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# REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH IN COLLEGE STUDENTS

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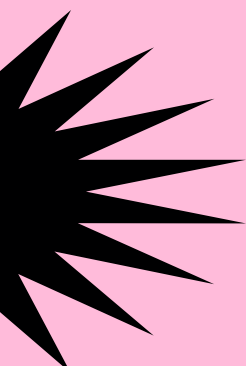
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# CHAPTER ONE

# WHAT IS A SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTION?



Sexually transmitted infections, or STIs, are a special class of infection that is spread through sexual contact. STIs can be bacterial, viral, or parasitic.<sup>1</sup>

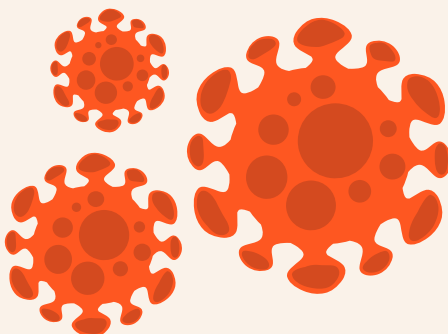
Bacterial STIs include chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis.<sup>2</sup>

Viral STIs include human papillomavirus (HPV), human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and hepatitis B.<sup>2</sup>

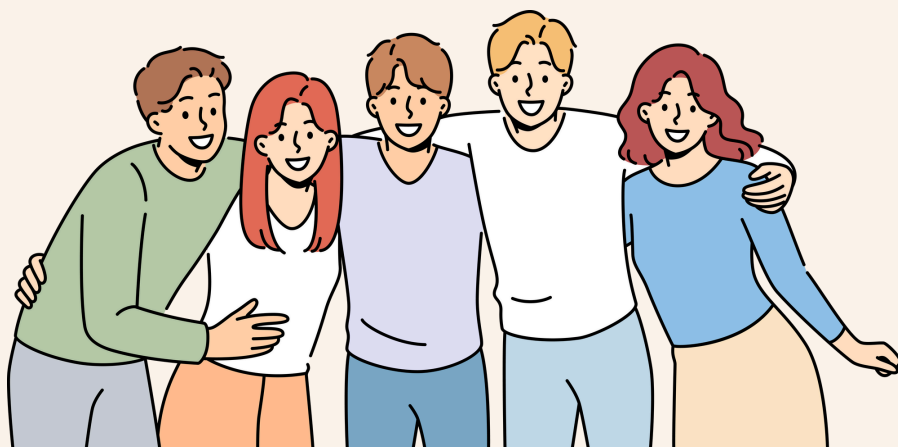
Parasitic STIs include trichomoniasis.<sup>2</sup>

There are other kinds of STIs that are less common. Each STI may present itself differently, but most STIs have common symptoms.

Make sure to get screened and consult a healthcare professional to gain more knowledge about the specific STI that you may have.



# HOW DO STIS SPREAD?



Most STIs have the same way of spreading.

STIs are spread through the actions of vaginal sex, oral sex, or anal sex.<sup>2</sup>

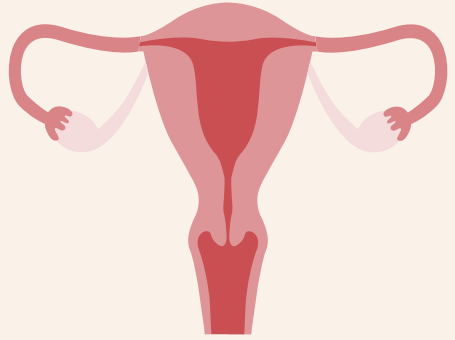
A person with an STI can spread it through contact with their genitals, rectum, or bodily fluids.<sup>2</sup>

Some STIs can even spread from skin-to-skin contact and contact with the infected person's mouth.<sup>2</sup>

# THE LONG-TERM

## CONSEQUENCES

Untreated STIs can cause long-term damage to one's body. It is important to regularly screen yourself, because many STI's may not have symptoms.



## REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Untreated STIs can cause damage to one's reproductive system and reproductive organs, especially the female reproductive system.<sup>8</sup>

Infertility, pregnancy complications, cancers, and organ damage may be a consequence of an untreated STI.<sup>8</sup>

## OTHER LONG-TERM EFFECTS

Other long-term effects may include HIV, chronic pain, and lifelong infections.<sup>8</sup>

Other types of organ damage can also occur, such as damage to the liver.<sup>8</sup>

Cold sores, which decrease quality of life, may also be a persistent effect of STIs.<sup>7</sup>

# COLLEGE CAMPUSES & STIS



A survey by Sesame conducted with 500 college students found that **1 in 4** students had an STI.<sup>4</sup>

College students are at a high risk for contracting STI's due to...

- Risky & unsafe sex behavior
- Limited resource access, such as STI screening
- Stigma
- Lack of sex education

Common STI's present in college campuses include chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, herpes simplex virus (HSV), and human papillomavirus (HPV)<sup>4</sup>



# CHLAMYDIA

Chlamydia is the most common sexually transmitted infection among college-aged students.<sup>3</sup>

## ASYMPTOMATIC

Many students are often not aware that they have contracted chlamydia because it can be asymptomatic.<sup>3</sup>

## RESOURCES FOR STI HEALTH

Many campuses may offer resources for STI health, including educational programs and campus health centers.

## PREVALENCE

A sample of 789 students were screened from colleges in Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. The chlamydia prevalence in this sample was around 9.7% . Students under 20 years of age were 66% more likely to be infected than older students.<sup>3</sup>



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# CHAPTER TWO

# PREVENTATIVE MEASURES



## Preventing STIs

To avoid catching or further spreading a STI it is important to have safe-sex practices like:<sup>1</sup>

- Practicing abstinence
- Limiting the number of your sexual partners
- Condoms
- Regular testing
- Vaccination
- Communication

### Practical tips:

1. Always carry condoms or protection
2. Seek medical advice when needed/possible
3. Educate yourself and others about STI prevention



# SIGNS & SYMPTOMS



- Sores or bumps on the genitals or in the oral or rectal area<sup>2</sup>
- Painful/burning urination<sup>2</sup>
- Discharge in the penis<sup>2</sup>
- Odorous vaginal discharge<sup>2</sup>
- Pain during sex<sup>2</sup>
- Fever<sup>2</sup>
- Rash<sup>2</sup>

# STI SCREENING

**Screenings are a protective measure in place to treat STIs before they get worse or spread to others.<sup>3</sup>**

STIs do not always present symptoms.<sup>3</sup>

If you are sexually active, it is recommended to have STI screenings at least once a year.<sup>3</sup>



Be prepared for your healthcare provider to ask you questions about your sexual activity:<sup>4</sup>

- “Are you currently having sex of any kind?”
- “What kind of sexual contact have you had?”
- “What protection methods do you use?”

# DIAGNOSTIC TESTING FOR STIS

If you are presenting with symptoms of an STI, it is best to test immediately.<sup>4</sup>

Abstain from any kind of sex until symptoms reside.<sup>4</sup>



## STI testing includes:<sup>2</sup>

- Blood tests
- Urine samples
- Fluid samples
  - Swab of the mouth
  - Swab of open sores

# TREATING STIS

Once you have been diagnosed with an STI, a healthcare provider will provide treatment

Be prepared for prevention counseling from your healthcare provider:<sup>4</sup>

- Prevention counseling is non-judgmental it is a simple overview of how to prevent the spread of STIs

## BACTERIAL STIS

Bacterial STIs can be treated with antibiotics. It is vital to take the entire dosage prescribed to you for symptoms to go away.<sup>2</sup>

## PARASITIC STIS

Parasitic STIs can be treated with antiparasitics, antibiotics, or antifungals.<sup>5</sup>

