

SEXUAL HEALTH AND COVID 19

The [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) has issued guidelines for the prevention of COVID-19. One of the most important COVID-19 prevention strategies is to remain 6 feet/2 metres apart from others. **Any physical contact with another person, including sexual behaviours, can be high risk for getting or passing COVID-19.**

Sexual health and wellness are always important.

Here are some tips for how to enjoy sex and to avoid getting or passing COVID-19.

MASTURBATION

- Masturbation is low risk for COVID-19.
- Wash your hands and any sex toys you use before and after masturbation for at least 20 seconds with soap and water.
- Masturbation allows you to get in touch with your own sexuality and focus on your own sexual wellness.
- Masturbation can be a pleasurable way to relieve stress.

SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH HOUSEHOLD PARTNERS

Sexual partners who share a household, who do not show symptoms of COVID-19, and have taken precautions to avoid infection from outside their household might choose not to practice physical distancing within their home.

After assessing the risk of getting or passing COVID-19, if you have chosen to engage in sexual activity with your existing household partner(s), keep the following in mind:

- The COVID-19 pandemic is very stressful. Due to stress, some individuals may be less interested in or able to engage in sexual activity, while others may be more interested in sexual activity.
- Now more than ever, communication about sexuality can be important to maintain and enhance intimacy within a relationship.
- Consent to sexual activity by all partners is essential.
- Creating physical and emotional boundaries can be helpful for some. For others, focusing on connection and engaging in novel activities (whether sexual or not) together might be beneficial.

SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH NON-HOUSEHOLD PARTNERS

To maintain physical distancing, avoid physical sexual contact with people outside of your household. This includes leaving your home to meet new or existing sexual partners or having those partners come to your home. There are a number of options for non-physical sexual connections with new or existing sexual partners:

Sexting • **Online “virtual dates”** • **Phone sex**

These options provide opportunities to establish or enhance sexual communication with new or existing partners. This can help to build intimacy and contribute to satisfying and mutually pleasurable relationships while remaining safe during the pandemic.

SAFER SEX AND CONTRACEPTION

It's extremely important to practice safer sex (e.g., condoms with lubricant or dental dam use) to prevent sexually transmitted infection (STI) transmission during the COVID-19 pandemic. Access to health care for both the testing as well as the treatment of newly acquired STIs may be limited.

Some people may decide that they do not want to become pregnant during the pandemic. Condoms with lubricant are an effective form of contraception, which are easily accessible and can be ordered online.