

Naturally Curious



GUIDE – Talking to Youth About Sexual Health

You can use the following points when going on the local radio station, as part of a community presentation, presenting to youth, and many other ways!

The goals of the project are to:

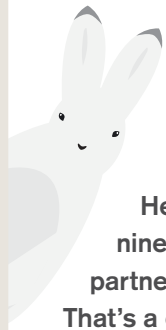
- Help adults talk to young people about healthy sex
- Encourage everyone to get tested for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and blood-borne diseases – and be treated if they need it

- Give Inuit the facts about STIs and blood-borne diseases to help them know how to not get infected and how to prevent the spread if someone is infected

The information is presented for you to use by reading it out or to use it as information to refer to for the presentation. You will see each fact starts with a slightly humorous way to introduce the topic. Each of the introductions uses a fact from nature – to tie in with the *Naturally Curious* theme of the project.



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INUIT WOMEN OF CANADA



Healthy sex is normal and natural

Here's a fun nature fact: The arctic fox mates nine months out of the year and only with one partner. And those partners stay together for life. That's a committed relationship!

Just like the fox, people "mate" too. Sex is a natural part of life. People have sex not just to have babies- and that's normal and healthy too. As long as both people agree – consent – to having sex. And if you aren't ready to have a baby, use protection. And if you don't want to pass on an infection – or get one – you need to use protection.

Protect yourself and your partner by practicing safe sex – and a condom is one of the best ways to prevent infection.

Find out more by asking at the health centre (you can also suggest who people can ask, for example, the nurse, community health rep or someone else). Check out the *Naturally Curious* Facebook page.

You can stop passing on or getting infections with protection

Here's another fun nature fact: Female snowshoe hares often mate with a number of males – and she can get pregnant every month even if she already is pregnant.

Women won't get pregnant more than once if she already is pregnant – but women can get pregnant when they have their periods or if they have a sexually transmitted infection.

Healthy sex and getting pregnant are normal for humans. Getting infected or getting pregnant when you don't want to is not healthy.

You can prevent getting pregnant or getting an infection by using protection. If you think you are ready to get pregnant – FIRST think about these questions:

Do you and your partner a loving and happy relationship? That means you respect what each other thinks and believes. Do you both want to have a baby?



Do you have a good support system? That includes your partner and other family members or friends who can help you manage with the big changes that come with having a baby – that keeps growing and needing you.

Do you have a way to support the baby and yourself? Babies need clothes, diapers, food and since they keep growing, they keep needing more of these.

Do you know what big changes will happen to your life with a baby? Does your partner?

Think about these questions to help you decide if you are ready for having a baby. Talk to an adult you trust about how they managed all the changes and needs. Ask the clinic or nurse to give you an idea of what to expect.

If you aren't ready – use protection.

Kids are curious – you can help them understand

It's pretty typical for kids to be curious about their bodies and, as they start reaching puberty, to wonder about sex.

When kids are really young, we help them learn about their different body parts – their nose, their hands and toes. It's natural for them to wonder about other parts of their body. You can tell them that girls have vaginas and boys have penises and everyone has a bum.

As kids get older, you can talk to them about how their bodies start to change – and that is really normal. If you need some help in explaining to young people what happens with puberty, you can ask at the health clinic for ideas and help. If you are comfortable talking about it right away, you can tell them that boys and girls will start to feel and see changes in their bodies, such as girls getting periods and boys' voices starting to get deeper. Let them know it's natural and normal for this to happen.





Sexually transmitted infections – some facts

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There are really only two ways to not pass on an infection and to not get the infection. The first is to not have sex – and that includes oral sex and some other sexual activities. The second way is to use protection. A condom is the best protection as long as it is new and not damaged.

You can NOT prevent getting an STI from washing. It's good to wash. It does NOT stop an STI from getting into your body if you have sex with someone who has an STI.

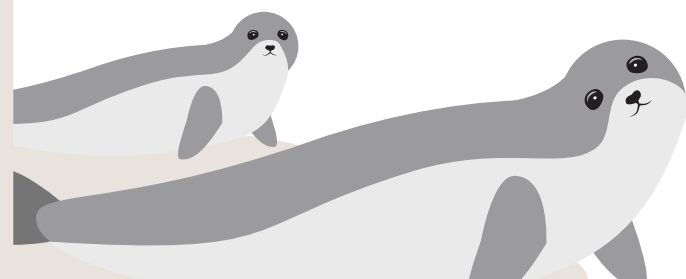
You won't get an STI from sitting on a toilet seat.

You can get an STI from sexual activities. That's why they are called sexually transmitted infections.

Another type of infection you can avoid is a blood-borne infection. Blood-borne infections include hepatitis B and C and HIV/AIDS. A blood-borne infection is passed from an infected person when that person's blood comes in contact with another person's blood. This can happen if people share needles or if they have sex when both have cuts or scrapes where their blood can pass from one to the other.

You can prevent getting or giving a blood-borne infection by making sure you never let an open cut or scrape come in contact with another person's blood. Never share needles, including for homemade tattoos.

You can get tested for blood-borne infections. Visit the clinic to find out more.



STIs – testing and treatment

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It's easy to get tested for STIs. But many people don't know they have an STI because they feel fine and don't have any symptoms. Use protection when you have sex and get tested – regularly because you may not know if you or your partner has an STI.

If you do have an STI, treatment is pretty simple and easy. For most STIs, you will take antibiotics or some other (e.g., antiviral) medicine.

If you don't get tested and have an STI – you won't get treated.

There are different ways to get tested, and some ways are simpler than others.

If you don't get treated, you can end up with serious health problems including not being able to have a baby, suffering pain, and, from some STIs, you can go blind, have brain or heart damage and some lead to death.

Prevent STIs – use protection. Get tested. Follow treatment.

See the clinic if you have questions and for more information. No one else needs to know why you are at the clinic.