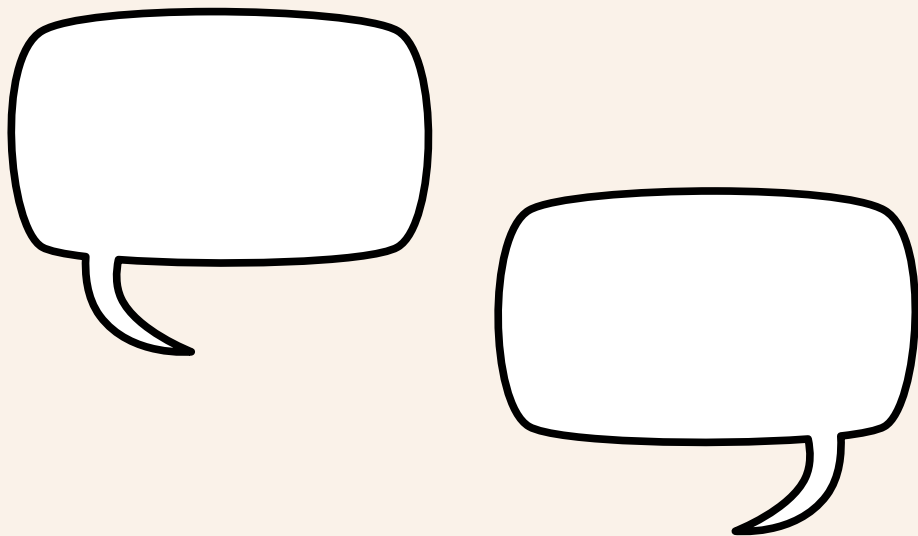
## VIRAL STIS

Viral STIs cannot be cured, but symptoms can be managed with antiviral medicine, healthy lifestyle and safe-sex practices.<sup>2</sup>





# HOW TO TALK TO YOUR PARTNER

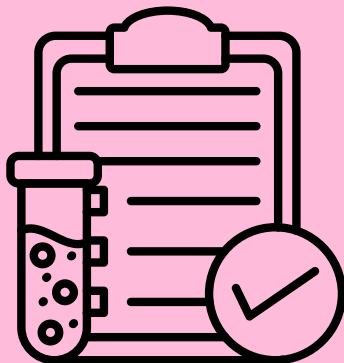


If you or your partner has contracted an STI, it is best that both you and your partner are tested

How to talk to a partner: <sup>6</sup>

- Be honest
- Remain calm
- Listen
- Talk to them about testing, treatment, and protection methods

# RESOURCES FOR STIS



## University of Georgia

### University Health Center:<sup>7</sup>

- Condom Express
- Laboratory services

### Health Promotion Department:<sup>8</sup>

- Education
  - Symptoms
  - Transmission
  - Risk Factors
- Counseling

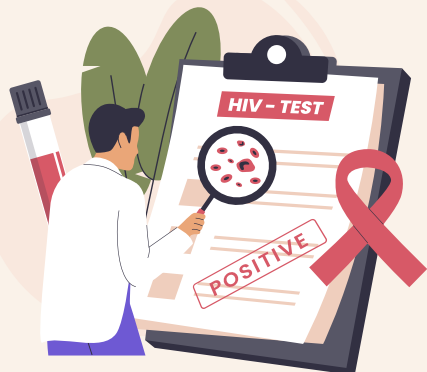
## Other:

### Center for Disease Control and Prevention:<sup>8</sup>

- Facts Sheets for each STI
- Prevention
- Testing type and frequency
- STI Program Resources
  - Management and Evaluation tips

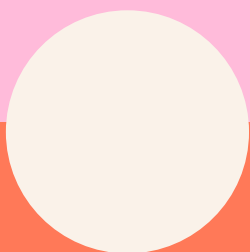
### Health Resources and Services Administration:<sup>9</sup>

- Public Health Service Act, Section 318
  - Authorizes STD funding
  - Pharmacy services
  - 340B University
    - Educational sessions



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# CHAPTER THREE

# UNDERSTANDING PREGNANCY?

What it is and how it happens

## Fertilization:

Sperm and egg come together and the sperm fertilizes the egg (fertilization). The fertilized egg, zygote, and implants in the uterus.<sup>1</sup>



## First Trimester

The embryo is formed. Major organs are starting to develop. Mothers experience beginning pregnancy symptoms: missed period, tiredness, etc.<sup>1</sup>



## Second Trimester

Pregnancy is starting to become more visible as the uterus grows. The baby's organs, hearing, and features continue to mature. Morning sickness symptoms and energy levels will increase.<sup>1</sup>



## Third Trimester

Baby is fully developed and ready to prepare for birth. Mother will likely experience contractions and kicking.<sup>1</sup>



# SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

## HOW TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN PREGNANCY AND PERIOD

The best way to differentiate between pre-menstrual symptoms (PMS) and pregnancy symptoms is to take a pregnancy test.<sup>2</sup>



## PREGNANCY SYMPTOMS<sup>2</sup>

- Missed period
- Morning sickness
- Fatigue
- Breast tenderness and fuller
- Frequent urination
- Light vaginal bleeding
- Light cramping



