

Coronavirus 'SEX-PLAINED' - Your Questions Answered

You might be wondering how coronavirus (COVID-19) could affect your sex life, relationships and sexual health. Here, in this short guide we will provide you with advice, facts and top tips to keep you, your loved ones and your community safe.

Can I get coronavirus from having sex?

Although COVID-19 is not a sexually transmitted infection, it is a respiratory bug which means close contact does increase the risk. We do not yet know whether coronaviruses can be found in semen and vaginal fluid.

If your sexual partner is part of the same household, sex should not be a problem; however, this only applies if both you and your partner are not showing any symptoms of COVID-19 or have not been in contact with COVID-19. Symptoms include a high temperature and/or a dry persistent cough. If either of you show symptoms of the virus, you must follow the [self-isolating](#) guidance.

If you are a heterosexual, with your regular partner and you are sure that they are not infected, please use some form of contraception to prevent unwanted pregnancy. You can access a free and confidential service by calling the Sexual Health Service on 01422 261370. Home testing for chlamydia and gonorrhoea can be requested on-line and order condoms via the [website](#) and have them posted to your home.

You can also access contraception from your GP.

It is advised that you do not have sex with new people at this time. This also goes against government advice to [stay at home](#) and to practise [social distancing](#). Experts have warned that some people who have the virus may not show any symptoms and could easily pass it on to others. You could pass it to them, or they could pass it to you via close contact and kissing.

Can I get coronavirus from kissing?

Kissing can put a person at risk of COVID-19. Although the infection may not be spread through most forms of sexual intimacy, it can be transmitted as a result of close contact. The disease can be spread through droplets of water and mucus from the nose and mouth as a result of coughing and sneezing: this means kissing is a risk!

If you have kissed or have been in contact with someone you think has gone on to develop COVID-19, be sure to [self-isolate](#). If you're somebody who has developed symptoms, and you know that you've kissed people recently, you should let them know.

Can I still see my partner if we don't live together?

Couples who do not live together must practise [social distancing](#) and stay two metres away from each other. People should only be having sexual contact, including with their regular partner, if they live in the same household. The Government's directive advises people to only leave the house for items which are absolutely necessary such as groceries and medication.



Calderdale Sexual Health Services
Calderdale & Huddersfield HIV Services



Try not to worry - couples can engage in a number of activities together without physically seeing each other. With the help of technology, couples can watch movies together via streaming services and even maintain a sex life by participating in virtual fun. See below for some ideas.

I'm worried that I may have an STI. Where can I get a test?

Please call Calderdale Sexual Health Clinic on 01422 261370. A telephone assessment will be booked and tests will be arranged either by attending the clinic or where appropriate posted out to you. The tests are free and confidential. You have to register, answer a few questions and the tests will arrive in discrete packaging for you to then carry out the test and post your samples back in a prepaid envelope. Your results will be available on a dedicated automated results line or phoned through to you.

How do I get an appointment? What clinics are currently open?

If you feel that you need an appointment please contact the Sexual Health Clinic booking and information line on 01422 261370. An appointment will be made for a telephone consultation and provide you with the most appropriate information and support for your needs.

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, the sexual health clinic that is currently doing face to face pre-booked appointments, following a telephone consultation is at Broad St Halifax.

Help! I'm running out of contraception pills. How can I get some more?

Please call 01422 261370 for a telephone consultation. Arrangements will be made for you to be able to collect pills from clinic. Alternatively, you may be able to contact your GP to order your repeat prescription.

Can I have new coil /implant fitted?

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and national guidance to protect staff, patients and local communities, routine coils and implant fittings are not usually taking place. Free contraceptive pills and free condoms are offered, as alternative contraception choices. If you would like to talk to someone in sexual health, please contact the information and booking line on 01422 261370.

Help! My coil or implant is about to expire. What should I do?

At present, to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, non-essential face-to-face contact with healthcare providers is being minimised where possible. Replacement procedures for long-acting reversible contraceptive (LARC) devices that have recently expired are deemed non-essential by the Faculty of Sexual & Reproductive Healthcare. They have offered the following guidelines to patients:

Coils with hormones

The coil 52mg LNG-IUS (Mirena/Levosert) can be extended for another year and arrangements should be made for the removal/replacement after the COVID-19 crisis is over. If you contact the Sexual Health Clinic you will be placed on a recall list for when this service is reinstated.

Jaydess and Kyleena patients are advised to use condoms or add the Progestogen-only contraceptive pill at end of the licence. To find out more about ordering the contraceptive pill call 01422 261370, OR use the website to "Ask the Expert" or to order free condoms via post [here](#).

Coils without hormones

Women using copper IUDs licensed for 5 years can leave the LARC in place and arrangements should be made for the removal/replacement after the COVID-19 crisis is over. If you contact the Sexual Health Clinic you will be placed on a recall list for when this service is reinstated.

Users of copper coils licensed for 10 years, can be left for 12 years. Women can leave the LARC in place and also have a Progestogen-only contraceptive pill or order free condoms via the postal service if they are worried, but risk of pregnancy is likely to be small.

Implants

Extended use of Nexplanon to 4 years use.

Depot Injections (Depo-provera)

Where possible women on the depot injections would be switched onto the progesterone only pill until the COVID-19 outbreak is over. If this is not possible arrangements will be made for you to come into the Sexual Health Clinic for your injection. Please call 04122 261370 to discuss your options.

