

# SMART *is the new* SEXY

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The nighttime is the right time to obsess about the perfect outfit, break out the flat iron and squeeze into the Christian Louboutins for that night out at the latest chic downtown hot spot. All of that primping can take hours, but for most, this is where the planning ends. The stuff of romance novels or horror stories? Cut to two friends talking about a recent dating experience.

The setting was a La Jolla coffee shop, mid-afternoon. Cute twenty-something girl with magenta mega-check Burberry scarf and grey skinny jeans has been eagerly waiting to spill the story of her latest dating misadventure for sympathy and advice. She declares disappointingly that her latest suitor, initially a dead ringer for Prince Charming, had admitted that, following a few tequila shots on date number two, she was "hot, but maybe too, uh, you know 'smart or serious.'" Not that there is anything wrong with that.

What could have led to this unfortunate turn of events? Scarf girl thinks that her responsible questions about safe sex may have sent Prince Charming running for the hills. Scarf's best friend forever, with a visually mesmerizing tattoo of Chinese characters on her right shoulder, retorts, "Just be glad your questions scared him off, and, doesn't he know? Smart is the new sexy!"

What defines "sexy" is subject to preference. Being armed with information and knowing when to use it is indisputably powerful. A safe strategy is a great starting place for romance and ecstasy. Sexual intimacy has a statistical probability of occurring. So, be prepared.

## THE RULES

### 01 SAFE SEX

#### NEGOTIATING SAFER SEX IS BEST-DONE WHILE FULLY CLOTHED.

Knowing how to ask a new partner about STIs is crucial to an honest and productive discussion. Acknowledging the awkwardness of the topic, then diving right in usually works best. The big ones are Hepatitis B, Herpes Type2, HPV, HIV, chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis and trichomonas. These diseases can be screened for through a combination of blood, urine and genital swabs. More than an unwelcome nuisance, these infections can have implications for causing cancer (HPV), infertility (chlamydia/gonorrhea), chronic contagious carrier states with painful outbreaks (Herpes) and life-threatening disease (HIV, Hepatitis B, syphilis).

### 02 LIBATIONS

#### DRINK ALCOHOL RESPONSIBLY WHEN SEXUAL ENCOUNTERS ARE POSSIBLE.

Studies show that nearly two-thirds of unplanned pregnancies in the United States occurred while the woman was intoxicated.

### 03 PROTECTION

#### BE PREPARED.

Pack two condoms (in case of a mishap or morning romp), a fully charged phone and a friend with knowledge of one's plans. According to the National Survey of Sexual Health and Behavior, only 29% of men ages 25 to 34 used condoms with their last sexual partner, so packing a couple so packing a couple ahead of time will alleviate any room for error.

### 04 EXAMS

#### GET AN ANNUAL GYNECOLOGICAL EXAM.

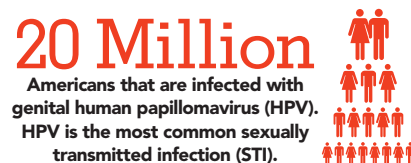
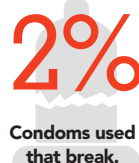
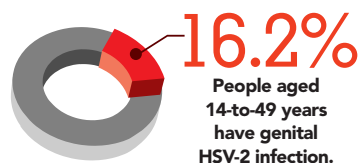
This is done with a gynecologist or a primary care doctor. A Pap smear will be performed, which is a test for cervical cancer. According to the American Cancer Society, since the popularization of the Pap test in 1955, the cervical cancer death rate has declined by over 70%.

### 05 VACCINATE

#### GET THE HPV VACCINE SERIES.

The Centers for Disease Control recommends HPV vaccines for girls and women ages 13 to 26, all teen boys and men through age 21 and all gay and bisexual men (or any man who has sex with men).

To quote the magnificent Oscar Wilde, "Everything in the world is about sex except sex. Sex is about power." And knowledge is power.



## RECOMMENDATIONS:

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends women get their first Pap smear at age 21, and every other year until they turn 30, then every year after that.