

## Preventing unintended pregnancy

Pregnancy happens when a sperm and egg meet, fertilisation occurs, and the fertilised egg implants in the uterus (womb). Pregnancy can occur even with one act of sex, if it is your first time having sex, during your period, and even if the penis is withdrawn from the vagina before ejaculation.

### What is contraception?

Contraception is something that prevents pregnancy.

Methods of contraception available include:

- Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives (LARCs). LARCs are contraceptive methods that are highly effective, work for a long time, and are quickly reversible when you stop using them. LARCs include the contraceptive implant (the rod) and intrauterine devices (IUDs)
- Hormonal methods, such as the pill and the contraceptive injection
- Barrier methods-including condoms. (Condoms are the only contraceptive method that also protects you from STIs)

To discuss contraception and which method might suit you, see a nurse or doctor at SHFPACT, or see your GP.

### Emergency Contraception (EC)

Emergency contraception reduces the risk of pregnancy after unprotected sex. This may occur if you didn't use any contraception, or the contraception failed (such as a condom breaking or slipping off).

Emergency contraception can be tablets or a Copper IUD. You need to use EC as soon as possible after the unprotected sex occurs.

There are two different EC tablets available:

- **Levonorgestrel EC.** You need to take the Levonorgestrel EC **within 3 days** of sexual intercourse. **The sooner you take it, the better** because its effectiveness decreases over time.  
**Where can I get it?** In the ACT, you can get Levonorgestrel EC free from the Walk-in Centres, Canberra Sexual Health Centre and the Junction Youth Health Service in Civic. It is also available at most pharmacies and from SHFPACT for a low cost.
- **EllaOne** is the other EC available in a tablet. It is considered a little more effective than Levonorgestrel EC. You need to take it **within 5 days** of unprotected sex.  
**Where can I get it?** EllaOne is available from most pharmacies.

**The Copper IUD** is the most effective form of emergency contraception and is over 99% effective at preventing pregnancy. It needs to be inserted **within 5 days** of the unprotected sex. For more information, call SHFPACT on 6247 3077.

For more information on safe sex, contraception, STIs, and relationships, see the following websites:



**Play Safe**  
playsafe.health.nsw.gov.au/



**REACH OUT**  
https://au.reachout.com/relationships/sex



**The Line**  
theline.org.au



**Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT**  
shfpact.org.au

Do you need to talk to somebody about sexual health, relationships or wellbeing?

THE SERVICES BELOW ARE ONLY A CLICK OR CALL AWAY!



Sexual Health & Family Planning ACT



Headspace  
headspace.org.au



Canberra Sexual Health Centre  
health.act.gov.au/sexualhealth



A Gender Agenda  
genderrights.org.au



The Junction Youth Health Service  
anglicare.com.au/services/youth-family/health



Canberra Rape Crisis Centre  
crcc.org.au



Meridian Incorporated  
https://meridianact.org.au/



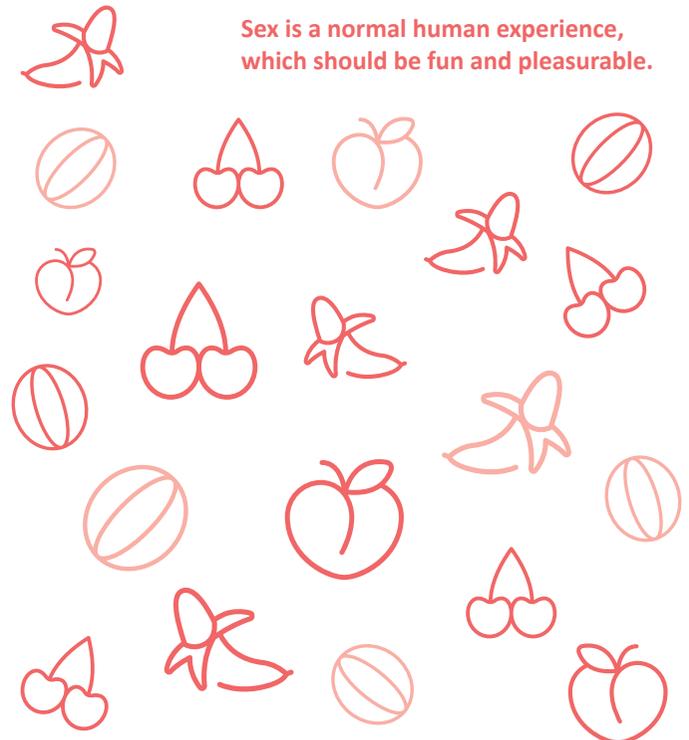
Lifeline  
act.lifeline.org.au  
Call 13 11 14



ACT Walk-in Centres  
Services include chlamydia screening and EC

Cover icons: Flaticon.com

SHFPACT is a health promotion charity (HPC) assisted with funding from the ACT Government. All donations to SHFPACT over \$2.00 are tax deductible.