# PROTECTION AND CONTRACEPTIVES

## What are the most effective contraception methods?

### MOST EFFECTIVE<sup>3</sup>

#### Intrauterine Device (IUD):

- Last 3-8 years
- 0.2-0.8% chance of pregnancy

#### Implant:

- Lasts 3 years
- 0.05% chance of pregnancy

### LEAST EFFECTIVE<sup>3</sup>

#### Male Condoms:

- 18% chance of pregnancy

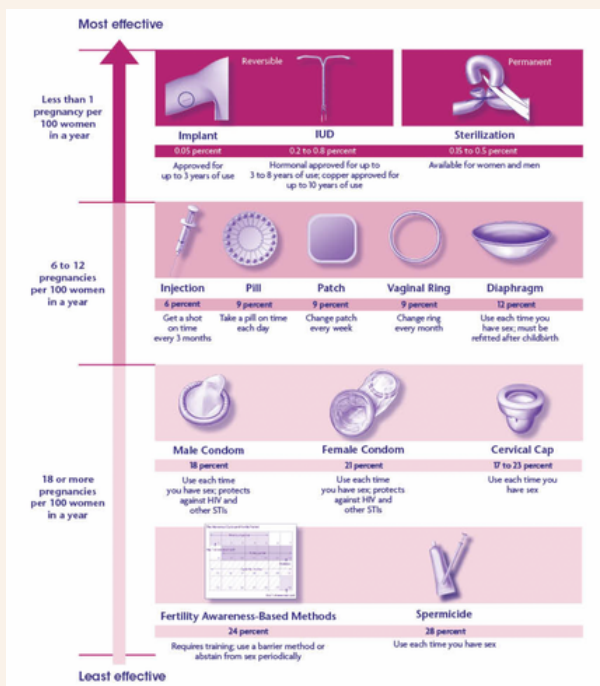
#### Female Condoms:

- 21% chance of pregnancy

#### Cervical Cap:

- 17%-23% chance of pregnancy

### MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS<sup>3</sup>

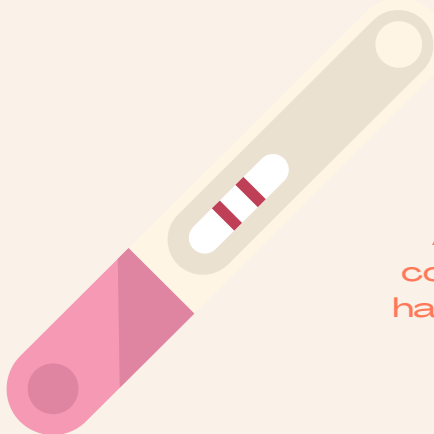


# COLLEGE STUDENTS' ROLE IN PREGNANCY

**A study found the prevalence of unintended pregnancy in sexually active female university students was 31.8%<sup>4</sup>**

College students are at a high risk for becoming pregnant due to...

- Risky & unsafe sex behavior
- Limited resource access, such as condoms/other forms of birth control
- Stigma
- Lack of sex education



About 50% of college students have unexpected pregnancy.<sup>4</sup>



# COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

“It is okay to drink alcohol”

It is never okay to drink when pregnant, as this can cause serious birth defects<sup>5</sup>

“If my periods are irregular, I can’t get pregnant”

You can still get pregnant if you have irregular periods<sup>5</sup>



“I can’t get pregnant if a partner ‘pulls out’ before ejaculation”

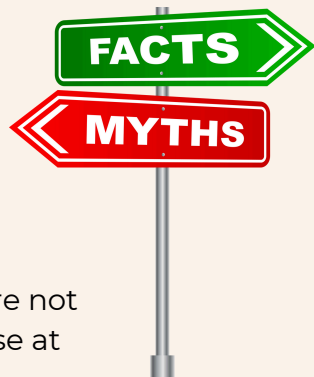
Pregnancy is still obtainable if partner does not use a form of birth control, pre-ejaculatory fluid can still cause pregnancy<sup>5</sup>

“Birth control does not fail”

