

SEX

Everything you want to know about sex, your body and your rights

What is sex?

Sex is a way of showing love and other feelings. There are all kinds of ways to have sex. You can have sex by entering each other's bodies. For instance, when the man brings his penis into the woman's vagina. This is how you can get pregnant. Other ways of having sex are kissing, caressing, or touching each other at sensitive spots on or inside your bodies with your hands and mouth. You can also have sex by yourself, which is called masturbating.

Some people choose to wait to have sex until they are married. Other people start to be sexually active before they are married or have sex without being in a relationship with someone. It is totally up to you with whom, when and how you have sex. All that matters is that you and your partner(s) both want to have sex and enjoy it.

What are your rights?

Every person has sexual rights. These also include all the rights that protect you against force, discrimination, and sexual violence and assault. The most important rights are:

- > **The freedom to have sex or not.** Nobody can force you. That also includes your partner. Sexual force is a criminal offence.
- > **The right to choose who you have sex with.** Aspects like gender, background, religion, skin colour, disability, and finances never matter. Men are allowed to have sex with men and women are allowed to have sex with women.
- > **The right to use contraception.** There are different types of contraception to protect your health and decide if and when you want to have children.

More information about...

"Being a virgin"

Some people believe that women should remain a virgin until they are married. "Being a virgin" means that you have never had sex. Many people also believe that a woman loses some blood when a man's penis enters the vagina for the first time. They think that it causes the hymen to rupture. That is not true. The hymen is not some sort of membrane that closes off the entrance to the vagina. The hymen is a supple tissue around the edge of this entrance. When a woman is excited and wants to have sex, the inside of the vagina becomes wet and widens. This makes it easier for the penis to enter without bleeding. Some women are forced to prove that they are still a virgin, but a woman's virginity is not something you can see. Not even a doctor.

Do you want to know more about the hymen? Then please read the brochure 'All about the hymen' on www.femmesforfreedom.com/alles-over-het-maagdenvlies.

Problems with having sex

Some people experience problems when they have sex. For example, when a man is unable to bring his penis into the vagina or fails to "come" (ejaculate). Such things can have all sorts of reasons. Maybe you are tense or scared. Or perhaps you don't really feel like having sex. You can always go to

your doctor if you think that something might be wrong. Your doctor can also refer you to a sex therapist. A sex therapist helps people when they have sexual problems. A sex therapist is not covered by your basic health insurance but some additional insurance packages have it included. You can ask your own health insurance company if or how much your insurance would pay. You can also go to <http://www.sense.info/> for tips, advice and help if you experience pain during sex.

Sexually transmitted diseases/ STD

Having unprotected (unsafe) sex can cause sexually transmitted diseases, also often shortened to STD. STD are infectious and passed on from one person to another during sex. They can be serious and a health risk. Unsafe sex happens when a penis touches the vagina, anus, throat or mouth without using a condom. Condoms protect you and your partner against venereal diseases.

STD test

Did you have sex without a condom? Are you afraid that you have an STD? Get yourself tested at the GGD or by your doctor. The GGD may offer free STD tests when you are below the age of 25, when you had sex with someone who has an STD, or to men who have sex with other men.

You can ask the GGD in your area if you can have a free STD test. When you go to your doctor for a test, the costs will be deducted from the excess amount of your health insurance. People living in an asylum seekers' centre can get free STD tests at the centre's health centre. If you are a virgin and plan on having sex with someone who has had sex before, it is wise to ask them to take an STD test to know that you are safe.

Protect yourself against HIV/AIDS

Men who have sex with other men can use PrEP medication to protect themselves against HIV/AIDS. Women with a higher risk of contracting HIV/AIDS can also use PrEP. PrEP is prescribed by your doctor.

Where to go for help?	Contact information
The police help when you are a victim of sexual assault. You need to ask for the "vice squad" (zedenpolitie).	Are you in immediate danger? Call 112. If not, call 0900 8844
Veilig Thuis offers help when you are forced to get pregnant. You can also contact them if you are in any other situation with violence.	www.veiligthuis.nl or 0800 2000
Centrum Seksueel Geweld (Sexual Assault Centre) offers help to sexual assault victims. Sexual assault means that someone (also your husband or partner) touches you with sexual	www.centrumseksueelgeweld.nl or 0800 0188

intentions against your will or forces you to have sex. You can call the Centre for free and anonymously.	
Femmes for Freedom offers sex education to all women, also to newcomers. The website offers more information about sex, choosing your partner, and the hymen.	www.femmesforfreedom.com .
Sense offers information and advice on all sex-related subjects, such as relationships, contraception, venereal diseases, and pregnancy. You can call them anonymously.	www.sense.info or 0900 402 402 0
Zanzu offers information about sex in 14 languages.	www.zanzu.nl
The GGD [Municipal Health Centre] is where you can have yourself on venereal diseases and they provide information and advice on how to prevent and cure venereal diseases.	Go to www.ggd.nl to find a GGD near you.
Anticonceptie voor jou can help you choose the type of contraception that would be best and most practical for you.	www.anticonceptievoorjou.nl