

Naturally Curious



Talking to Youth About Sexual Health



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PAUKTUUTIT
INUIT WOMEN OF CANADA



Welcome!

Talking about sex is okay! In fact, it can help young people know healthy sex is normal. This booklet gives you some ideas about how to talk to young people about healthy sex – and staying healthy. Young people in your community want to talk to a trusted adult about sex. If you are willing to listen to them, they are more likely to ask you questions.

This guide talks about healthy sex, about sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and blood-borne infections (such as hepatitis B and C and HIV/AIDS). You can help young people not get STIs or blood-borne infections by talking about healthy sex and protection.

For more ideas and information to help you talk to young people, ask at the health centre, talk to the local community health representative (CHR) or a nurse or doctor. The more facts you have, the more you can help young people know how to stay safe and healthy. You also can go to [facebook.com/NaturallyCuriousProject](https://www.facebook.com/NaturallyCuriousProject)

Choosing the best words

Talking about sex can be uncomfortable. Use words that are common or understood by youth in your community and that you are comfortable using. In this booklet, we use words like vagina, anus and penis to talk about genitals. You can use these or you might say private parts. Try not to use nicknames. Use words that help show body parts and sex are natural.



Anus



Penis



Vagina

Inuit values

Inuit Qaujima jat uqangit

Remember Inuit values when you are talking to young people. When you look at each value, you can see how each one can be used when talking about healthy sex. You can ask children and youth about respect, caring, how they can show respect for their friends, families and partners. Talk about the value of being resourceful to ask what ideas they have to stay safe and healthy and help someone else be safe and healthy. Remind them they can say no to anyone who tries to touch them when they don't want them to and show them the value of love and acceptance by letting children know you love and accept them just as they are.

Inuuqatigiitsiarniq:
Respecting others,
relationships and
caring for people.

Tunnganarniq:
Fostering good
spirits by being
open, welcoming
and inclusive.

Pijitsirniq:
Serving and
providing for
family and/or
community.

Aajiiqatigiinni:
Decision making
through discussion
and consensus.

**Pilimmaksarniq/
Pijariuqsarniq:**
Development of
skills through
observation,
mentoring, practice,
and effort.

**Piliriqatigiinni/
Ikajuqtiigiinni:**
Working together
for a common
cause.

Qanuqtuurniq:
Being innovative
and resourceful.

**Avatittinnik
Kamatsiarniq:**
Respect and
care for the land,
animals and the
environment.

How to start talking

Here are some ideas to talk to different ages about our bodies, about staying safe and healthy and about sex. Try to think of talking about sex as the same as talking to children and youth about other ways to be healthy. You teach them about being clean, brushing their teeth, not coughing on someone else. Talking about sex is an important part of helping young people stay healthy.

Talking to children up to about age 7

It is never too early to talk to children about their bodies. We all have them! Give them basic information. Use the right words for body parts because those are the words they will probably will learn in school health classes.

Since kids are naturally curious, they ask lots of questions. Use that as a chance to start the conversation. Or you can just start it when you are sitting together.

Here are some ideas:

Let children know their body belongs to them. Let them know there are safe touches – like someone helping a child have a bath or for a check-up at the clinic. Tell them there are unsafe touches and they can tell someone not to touch them. If the touch makes the child feel odd or bad or unsafe, they can and should say no and they should tell you about it (or another person they trust). Be sure to let the child know he or she has not done anything wrong.

If a little child asks where a baby comes from, you can keep it simple by saying the baby grows inside the mom until it's time to be born.

Little children sometimes touch their penis or vagina in public. It is normal. You can just quietly let them know that is better done in private.


You tell little ones the names for parts of their body, like their nose or toe. You can also tell them they have a bum and that girls have a vagina and boys have a penis.



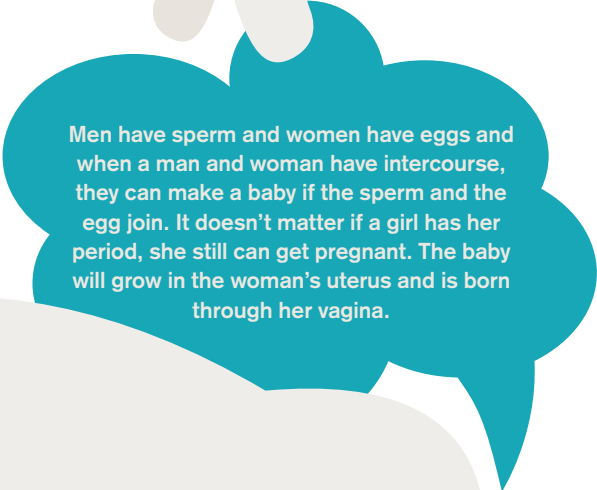
Talking to children from 7 to 10

Children at this age will be ready for a bit more information. Look for ways to start the conversation, such as when a new baby has been born that the child knows.

