

GLOSSARY

abstinent	Choosing not to participate in sexual activity.
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome. A viral disease that attacks the body's immune system so that it can no longer fight off disease and infection. Caused by HIV. (see HIV)
adolescence	The stage of life between childhood and adulthood that begins with puberty and ends with physical maturity.
birth control pills	Oral contraceptives for women obtained through a physician's prescription and taken daily on a monthly schedule.
cervix	The narrow outer end or neck of the uterus, extending into the vagina.
chancroids	A sexually transmitted, bacterial disease that causes genital ulcers and enlarged lymph nodes in the groin.
Chlamydia	A micro-organism that can infect both men and women and damage reproductive organs, sometimes causing sterility. It is the fastest-growing sexually transmitted disease (STD), especially among young people 15 to 25, and is a major cause of cervicitis, pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), and nongonococcal urethritis (NGU).
conception	The joining of an egg and a sperm. (See fertilization)
condom	A sheath worn over the penis during sexual intercourse. Condoms made of latex, when used correctly and together with the spermicide nonoxynol-9, are highly effective in preventing pregnancy and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases.
contraceptive	Any device that reduces the risk of an unplanned pregnancy or of contracting a sexually transmitted disease. Contraceptives can be divided into two general categories: Prescription contraceptives: Can only be bought with a doctor's prescription. These include birth control pills, Norplant and Depo-Provera, all of which prevent ovulation, the IUD or intrauterine device, which acts to keep a fertilized egg from implanting or attaching to the uterine lining; and cervical caps and diaphragms, barrier methods that fit over the cervix and block the entrance to the uterus. Cervical caps and diaphragms must be individually fitted by a trained technician and used with a spermicide. Non-prescription contraceptives: Can be bought over the counter in a store. Those made for use by women include the female condom and the contraceptive sponge, which are barrier methods; spermicides in many forms (foam, jellies, creams, films, and suppositories) and condoms, the only contraceptive used by males.

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douching	Washing out the vagina by forcing liquid into it. Douching after intercourse does not prevent pregnancy, and may even serve to push the sperm closer to the egg. Soda pop will not work any better than water as a douche, while a chemical douche can harm the lining of the vagina and upset its natural chemistry.
egg (ovum, pl. ova)	The egg, produced by the mother which when joined to the sperm produced by the father develops into a fetus. Female babies are born with all the eggs they will ever have.
ejaculation	The sudden discharge of semen from the penis during male orgasm.
Fallopian tube	Either of a pair of tubes through which an egg makes its way from the ovaries to the uterus.
fertilization	The joining of an egg and a sperm. (See conception)
genital warts	(See HPV)
genitals	The body's reproductive organs.
hepatitis B	A highly contagious, virus-caused disease that anyone can get, but sexual contact or any contact with infected blood or body fluids through the use of needles greatly increases the risk. Most of the 300,000 Americans who get hepatitis B each year are adolescents and young adults. There is no cure for hepatitis B, but there is a vaccine which many public health officials recommend be given to protect adolescents and young adults.
herpes	A virus-caused, chronic disease of the skin and mucous membranes easily spread by direct contact. Known as herpes simplex virus (HSV), it comes in two forms: HSV-1 generally causes cold sores around the mouth. HSV-2 most commonly causes genital herpes. Once contracted, HSV hides out in nerve cells between attacks. There is no cure, but the disease can be treated.
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus. The virus that causes AIDS. Spread through an exchange of body fluids--blood, semen, breast milk, or cervical-vaginal secretions--the virus relentlessly attacks and gradually destroys the cells in the human immune (defense) system that fights off infections and diseases, and eventually kills its victims. As yet there is no vaccine or cure.

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HPV	Human Papilloma Virus. Also called genital warts. Small growths that show up around the genital area, usually sexually transmitted by skin-to-skin genital contact with an infected person. HPV is very contagious, and although it responds to treatment, there is no cure. Teenagers are among the hardest hit: one study found that 38 percent of sexually active teens had genital HPV.
implantation	Once sperm and egg have joined, the fertilized egg moves into the uterus and implants or attaches itself to the uterine lining.
impotence	Inability in a male to achieve or maintain an erection in order to engage in intercourse.
menstrual cycle	The monthly processing of preparing the lining of the uterus for the implantation and support of a fertilized egg. If the egg is not fertilized, the tissue and blood that line the uterus are not needed, they flow out of the body as the menstrual flow or period.
ovaries	The two glands in the female reproductive system, located near the uterus, that produce female hormones and ova. About once a month, one ovary releases a mature egg into the uterus.
ovulation	The time during the female menstrual cycle when a mature egg erupts through an ovary wall and begins its journey down a Fallopian tube to the uterus.
penis	The male genital organ that fills with blood and gets hard and erect during sexual excitement.
PID	Pelvic Inflammatory Disease, a serious infection of the female reproductive organs. In most cases, it is caused by the sexually transmitted disease chlamydia and gonorrhea and can lead to ectopic pregnancy or sterility. If detected early enough, PID can be cured with antibiotics.
period	Another name for the monthly menstrual flow. (see menstrual cycle)
prostate	A firm, partly muscular gland located close to the base of the male urethra. The prostate secretes a fluid that aids in ejaculation.
puberty	The time of life between childhood and adulthood when a person's reproductive organs develop into mature organs. Puberty occurs at different times for different people. Girls tend to enter puberty earlier than boys.
semen	The sticky liquid, containing sperm, ejaculated through the urethra in the penis during sexual intercourse.

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seminal vesicles	The storage pouches on either side of the male reproductive tract in which sperm mix with other fluids to form semen.
sexually transmitted disease (STD)	Any one of the many infectious diseases that are spread during close body contact, most often sexual contact.
sperm	Microscopic cells produced in a male's testicles that can fertilize a female ovum. Males can make sperm all their lives from puberty on.
spermicide	Any chemical designed to kill sperm to prevent fertilization or to kill some kinds of STD germs. The most effective spermicides contain the ingredient nonoxynol-9. Spermicides come in a variety of forms. (See contraceptive)
sterility	Failing to produce or incapable of producing offspring. Many women become sterile as a result of STD-caused damage to their reproductive organs.
syphilis	A bacterium-caused and very dangerous sexually transmitted disease. Its first stage is characterized by painless sores called chancres, its second stage by a rash and flu-like symptoms. Treatment is possible in both these stages, but if left untreated, the third stage will eventually result in heart disease, brain damage, blindness, or even death.
testicles	The two glands, located in the male scrotum or external pouch, that produce male hormones and sperm.
trichomoniasis	An infection in the vagina, characterized by a persistent discharge. Other symptoms may be vaginal pain, itching or burning. The infection can be passed back and forth between sexual partners and may attack the male urethra and bladder.
urethra	In males or females, the tube that carries off urine from the bladder. In the male, the tube through which semen is ejaculated out of the penis.
uterus (womb)	Part of the female reproductive system. After an egg is fertilized, it implants itself in the uterine lining.
vagina	The flexible muscular canal that extends down from the cervix to an opening in the vulva. During sexual arousal, the vagina becomes lubricated.
vas deferens	The tubes through which sperm move from the testicles to the seminal vesicles.
vulva	The external part of the female reproductive system.
wet dream	Slant for "nocturnal emission" or what happens when a sexual dream causes a male to ejaculate in his sleep.

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withdrawal

The practice of pulling the penis out of the vagina during sexual intercourse before ejaculation occurs. Withdrawal is a very unreliable way to prevent pregnancy, because the fluid that can leak from the penis even before ejaculation may contain thousands of sperm.