

PROFESSIONAL GUIDE

SEXUAL HEALTH GUIDE

FOR MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN

Practical information for a safer and healthier sex life



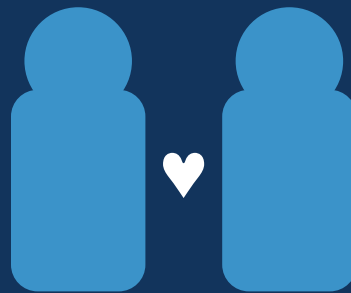
SAFETY



RESPECT



HEALTH



BY HASSAN

An evidence-based resource for consent, hygiene, HIV/STI prevention and safer intimate practices.

ENGLISH EDITION • 60 PAGES

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Sexual Health Guide for Men Who Have Sex With Men

English Edition

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This guide is an educational resource intended for general adult sexual-health information. It is not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of a qualified healthcare professional with any questions regarding a medical condition, medication, vaccination, testing schedule, or prevention strategy. Recommendations can vary by country and by individual circumstances; readers should verify current national and local guidance before making individual medical decisions.

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Intended Audience

This guide is intended for adults. It does not assume any particular sexual orientation, relationship status or identity. The term “men who have sex with men” (MSM), used throughout this guide, describes behavior rather than identity.

Sources and Public-Health Basis

This guide follows major international public-health guidance, especially the World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations for MSM and the WHO consolidated guidelines on HIV, viral hepatitis and STI prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care for key populations. Full references are listed at the end of this guide.

Author

Hassan

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Foreword and How to Use This Guide

This guide is an adult sexual-health education resource. It explains, in clear language, how men who have sex with men can reduce the risk of HIV, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), injury and other health problems. It does not assume any particular sexual orientation, relationship status or identity.

The term “men who have sex with men” (MSM) describes behavior rather than identity. A person may identify as gay, bisexual, heterosexual or in another way while having sex with a man.

The guide is built around four principles: consent, prevention, hygiene and access to appropriate healthcare. Modern HIV prevention is combined prevention: condoms and compatible lubricants, testing, vaccination, PrEP, PEP and effective HIV treatment can each play a different role.

This guide is educational and does not replace individualized medical care. Medication choices, vaccination schedules and testing intervals can differ by country and by individual circumstances.

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1. Consent: the Foundation of a Healthy Intimate Relationship

A healthy intimate relationship begins with consent. Both people must freely agree to the activity, and either person can change their mind at any time.

Consent to one activity is not consent to another. Agreeing to kissing does not automatically mean agreeing to sexual contact. Consent given on one occasion does not create an obligation for a future occasion.

Consent must be voluntary. Threats, pressure, blackmail, intimidation or exploitation of someone who is severely intoxicated can undermine valid consent. A person who is unconscious or asleep cannot consent.

Good communication can be simple: ask what the other person wants, state your own boundaries and check that both people remain comfortable. A refusal should be respected immediately.

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2. Understanding the Main Health Risks

Sex between men can transmit HIV and other STIs. Risk varies according to the activity, presence of an infection, use of barriers, HIV status and treatment, and use of PrEP or PEP.

Anal sex can present a higher HIV exposure risk because rectal tissue can be vulnerable to injury and can allow exposure to infected body fluids. Gonorrhea, chlamydia and syphilis can also be transmitted.

Oral sex has a much lower HIV risk than anal sex, but several STIs can be transmitted through oral contact. Skin-to-skin infections such as HPV and herpes may also spread from areas not covered by condoms.

A lack of symptoms does not prove that someone is infection-free. Many STIs are asymptomatic, so appropriate testing is important.

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3. Anal Anatomy and Health

The anus and rectum contain sensitive tissue. They do not need to be made “sterile.” Gentle external washing is generally enough for hygiene.

Harsh soaps, disinfectants and repeated internal cleansing can irritate tissue. Pain, persistent bleeding, unusual discharge, sores or a new lump should be assessed by a healthcare professional.

Friction can cause irritation or small injuries. Adequate compatible lubricant can reduce friction during anal sex.

The most important rule is to stop if there is significant pain or unexpected bleeding. Continuing through pain can worsen an injury.

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4. Hygiene Before Intimacy

Good sexual hygiene does not require complicated procedures. Wash your hands and gently clean the external genital and anal areas if desired.

Avoid putting household disinfectants, bleach, alcohol or irritating products on genital or rectal tissue. They can cause burns and injury.

Keep fingernails clean and reasonably short to reduce accidental scratches. Clean sex toys according to their material and manufacturer instructions. If toys are shared, use a new appropriate barrier between users.

Hygiene does not prevent all STIs. A clean person can still have and transmit an infection, so testing, vaccination and appropriate HIV prevention remain important.

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5. Condoms: Purpose and Selection

Condoms are an important tool for reducing HIV transmission and several STIs when used correctly and consistently. They do not cover every area of skin, so they cannot eliminate every STI risk.

Check the expiration date and packaging. Avoid condoms that have been exposed to excessive heat or severe friction.

Choose a size that fits securely and comfortably. A condom that is too tight can be uncomfortable; one that is too loose may slip.

Do not use two condoms at the same time. Friction between them can increase the chance of breakage. Use one condom correctly.

Condoms are single-use barriers. Replace one if it breaks, slips or becomes damaged.