



## Sexual Health

If you have any questions or queries that we could help you with please visit us and we will endeavour to assist you in any way possible. We know this may be embarrassing or frightening but remember we are professionals not here to judge, not here to tell, just here to listen.



The law says it's legal for you to agree – or consent – to sex from the age of 16.

Even if you're under 16, you can get confidential contraceptive and sexual health services; including free confidential pregnancy testing, referral to abortion/pregnancy advice services, free chlamydia screening, advice and referral for testing for all sexually transmitted diseases. All contraceptives are also provided free of charge including condoms and the morning after pill.

These services are all available confidentially if you are judged able to understand your actions even if you're under 13.

### Where else to get help?

- Sexual Health Line on 0300 123 7123
- Visit the [NHS Website](#)
- Contact [Brook](#)-a charity for the sexual health of under 25s

# Frome Valley Medical Centre



## Sexual Health Consent

**When it comes to sexual activity and sex, you have the right to decide when you do it, where you do it, and how you do it.** For any sexual activity to happen, both people need to consent, or say yes, willingly and freely. Sexual activity does not just mean [sex; it includes kissing, hugging, making out, cuddling, and touching someone's body in a sexual way.](#)



So, how do you know if someone wants to make out or have sex? You have to ask! For example, if you want to touch someone's bum, you could say something like, "Is it okay if I touch your bum?" and if they say "YES!" its bum touching time. If they aren't sure or don't say anything that means the answer is no. In other words, **anything other than yes means no.**

We know that consent can be a lot more complicated than just saying "yes." People don't always talk about touching/sex before it happens. Many people communicate non-verbally, through eye contact and body language. Unfortunately, non-verbal communication can sometimes lead to misunderstandings, if you are unsure, **stop and ask.**

Working out when you're ready to have sex and feeling comfortable about it is one of life's big decisions. You're the only one who can, and should, decide.

Just because you've had sex before, even with the same person, doesn't mean you have to do it again.

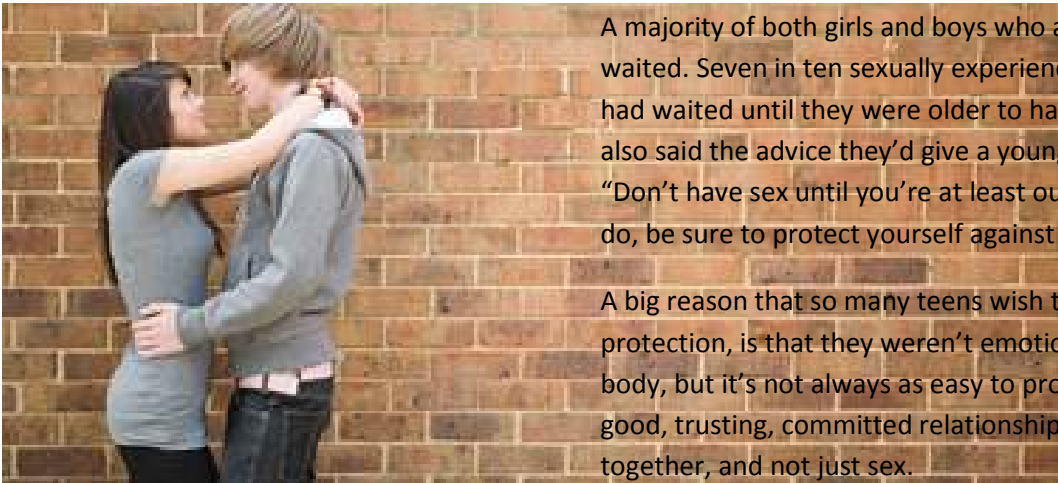




## Sexual Health Waiting and Abstaining

Just because 'everyone else is doing it' doesn't mean you have to. The reality is that many teens are waiting to have sex, and many of those that did wish that they had waited longer. **Less than half of all teens in secondary school have had sex.** That means you are in the majority if you haven't!

The bottom line is, you don't have to have sex if you're not ready, and that's ok! Birth control can do a very good job of protecting you from [pregnancy and STDs](#), but the [only 100% proven method for avoiding them is not having sex.](#)



A majority of both girls and boys who are sexually active wish they had waited. Seven in ten sexually experienced teens (71%) say they wish they had waited until they were older to have sex. Sixty-four percent of teens also said the advice they'd give a younger sibling or friend would be: "Don't have sex until you're at least out of secondary school, but, if you do, be sure to protect yourself against pregnancy and STDs.

A big reason that so many teens wish they had waited, even if they used protection, is that they weren't emotionally ready. You can protect your body, but it's not always as easy to protect your feelings. Being in a good, trusting, committed relationship means enjoying many things together, and not just sex.