Here are some ideas about what you can talk about.



Both boys and girls grow hair around their genitals; girls get their period; and boys sometimes have wet dreams.



Men have sperm and women have eggs and when a man and woman have intercourse, they can make a baby if the sperm and the egg join. It doesn't matter if a girl has her period, she still can get pregnant. The baby will grow in the woman's uterus and is born through her vagina.

Talking to youth from age 11 on

It's never too late to start talking to a young person about their body and sex. Young people might be embarrassed to ask you about sex. You might not be comfortable either. Find a reason to start talking about it, such as after they had a nurse or CHR visit school to talk about sexual health or the young person is starting a relationship.

Here are some questions that can make it easier for you and the young person to talk about sex:

I feel a little uncomfortable, but this is important. We can see what we can find out maybe from the nurse/health centre.

I don't know - but I'll try to find out and tell you.

What did you learn about sexual health today in school? What did you think about it? Let me know if you have any questions – I can try to answer them.

That's a great question. I'm glad you asked me about that.

Are you wondering about you're feeling or how your body is changing now?

It seems like you don't want to talk about this right now, and that's okay. If you ever have any questions, you can ask me.

Some people grew up without learning from an adult about sexual health. You could tell the young person you wish you knew more when you were his/her age and you want to make sure you can help him/her make good choices.

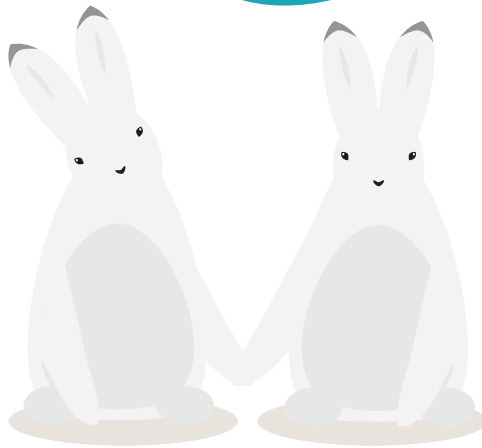
You can ask a young person “what if” questions to help them think about what could happen in different situations. You could ask:

What if you got pregnant now? How will you manage this?

What if you get a disease from sex? Or what if your partner has a sexually transmitted disease?

What if your girlfriend got pregnant? What do you think you would do?

What if you don't want to have sex yet? What can you tell your girl/boyfriend?



Help them think about these questions and come up with ideas about how to not get an STI or not get pregnant. Talk about how they can stay strong in their decision if they are not ready for sex or, if they are, how they can stay strong about wanting to use protection. Talking together can help the young person find ways to make healthy choices. Both of you can ask at the clinic for more information or help.

Remember to be honest about what you do or don't know about. Stay positive. And keep listening to encourage the young person to keep asking questions and talking to you.

Sexually Transmitted Infections – STIs

The rest of this guide gives you information about STIs and blood-borne infections you can share with young people. Ask at the health centre if you want more information and encourage young people to get the facts, too.

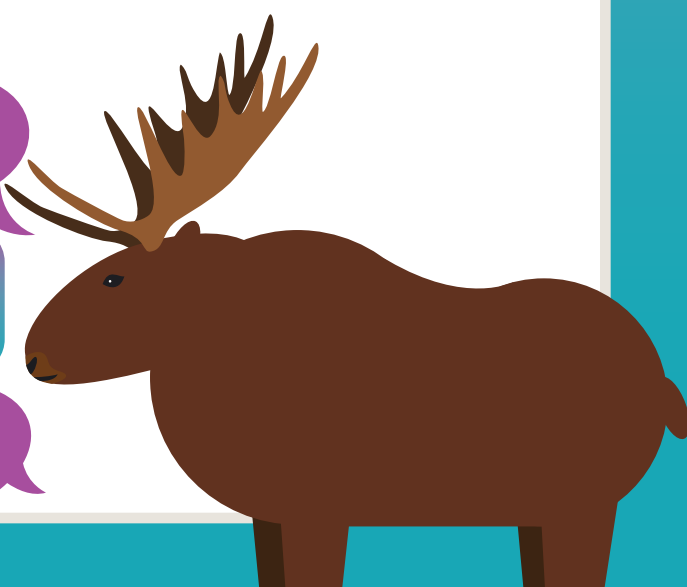
What is an STI?

A sexually transmitted infection –an STI – is a disease passed from one person to another during sex. The most common STIs are herpes, gonorrhoea, syphilis, human papilloma virus (HPV), chlamydia, hepatitis A, B and C (hep A, hep B, hep C) and human immunodeficiency virus infection (HIV) and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

What does an STI feel like?