I need emergency contraception and I'm not sure where I can get it.

The Sexual Health Clinic is still offering emergency contraception via post. If you are under 16 years old or over 16 years old and wish to access sexual health services for emergency contraception, please contact the clinic on 01422 261370 for support and advice. Please be patient the service is experiencing high volumes of calls at this time.

Alternatively, for Emergency Contraception, please use the '[search](#)' on the website for you nearest pharmacy. It is also advised that you contact the pharmacy directly, ahead of your visit to find out their current situation regarding opening times and access to services.

Can I get coronavirus by touching someone else's vagina or penis?

Zero contact between any partners that you're not living with is key. Essentially, any possibility of transfer of coronavirus - from your mouth to your hands, to genitals, to someone else's nose or mouth - increases the risk of passing on coronavirus.

I wasn't using condoms before coronavirus, should I start now?

This depends on your reasons for not using condoms previously. Using a condom consistently and correctly will help protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unplanned pregnancy. If you weren't using condoms because you were relying on something like the withdrawal method – which can still leave you at risk of STIs- then it's even more important that you use condoms now. Remember, contact with anyone outside of your household is not allowed. You can now order free condoms by post via our [website](#).

Anything I should know about coronavirus and masturbation?

Masturbation is the one fool proof thing you can do. The same hygiene rules apply; before and after, wash your hands along with any sex toys and your keyboard or touch screen you have used.

How can I maintain a relationship at a time like this?

If you use your imagination a little bit there are lots of ways you can maintain a relationship without being face-to-face with your partner. For people who are dating and are isolating in different places, you may need some creativity. Zoom, Skype, FaceTime and Houseparty are all options for audio and video calls one-to-one or with up to 100 people! They are great for staying in touch with partners or for staying in touch with family and friends, just be sure you follow the usual online safety rules.

Below are some ideas that you may find useful to continue relationships at this time: -

1. Get creative and think of activities you can do in tandem while on video chat – Netflix party anyone?
2. If you would normally plan a date around food or drink, why not do it virtually? Get a takeaway on speed dial or how about cooking up a special meal ‘together’? Just be sure to sit at a table and talk when you’re there. You know, like you would at a real restaurant!
3. Get to know your partner better on an emotional level during lockdown!
4. Use video calling and do a workout together. Stretch out joints and muscles and get the blood pumping. Great for a boost of energy!
5. Remember, sexting is available to you but the rules still apply. Think before sending ‘nudes’ - once a photo is shared online, you have lost all control of it and it will be virtually impossible for you undo. Even if you change your mind and delete the photo you uploaded, other people may have already shared or copied the image. Sending or sharing indecent images of anyone who is under 18 – or keeping an image someone sends you – is a serious crime. This is the case even if the person sharing the image with you is happy to do so or you are happy to send nude selfies to someone else.

Do I need to keep taking PrEP even when I am not having sex?

No, you don’t. You can start and stop PrEP any time you like. PrEP is only intended to be used when you are at risk of exposure to HIV. If you are not having sex – then you do not need to use PrEP.

How do I stop PrEP?

For cis men (people who were assigned male at birth and still identify as a man) and non-binary people assigned male at birth, you need to keep taking one PrEP pill per day until you have two sex-free days. For trans women who are not taking gender affirming hormones, you need to keep taking one PrEP pill per day until you have two sex-free days. For everyone else including cis women (people who were assigned female at birth and still identify as a woman), trans women taking gender affirming hormones, non-binary people assigned female at birth and trans men, keep taking one PrEP pill per day until you have seven sex-free days.

Will I still be able to get my PrEP pills?

If you are on the PrEP trial you are still able to get your tablets from your clinic. A telephone assessment will be done first and then a time will be arranged for you to come into clinic

How do I get condoms by post?

Condoms are the best way of preventing the spread of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. They can also protect against unwanted pregnancy. You can register to receive condoms by post from Calderdale Integrated Sexual



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Calderdale & Huddersfield HIV Services



Health Service by clicking on this link <https://www.sexualhealth.cht.nhs.uk/information-and-advice/condoms-by-post/> these can only be supplied to Calderdale residents.

The Brunswick Centre provide a condom by post service to communities at increased risk of HIV infection. You will need to have a Calderdale or Kirklees postal address to access this service. To order them you can text your name and address and quote 'condoms' or 'condoms and lube' whichever you require to 07874 643 429 or email condomsbypost@thebrunswickcentre.org.uk.

Both services are confidential. If you have any special requests such as non-latex, king size, trim etc please state.

I think I have been at risk of HIV, how do I get a HIV test?

If you think you may have been at risk of HIV you will need to ring the Sexual Health Clinic on 01422 261370 or 01422 261365 to be triaged over the phone, an appointment will be offered where appropriate (the walk in and wait clinics are suspended until further notice).

I think I have been at risk of HIV in the last 72 hours, how can I access PEP?

Please call 01422 261370 for a phone assessment and arrangements will be made for you to come into the Sexual Health clinic as soon as possible.

For general queries and non-urgent advice you can contact the sexual Health Clinic via the [Ask the Expert section](#) of the website. The team aim to respond within 48 hours during the working week (mon-fri).

Keep well and keep safe!