There are lots of reasons not to have sex besides not wanting to get pregnant or get someone else pregnant (although that's a pretty good reason, too). Here are some of the most common reasons teens give for waiting:

- I'm waiting for the right guy or girl.
- I've got better things to do with my time.
- It's against my religious beliefs.
- I think sex is something special that should be saved until you are married.
- I'm worried about my reputation.
- I don't want to catch an STID.
- I want to make sure I'm in a lasting relationship first.
- I just don't feel like I'm ready yet.

All of these are perfectly good reasons to wait. What are yours?





## Sexual Health Puberty

**Puberty describes the time in life when the body matures sexually and the reproductive organs become functional.**

It's caused by a release of the sex hormones testosterone and oestrodinol in the body. Testosterone is the male sex hormone that's produced by the testis (the male sex organs). Oestrodinol is the main female sex hormone that's produced by the ovaries.

Puberty causes a number of changes to occur which can be categorised as:

- **physical changes-** including rapid growth spurts, the development of breasts in girls and an increase in penis size in boys
- **psychological changes-** which can cause teenagers to become moody, self-conscious and aggressive
- **behavioural changes-** which can cause some teenagers to experiment with new and potentially risky activities. such as smoking. drinking. alcohol and sex

### When does puberty start?

There's no set age when puberty starts. The age at which puberty begins and the rate of development differs between individuals.

Most girls begin puberty at 8-14 years of age, with 11 the average age. Girls develop quicker than boys. Most girls reach full sexual maturity within four years of starting puberty.

Boys tend to develop later than girls. Most boys begin puberty at 9-14 years of age, with 12 the average age. Most boys reach maturity within four years of starting puberty.



### Early or delayed puberty

If a child experiences puberty earlier than normal it's known as early or precocious puberty. Delayed puberty is where puberty occurs later than normal.

Normally this is nothing to worry about as everyone experiences puberty differently. However, in some cases, early or delayed puberty may be caused by an underlying condition. If there's no obvious cause, such as a long-term illness, tests may be needed to help diagnose any problems. If you have any concerns about this please visit our surgery.

## Being safe and

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## Sexual Health Contraception



**Contraception is free for most people in the UK, and there are 15 types to choose from. Find out what's available and where you can get it.**

Contraceptive methods protect against pregnancy. If you use contraception correctly, you can have sex without worrying about getting pregnant or getting someone pregnant.

Most methods of contraception won't protect you against catching or passing on a sexually transmitted infection (STI). Condoms are the only method that protects against both STIs and pregnancy. Protect your own and your partner's health by using condoms as well as your chosen method of contraception.

Always buy condoms that have the CE mark or BSI kite mark on the packet. This means they've been tested to high safety standards. Condoms that don't have the CE mark or BSI kite mark won't meet these standards, so don't use them.

### **Will they tell my parents?**

Contraception services are free and confidential, including for people under 16 years old. This means the doctor or nurse won't tell your parents or anyone else, as long as they believe you're mature enough to understand the information and decisions involved. However, if they believe there's a risk to your safety and welfare, they may decide to tell your parents.

### **Where to get free contraception**

You can get free contraception and condoms from:

- our GP surgery
- community contraceptive clinics
- some genitourinary medicine (GUM) clinics
- sexual health clinics – these offer contraceptive and STI testing services
- some young people's services

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## Sexual Health

There are lots of contraceptive methods to choose from. You should use a method that suits you, not just because your friends are using it. Don't be put off if the first method you use isn't quite right for you – you can try another.

Read more about the contraceptive options available on the NHS website to help you decide which one will suit you best:

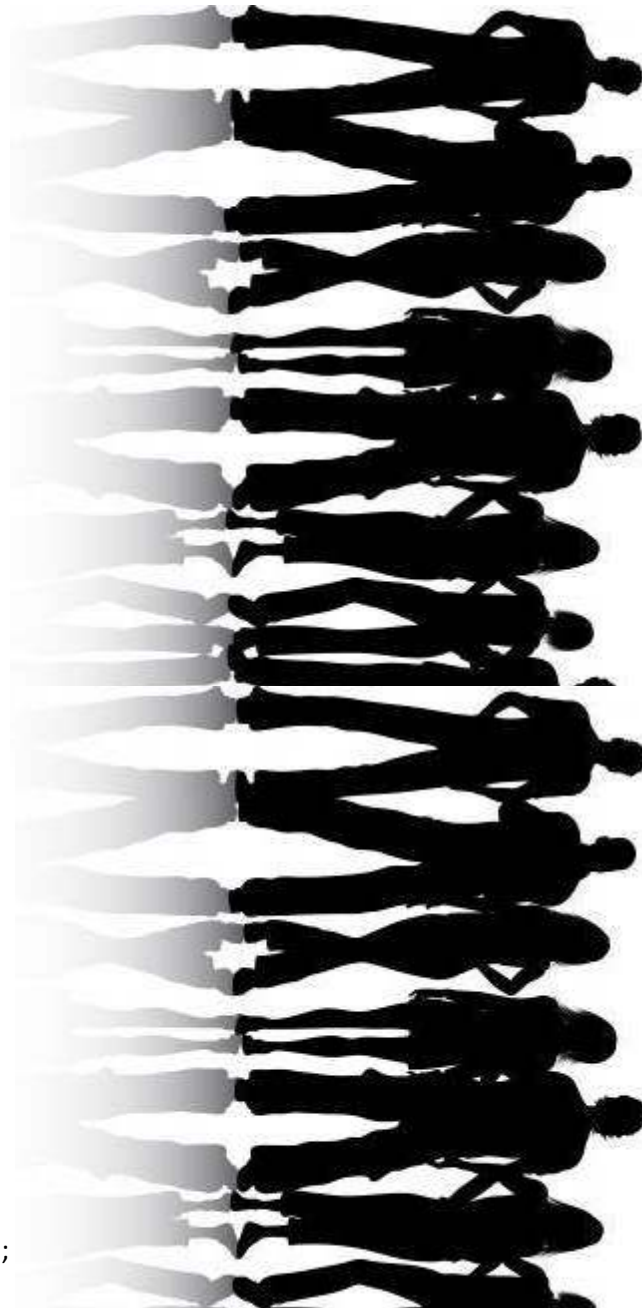
- [combined pill](#)
- [condoms](#)
- [contraceptive cap](#)
- [contraceptive implant](#)
- [contraceptive injection](#)
- [contraceptive patch](#)
- [diaphragms](#)
- [female condoms](#)
- [intrauterine device \(IUD\)](#)
- [Mirena \(intrauterine system or IUS\)](#)
- [natural family planning](#)
- [progestogen-only pill \(mini-pill\)](#)
- [vaginal ring](#)

Two types of contraception are permanent:

- [female sterilisation](#)
- [male sterilisation \(vasectomy\)](#)

You can also find out more about all 15 of these options by contacting:

- [Brook](#) – the young people's sexual health charity for under-25s
- [fpa](#) – provider of information on individual methods of contraception, including the [My contraception tool](#), which suggests types of contraception to suit you and your lifestyle; also provides information on common STIs, pregnancy choices, abortion, and planning a pregnancy
- National Sexual Health Line – 0300 123 7123





## Sexual Health Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Infections

If you suspect that you have a sexually transmitted infection (STI), don't panic. You simply need to get tested and treatment can then be given if it's needed. Many people with STIs don't get symptoms, so it's worth getting tested even if you feel healthy.



An STI can be passed from one person to another through sexual contact, including vaginal, anal and oral sex. You can get or pass on an STI whoever you're having sex with. Women can pass infections on to women, and men can pass infections on to men.

Many STIs can be cured with antibiotics. Some, such as HIV, have no cure, but can be treated to prevent them getting worse.

You can't tell by looking at someone (including yourself) whether they've got an infection, so it's important to get a check-up if you've had unprotected sex.

### Symptoms

Many people don't notice symptoms when they have an STI, including most women with chlamydia. If it's left untreated, chlamydia can affect your ability to get pregnant. Around 50% of women and 10% of men with gonorrhea don't have symptoms.

If you have any of the symptoms listed below, get tested.

In women and men:

- pain when you pass urine (pee)
- itching, burning or tingling around the genitals
- blisters, sores, spots or lumps around the genitals or anus
- black powder or tiny white dots in your underwear (this could be droppings or eggs from pubic lice)

In women:

- yellow or green vaginal discharge
- discharge that smells
- bleeding between periods or after sex
- pain during sex
- lower abdominal pain

In men:

- discharge from the penis
- irritation of the urethra (the tube where urine comes out)

These symptoms don't necessarily mean that you have an STI, but it's worth seeing a doctor so you can find out what's causing the symptoms and treat it. For example, it's possible to get thrush without having sex, but it can cause STI-like symptoms, such as soreness, itching and discharge. Thrush is easily treated.

### **Where can I get tested for STIs?**

You can get tested at:

- our GP surgery
- a sexual health clinic or genitourinary medicine (GUM) clinic
- some community contraceptive clinics some young people's sexual health services (call the Sexual Health Line on 0300 123 7123)
- Some pharmacies can also test for chlamydia.

Find out where you can get a [free chlamydia test](#) under the National Chlamydia Screening Programme (under-25s only).