Someone can have an STI and not feel anything. They can feel healthy, but can be infected.

Some STIs cause an unusual or smelly discharge from the vagina or penis; a rash, sores or itching on or around the genitals; burning or discomfort when peeing; or pain in the lower abdomen during or after sex. There are other symptoms, depending on the infection.



Remember: you can have an STI and not feel or see anything.

Prevent STIs with protection during sex.

Get tested regularly.

How does someone get and prevent an STI?

As we said above, people might not know they have an STI.

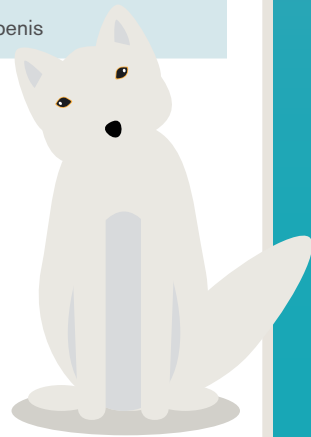
Be safe. If you are having sex, use protection. This usually is a condom.

It is important to tell young people that some things do NOT prevent STIs, even if a friend or an adult says it does.

- Washing your genitals or any other part of your body after any sexual activity does NOT prevent an STI. Washing is always a good idea, but it does not stop STIs.
- Just because someone doesn't have any signs of an STI, if they have one and it is not treated, they can pass it on.

Here are some ideas to prevent passing on STIs. Young people can find out more at the health centre or going to [facebook.com/NaturallyCuriousProject](https://www.facebook.com/NaturallyCuriousProject)

Activity	How to prevent passing an STI
Kissing with tongue	Don't kiss if one of you has sores on your lips or mouth or has an infection in your mouth
Fingering and hand jobs	Use a condom on the finger
Vagina oral sex (cunnilingus)	Cover the vagina with a clean rubber of some kind (cut condom, glove)
Penis oral sex (fellatio)	Use a condom on the penis
Penis-vagina intercourse	Use a condom on the penis
Penis-anus intercourse (anal sex)	Use a condom on the penis

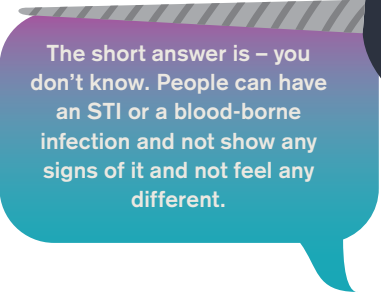


How do you stop passing on blood-borne infections?

Blood-borne infections – including hepatitis B and C and HIV/AIDS – get passed on from an infected person to another person when their blood gets mixed. This can happen is when people share needles or when people have open cuts and the infected person's blood gets into the other person's cut.

Don't share needles (for homemade tattoos or other purposes) and don't touch or come in contact with someone's cut or scrape.

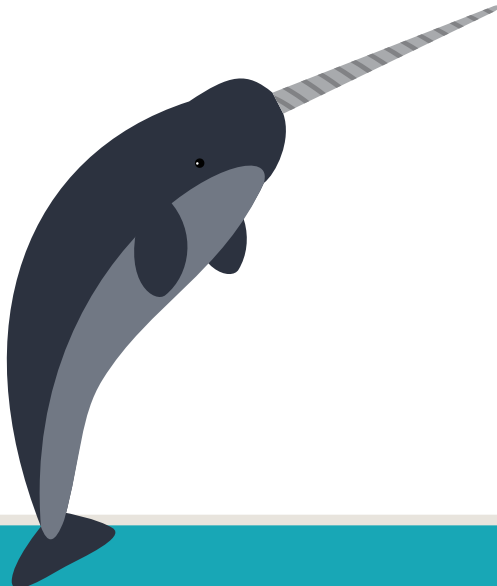
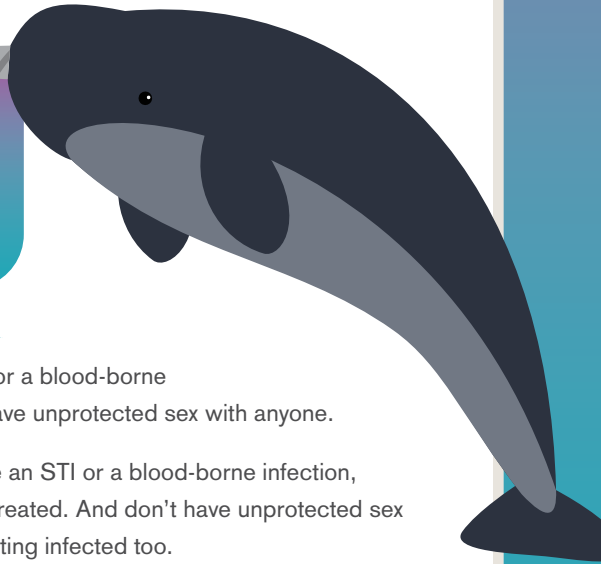
How do you know if someone has an STI or a blood-borne infection?



