



MEN'S SEXUALITY: MYTHS AND FACTS

Myth: Size matters!

Fact: Penises and testicles come in a variety of sizes and shapes. When they're not erect, penises appear to be quite different in size, but when they're erect their sizes are much more similar.

Since most men don't see each other's erect penises, they really have no way to realistically compare the size of their erect penis to that of other men. The myth, however, persists, and many men feel that they should be a certain size in order to "measure up." No wonder they may feel inadequate. The size of a man's penis has nothing to do with how much pleasure he feels, and it has little effect on the amount of pleasure for his partner as well.

Myth: Men are always ready and willing to have sex.

Fact: There are lots of times when both women and men don't feel like they want to have sex, and don't want to get "in the mood." Even though men may like sex, and even those men who like sex a lot, almost all of us, at one time or another, don't really feel like being sexually active. However this stereotype can operate to make men feel expected to perform even when they'd rather not, and put extra pressure on themselves in this way. They may feel like they can't say that they don't want to have sex. Men's aren't vehicles of sex and need to be okay in being willing to say *no* when they don't want to. By learning how to say no, the sexual activity they do participate in can be that much more enjoyable – for both men and their partners.

Myth: Very few men are virgins.

Fact: Sometimes guys will be less than truthful about how much sex they have had or have on a regular basis. While it is true that more than half of men have experienced sexual intercourse by the time they are 18, this number appears to be going down, and men are increasingly delaying sexual intercourse. In fact, as many as 1 in 4 men have not had sexual intercourse by the age of 19.

Myth: Sex is over when the man has an ejaculation.

Fact: This need not, and should not, be the case. Sexual activity involves two people and the sexual activity should continue until both partners are satisfied and ready to stop. Good sex involves ongoing communication and connection between the partners to make sure that they are doing what is mutually comfortable, exciting and pleasurable.

Furthermore, there's no reason why every sexual encounter has to include an orgasm or an ejaculation. Men may experience "blue balls" or "lover's nuts" if they experience an erection without ejaculation, these are not harmful conditions. Men will experience some discomfort, but the experience of building the relationship and being creative within the sexual activity can lead to a stronger relationship and better sex overall.

Myth: Using alcohol or marijuana is a stimulant.

Fact: Alcohol and marijuana may increase desire and reduce inhibitions (make you feel more like doing things), but this makes you at risk for doing something that you're not comfortable with, or doing something to someone else that they aren't totally comfortable with. Furthermore, alcohol and marijuana reduce the blood flow to the genital area and can decrease your sexual performance by making it difficult for you to maintain an erection or experience an orgasm.

Myth: Sex requires an erection.

Fact: This myth seems to have become even more wide-spread and believed more firmly since the introduction of Viagra and other impotence drugs. The fact is that sex involves a great deal of activities and most women and men report that the best sex involves creativity, fun, communication and partnership. Many men experience a lack of erection from time to time and this doesn't need to be a problem. In fact, being so *goal-oriented* about sex means that men can miss out on a lot of pleasure.

There are many things you can do to satisfy a partner and experience sexual pleasure yourself. Putting pressure on yourself to get an erection only makes it less likely that you'll have one.

Myth: All orgasms are "explosive, mind-blowing, and earth-shattering."

Fact: If you've been living in this culture with its movies and pulp fiction, you may have a very unrealistic idea of what an orgasm is all about. Orgasms vary in intensity and character. It's perfectly normal for them to feel different from one occasion to the next.

Myth: Men in relationships don't masturbate.

Fact: Although men tend to masturbate less frequently when they are in ongoing relationships, many men and women masturbate when their partner isn't available or just for their own pleasure. Some couples find that masturbating together enhances their level of intimacy. It's a matter of personal preference.

Myth: Girls can't get pregnant the first time they have sex.

Fact: Women can get pregnant every time they have unprotected sex with a man.

Myth: A girl can't get pregnant if she is having sex during her period.

Fact: A woman can get pregnant at any time during her menstrual cycle.

Myth: If a girl douches right after having sex, this will wash out all the sperm and she won't get pregnant.

Fact: Douching is one of the least effective methods of birth control. It does not get all of the sperm, and in fact, it may push sperm farther up in the reproductive tract.

Myth: A girl knows when, during the month, she can't get pregnant.

Fact: Although women often learn a lot about themselves and the particulars of their own menstrual cycle, no woman can know her menstrual cycle this well. A woman is at risk for getting pregnant every time she has unprotected sex with a man.

Myth: Once you've had gonorrhea (any other bacterial infection for that matter) and have been cured, you can't get it again.

Fact: Someone can become re-infected every time they have unprotected sex with another person who is infected.



Planned Parenthood of Kentucky

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