## Sexual Health Common Myths

### Myths and facts about sex at a glance:

- There are a whole lot of myths out there about sex — so don't trust everything you hear.
- Women can get pregnant anytime semen gets inside the vagina or on the vulva.
- The best way to prevent STDs is to not have sex. If you do have sex, always use a condom or Sheer Glyde dam and get tested for STDs regularly.



Myth #1: Everyone at my school is having sex.

FALSE. The average age when people start having sex is 17. And even once people start having sex, most teens don't have sex very often. In fact, 30 percent of people haven't had sex by the time they turn 20. **So it's normal to wait until you're older to have sex.**

Myth #2: You can't get pregnant the first time you have sex.

FALSE. **You can get pregnant anytime you have vaginal (penis-in-vagina) sex.** If you're having sex without birth control, you can get pregnant — whether it's the first time or the 100th time. It's even possible for you to get pregnant before you have your first period. Bottom line: if you're going to have vaginal sex, use birth control to prevent pregnancy.

Myth #3: You can't get pregnant during your period.

FALSE. It's not super common, but **it's possible to get pregnant from sex you had during your period.** This is because sperm can hang out in your reproductive organs for SIX whole days, waiting for one of your eggs to come out.

Myth #4: You can't get pregnant if you have sex in the water.

FALSE. Lots of babies have been made in pools and hot tubs. You get zero protection from pregnancy by having sex in a pool, bath, or shower. That's because the sperm are still getting in the vagina during vaginal (penis-in-vagina) sex.

HOWEVER, sometimes people are scared of getting pregnant from swimming in a pool that a guy has ejaculated in. That's not going to happen. Sperm can't do the backstroke through the pool water, into a vagina, and cause a pregnancy. So if a guy ejaculates near but not on or in a girl in water, she won't get pregnant.

Myth #5: Douching after sex prevents pregnancy.

FALSE. Squirting water, soda, vinegar or anything else up your vagina after sex won't prevent pregnancy ... but it could give you an infection. **The only thing that will prevent pregnancy is using birth control every time you have vaginal (penis-in-vagina) sex.**

Myth #6: Birth control doesn't really work.

FALSE. **When used correctly, lots of birth control methods are super effective — like, more than 99 percent effective — at preventing pregnancy.** But if you don't use birth control correctly, it doesn't work as well.

Some methods, like the IUD and implant] are easy to use correctly — they're placed in your body and do their thing without the chance that you could mess it up. Other methods, like the pill, are a little harder because you have to remember to take it every day, try not to miss any pills, and keep getting your new packs on time. If you miss pills, you're



Condoms are 98 percent effective at preventing pregnancy when used correctly. And condoms are also the best way to avoid STDs. But you have to put the condom on before you start having sex, and keep it on the entire time you're having sex. While condoms can break, this usually happens because they're used wrong. Using extra lubricant with a condom helps keep it from breaking.

**The best thing to do is to use both a condom and another birth control method.**

Myth #7: You can't get STDs from oral sex.

FALSE. While most STDs are spread through vaginal (penis-in-vagina) and anal (penis-in-anus) sex, **unprotected oral sex can also put you at risk for STDs.** Things like HPV, gonorrhea, syphilis, herpes, and hepatitis B can all be spread through oral sex. HIV is less likely to be transmitted through oral sex.

To protect each other from STDs, it's a good idea to use condoms for oral sex on a penis (that's what flavoured condoms are made for!). And you can use Sheer Glyde dams, cut-open condoms, or plastic wrap for oral sex on a vulva.

Myth #8: You'd know if you (or your partner) had an STD.

FALSE. **Most people who have an STD never have symptoms.** So just because you and your partner don't have symptoms doesn't mean you shouldn't worry about STDs. People with STDs can pass them to others, even if they feel fine. And if left untreated, some STDs can turn into really dangerous infections and even lead to permanent damage (like infertility).

The only way to know if you have an STD is to get tested — don't wait until something seems off. Getting tested for STDs is quick and easy.

Myth #9: Getting an STD is the end of the world.

FALSE. A lot of STDs (like gonorrhea and chlamydia) can be cured with simple antibiotics you get from the doctor. **These curable, bacterial STDs work just like throat infections— easily fixed in a week or so with medicine.** STDs that are caused by viruses — like HIV, HPV, herpes, and hepatitis — can't be cured. These viral STDs work more like the flu or mono — there's no cure, but there is treatment to help with symptoms. **People with viral STDs can live long, healthy lives with the help of their doctor.**

Myth #10: If you get an STD once, you can never get it again.

FALSE. A lot of STDs can be cured with antibiotics. **But once they're cured, you can get them again.** So if you get treated for an STD, your partner(s) should be treated also — otherwise they could give the infection right back to you if you have sex again. And you should keep getting tested whenever you have unprotected sex or start having sex with someone new.