The short answer is – you don't know. People can have an STI or a blood-borne infection and not show any signs of it and not feel any different.

If you think you might have an STI or a blood-borne infection – get tested! And don't have unprotected sex with anyone.

If you think your partner might have an STI or a blood-borne infection, encourage them to be tested and treated. And don't have unprotected sex with them, or you might end up getting infected too.



Can you treat an STI? What about testing?

Yes. But first you have to get tested to find out if you have an STI and what kind it is. The same is true for blood-borne infections.

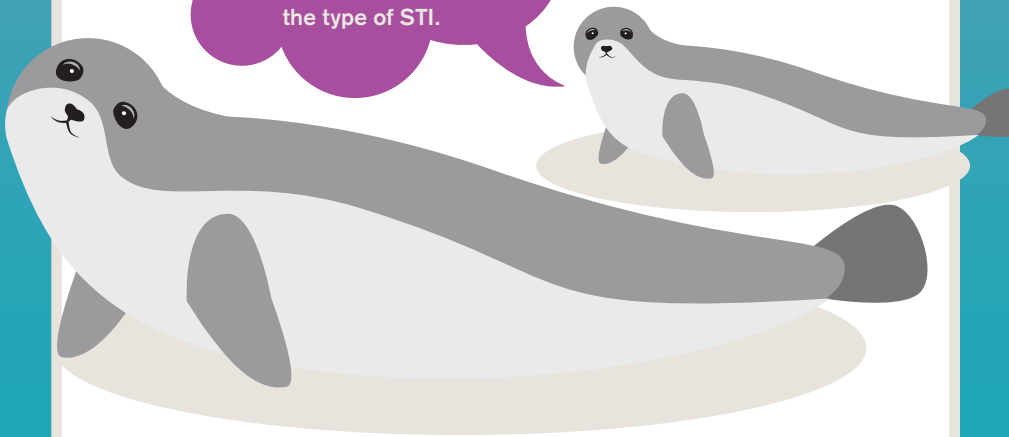
Getting tested for STIs and blood-borne infections is safe. It protects you and your partner(s) from becoming very sick.

Getting tested is just part of staying healthy. And since STIs don't always have symptoms, getting tested is the only way to know if you have an STI or blood-borne infection.

There are different ways to get tested, and some ways are simpler than others such as blood tests, urine tests or oral and genital swabbing.

No one else needs to know you are getting tested. No one else will find out your results.

Treating STIs is usually simple. Usually people are given antibiotics or antiviral medication, depending on the type of STI.



A few ideas about healthy relationships and sex

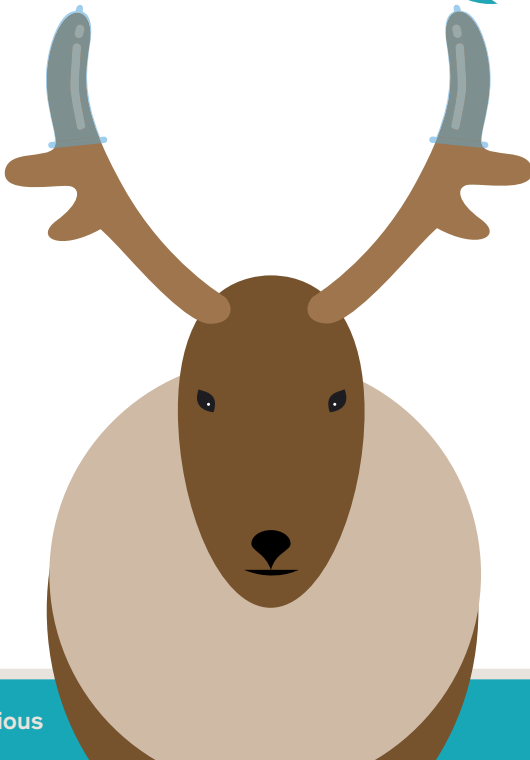
Part of healthy sex means having a healthy relationship. Talk to a young person about what that means. You can ask them what they think and encourage them to think about it before they jump into a relationship or having sex.

Do you really want to have sex? Think about the “what if” questions – if you got pregnant, if you got an STI.

Why do you want to have sex?

Does your partner also want to have sex? If only one of you wants it, then it isn't healthy sex. It can cause anger, fear and other emotional and physical health problems.

If you both are willing to have sex, does your partner agree with using protection? If not, then it isn't healthy sex. It can lead to disease or unwanted pregnancy. Your partner should respect your wishes if you want to use protection.







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