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02 6247 3077

shfpact.org.au



## What is sex?

### Sex can mean different things to different people.

A better way to describe sex might be to say sexual activity, as sex means different things to different people.

Sex can include:

- Penetration of the vulva/vagina or anus by another person using any part of the body or any object
- Contact between a mouth and a vulva, penis, or anus.
- Any other sexual activity that may involve another person/people such as kissing and mutual masturbation

Sex is a normal human experience, which should be fun and pleasurable.

## What is safe sex?

Safe sex means taking care of your physical and emotional wellbeing while being sexually active.

Safe sex means:

1. Preventing the transmission of sexually transmissible infections (STIs) and blood borne viruses
2. Preventing unintended pregnancy
3. Only having sex with the enthusiastic consent of everyone involved
4. Treating everyone involved with respect
5. Feeling good about your decision

## Sex always requires consent.

**With any sexual activity everyone involved must give consent.**

- Consent is an essential part of respecting the person/people you are with, their sexual rights and yours.
- Consent needs to be informed, voluntary, mutual, and enthusiastic.
- Consent means that a person must do or say something that clearly shows they agree to something they fully understand. This can be with through words or behaviours.
- Consent must be given for every sexual encounter – every time.
- Consent is needed in every relationship, no matter how long you have been together.
- Consent is an active and ongoing process. It can be taken back at any time.
- It's essential to check in regularly to see if the person/people you are having sex with are still consenting to what is happening. Some ways to check in is to ask questions like:
  - “Do you want to do this?”
  - “Is this, okay?”
  - “Do you still want to do this?”
  - “Do you need a break?”
  - “Do you want to stop?”

- If a person doesn't respond – they are not giving consent, and sexual activity must stop.
- If a person communicates no or wants to stop– they are not giving consent, and sexual activity must stop.
- If a person is drunk or under the influence of drugs, they cannot consent, and there should be no sexual activity.
- If there is any doubt, confusion, or mixed messages about consent, you need to stop and talk.

If you have been sexually assaulted, either recently or in the past, please contact one of the following support services:

### Canberra Rape Crisis Centre

<https://crcc.org.au/> Ph. (02) 6247 2525

### Forensic and Medical Sexual Assault Care

Ph. (02) 5124 0000 (Canberra Hospital Switchboard)

### 1800Respect

<https://www.1800respect.org.au/> Ph. 1800 737 732

**In an emergency, please call triple zero.**

### A video about consent

Tea consent —  
An interesting take  
on consent



## Feeling good about your decision

### Sex should be a positive, pleasurable experience.

We can feel all sorts of pressures to have sex, and while we may say yes and mean it, it's also important to feel good about that decision.

Things that help us to make good decisions include:

- Getting correct information on safe sex.
- Thinking about your own boundaries and what feels right for you. Your boundaries may change over time so it's good to revisit them now and then. It's important to communicate about your boundaries with sexual partners and to learn what their boundaries are.
- Talking with sexual partners before and during sexual activity. Communication is critical, being honest and open is important and is part of a healthy relationship. You might talk about what you both like and do not like; what each of you is expecting from the sexual activity; the use of condoms; and contraception.
- Thinking about how alcohol or drugs might affect your decision. If you are drunk or under the influence of other drugs it affect your ability to make good decisions. If you are very drunk or are high, you cannot give consent.

## Preventing sexually transmissible infections (STIs)

### What are STIs, and how do you get them?

STIs are bacteria or viruses that are sexually transmitted. They are transmitted from one person to another through the exchange of body fluids (such as semen, vaginal fluid, anal secretions), and through skin-to-skin contact.

### How do you prevent getting STIs?

The best way to reduce your chance of getting an STI is to use condoms and dams.

### Should I get tested for STIs?

Getting tested for STIs is important, STIs do not go away by themselves and can cause significant problems if they are not treated. Regular sexual health checks are an essential part of looking after your health. They are quick and easy, usually just involving a vaginal swab or urine sample and a simple blood test. Most common STIs are easy to treat.

### How often should I have a sexual health check?

An annual sexual health check is recommended, or more often if you have more sexual partners. If you are in a long-term monogamous relationship and have both been tested, you do not need to get tested again unless one of you has a new sexual partner.

### Where can I get a sexual health check?

You can get a sexual health check at sexual health clinics, family planning clinics, or your GP.

See the list of services on the last page of this factsheet.



References: Contraception: An Australian clinical practice handbook 4th Edition  
Faculty of Sexual & Reproductive Healthcare of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists UK. <https://www.fsrh.org/home/>  
STI Guidelines for Primary Care: <https://sti.guidelines.org.au>  
Reachout: <https://au.reachout.com/relationships/sex>  
Playsafe: <https://playsafe.health.nsw.gov.au/>  
The Line: <https://www.theline.org.au/>