Dental Dam

A dental dam is simply a piece of latex that acts as a barrier when held in place over the vaginal or anal area during oral sex. They can be purchased for about \$2.00 each or can be made out of a condom. A piece of Saran or Cling wrap (microwavable plastic wrap) can also be used, although there is not enough research to claim it is as safe as a dental dam or latex.

Important: Use a water-based lubricant with any latex product. Oil-based lubes, such as Vaseline, can cause the latex to break down.

How to make a dental dam: Cut the tip off of an unrolled condom, then cut it lengthwise. Unroll to use.

Sex is a big deal.

For more information, book an appointment with a nurse or physician at the **Student Wellness Centre: 306-966-5768**, or visit students.usask.ca/health for other student health articles.

Emergency Contraception

Emergency contraception is a method of contraception that is used to prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex or failed contraception (e.g., condom breaks, missed birth control pills, unplanned intercourse).

How to Access

Emergency contraception is available without a prescription from all pharmacies, your own doctor, a walk-in clinic, or the Saskatoon Sexual Health Centre. The cost may vary and your Usask student plan will reduce the cost. You can also obtain the product in advance and store it for use in case of an **emergency**.

Timing

Emergency contraception must be taken as soon as possible but not more than 72 hours after having unprotected sex. Your period should start within 21 days after taking an emergency contraceptive. See your health care professional if it does not.

Side Effects

Possible side effects include nausea and vomiting, breast tenderness, dizziness, and headaches. Side effects do not generally last more than 24 hours and may be reduced by taking an anti-nausea medication.

Note: If you vomit within one hour after taking an emergency contraceptive, you will need to retake the dose. Call your pharmacist or healthcare provider right away.

How do Emergency Contraceptives Work?

Depending on where a woman is in her cycle, emergency contraception will prevent ovulation, prevent fertilization of an egg, or stop a fertilized egg from implanting into the uterine wall.

Emergency contraception will not affect a pregnancy that has already been established. It is **not** an abortion pill. If you are already pregnant and take emergency contraception, there is no evidence that it will harm you or the fetus.

Emergency contraception will not prevent a pregnancy in the days or weeks following treatment. If you took emergency contraception because of incorrect birth control pill use, continue to take your birth control pills as usual. You can begin a hormonal birth control (“the pill”, patch, or NuvaRing) either with your next period or the next day following the use of an emergency contraceptive.

In all cases, use a backup barrier method, such as condoms, until you know you are protected from pregnancy. Speak to a pharmacist or healthcare provider about your specific situation.

If you are not already using a reliable method of birth control, consider discussing your options with your health care provider. Emergency contraception is not as reliable as other methods of birth control and is

not meant to be used on a regular basis.

Emergency contraception does not protect against STIs. If you had unprotected sex and are unsure of the health of your partner, consider STI testing.

Additional Resources

Visit these great sites:

- sexualityandu.ca
- plannedparenthood.org

Protective Services: 306-966-5555

SAFE WALK: 306-966-SAFE

Virtual SAFE WALK: Download the USafe App

USSU Women's Centre: 306-966-6980

Sexual Assault Centre 24-hour Crisis Line: 306-244-2224

Saskatoon City Police: 306-975-8300

Download the USafe App



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