COMMON SEX MYTHS

Myth: If I put a condom on inside-out and haven’t ejaculated yet, I can flip it over to the correct side to use it again.

Truth: There is always the possibility that pre-ejaculate (pre-cum) may have gotten on the condom. Pre-cum may contain fluid containing viruses, bacteria or sperm from a prior ejaculation. It is better to put on a new condom than to put your partner at risk for pregnancy or infection.

Myth: I don’t need to use protection for oral sex.

Truth: Certain sexually transmitted infections can be spread via oral sex. These include but are not limited to: herpes, gonorrhea, human papilloma virus (HPV), and chlamydia. For all types of oral sex, using barriers such as condoms or dental dams can reduce the risk of STI transmission.

Myth: I just tested negative for HIV, so I can have unprotected sex without fear of infecting my partner.

Truth: HIV tests work by measuring the antibodies that our immune systems produce to fight the virus. A person can have HIV and still receive a negative test result if the test does not detect the antibodies. It can take our bodies up to 3-6 months to develop enough antibodies for a positive test result. During this time, transmission of HIV is possible. So, getting tested every 3-6 months is good practice.

Myth: If I had an STI, I’d have symptoms.

Truth: Many STIs do not immediately cause signs and symptoms. Depending on the person, an STI may be asymptomatic, meaning that no symptoms ever appear. For example, gonorrhea and chlamydia are often asymptomatic. Even without signs and symptoms, STIs can have serious health consequences, such as pelvic inflammatory disease and infertility. It is best to get tested regularly to make sure you’re STI free.

Myth: The condoms I get at the student health center are more likely to break than the condoms I buy at the pharmacy.

Truth: The condoms at the Student Health Center are the same mainstream brands as ones sold at your drugstore or bodega, and they meet high safety and quality criteria. When condoms break, it’s often due to incorrect usage. Know the steps to putting on one correctly and use lubricant every time.

Do you have questions about other sex myths? Email the NYU Sexpert at: sexpert@nyu.edu.