



When Will I Be Ready to Have Sex?

14? 16? 18? 25? When you've gone steady for 2 years? When you're in love? *Who knows!?*

There is no magic age at which you should be ready to be sexually active. Everyone and every relationship is different.

However, there are some things you should think about that can help you decide if you're ready whether you are male, female, gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, transgender, young or old, etc.

What is Sex?

Everyone seems to be talking about it, some people are doing it, but what exactly is it? Well, when we talk about sexual activity, we are talking about placing a penis or sex toy inside a vagina or anus, or oral sex, which is placing your mouth on another person's genitals or anus. All of these activities are different forms of sex, and they all have consequences. Basically, consequences are things that happen because of something we do. For example, when a person drives a car, there are good things and bad things that can happen. A person might get more freedom because he or she has learned how to drive, and they may feel that driving is a sign of growing up. One of the bad things that can happen when driving is an accident.

Everybody who drives a car is at risk for getting into an accident. That doesn't mean that all people will have car accidents, but the possibility is still there. Because there could be an accident when driving a car, people wear seat belts, and drive by the rules of the road. However, wearing a seat belt doesn't mean that there won't be an accident. Ultimately, a person wearing a seat belt might get some bruises if an accident were to occur, but by wearing a seat belt, it keeps them from getting really hurt.

Like driving, sex has consequences. Some are good, and some are not so good. But like wearing a seat belt when driving, we can always protect ourselves from the consequences of sex.

What are Some Consequences of Sex?

- Sexually transmitted infections
 - HIV/AIDS
- Feeling bad about yourself
- Unplanned Pregnancy

What are Some Good Things About Sex?

- Feel closer to your partner(s)
- Planned pregnancy
- Feel good about yourself
- Feel Pleasure

Why Do People Decide to Have Sex?"

Although it seems like everyone is sexually active, there are a lot of teens that have decided to wait before they become sexually active.

But how do you really know that you are ready to have sex?

There are lots of different reasons why a person decides to have sex, they may:

- Feel ready
- Be in love with their partner(s)
- Be curious
- Be horny
- Be drunk or high
- Think that it will help them become popular
- Want to have a baby

Keep in mind, that when you do decide to have sex, you will have to be naked. Ask yourself if you are comfortable with another person seeing you naked or seeing another person without any clothes on.

Sex can also be a little messy. People will get sweaty, and often sex is wet. Bodies of people with vaginas make natural lubricant (wetness) in the vagina, and those individuals with a penis ejaculate. Does this gross you out?

Are You Old Enough to Have Sex?

Some people have sex very young; others wait until they are married. Choosing to stay away from sex and sexual activity is called abstinence. The choice is yours. However, the law also has a say in how old you must be to **legally** have sex. The legal age of consent is 16 years old. Once you are 16 years old, you can have sex with any person you choose, provided that they are not in a position of authority (like a teacher or a sports coach). If you are 14 or 15 you can only consent to sexual activity with someone no more than 5 years older than you. At 12 and 13 years of age, you can only consent to sexual activity with someone no more than 2 years older than you.

Remember Those Consequences Mentioned Earlier?

If you think that you are ready for sex, you also need to think about how to protect yourself from the consequences. Condoms can protect you from infections. Condoms work for heterosexual, homosexual, bi-sexual, and transgender people. Everyone should learn to use a condom. Condoms should be used for oral sex, as well as penis to vagina and penis to anus sex. Condoms should also be used to cover sex toys.

If you live in St. John's, you can get free condoms from Planned Parenthood.

You may want to protect yourself from unplanned pregnancies. This means using birth control. You can get confidential help from Planned Parenthood on different types of birth control, such as the Pill, Depo, and condoms. Planned Parenthood also has a clinic where a doctor can prescribe birth control for you.

If you are in a relationship, it is also important to talk about all these things with your partner(s). You may be all set, condom in hand, but your partner may not be ready. Sex is also much better when you have both talked about sex, and all partners are ready to protect themselves from the consequences. It is also a good idea to find out what turns your partner(s) on. This is one of the most important (and best) parts of having sex...getting to really know your partner(s).

Sex can be a very good thing in our lives...if we are ready for the consequences and make our own decisions about our bodies.

Remember that there are alternatives to having sex. Individuals can still be close to each other when they kiss, and hug. Other couples like to use their hands to touch each other's genitals or give each other massages. That's okay too.

So, when are you ready to have sex? Only you can decide. It is a decision that has to be made because you feel you are personally ready, not because of peer pressure or pressure from a relationship. If you have further questions regarding sexual decision making or safer sex practices; or would like to see a health care provider regarding any sexual health matter, please contact us.

Sexual Health Questions? We Have Answers!

Location:

47 St. Clare Avenue, St. John's, NL, A1C 2J9

Hours:

Monday: 9:00AM-4:30PM
Tuesday: 9:00AM-4:30PM
Wednesday: 9:00AM-4:30PM
Thursday: 12:00AM-6:00PM
Friday: 9:00AM-4:30PM

Phone:

579-1009
Toll Free: 1-877-NO MYTHS
(1-877-666-9847)

Website:

www.nlsexualhealthcentre.org

Email:

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