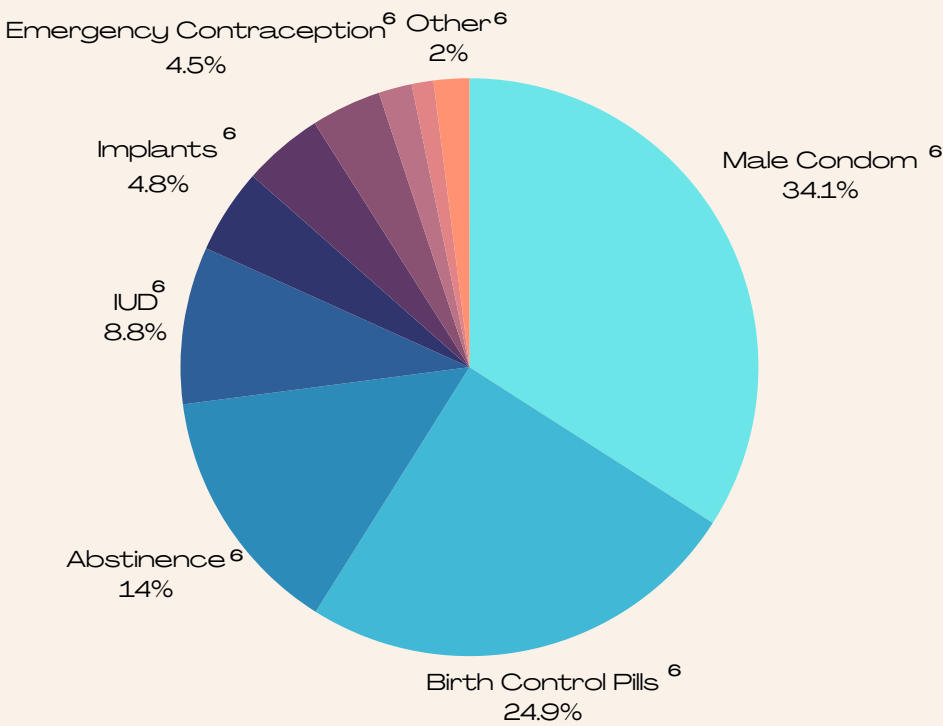
Birth control is not bulletproof, it is only 24.9% effective<sup>5</sup>

“The pill is effective after first time use”

Most birth control pills (can vary) are not effective until at least 2-3 days of use at the same time<sup>5</sup>



# MOST COMMON CONTRACEPTION METHODS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

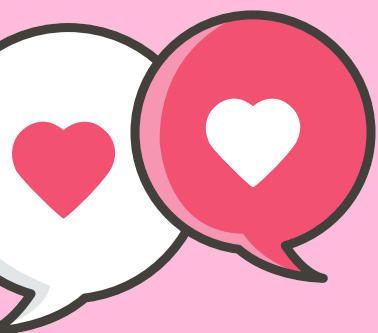


## What are the Most Common Contraception Methods used by College Students?

As of Fall of 2023, a survey given to college students shows that **male condoms** are the most common contraception methods used. This is followed by birth control pills and withdrawal methods.<sup>6</sup>

In 2022, 32% of **women** in the reproductive age use male condoms and 33% use oral contraceptives. In 2019, 49% of males and 39% of females in **high school** stated that male condoms were their primary mode of contraception.<sup>6</sup>

# HOW DO I TALK TO MY PARTNER ABOUT AN UNPLANNED PREGNANCY?



Nearly half of pregnancies in the United States are unplanned. Talking to your partner about an unplanned pregnancy is nerve-racking, but it is important to maintain clear and honest communication. This allows you to go through the stages of coping together and allows ample time to weigh your options about the pregnancy.

There is no perfect, step-by-step guide to handling this. Below are tips that will aide in easing anxious feelings about this process.

## **When?** <sup>7</sup>

- *A non-stressful period*
  - This may cause an undesirable reaction, stemming from a separate issue
- *Allowing plenty of time*
  - Rushing the conversation won't allow you and your partner to communicate your feelings efficiently

## **Where?** <sup>7</sup>

- *In-person*
- *A comforting place for both of you*

## **How?** <sup>7</sup>

- *Get in a calming mindset*
- *Phrase your words directly and positively, reminding them that this did not happen by yourself*
- *Allow your partner time to process*



# RESOURCES FOR UNPLANNED PREGNANCY

01.

## AMERICAN PREGNANCY ASSOCIATION<sup>8</sup>

Provides assistance for reproductive wellness through education, support, advocacy, and community awareness.

**Hotline: (800)-672-2296**

Mon-Fri: 7AM-10PM

Sat-Sun: 9AM-7PM

Visit

**americanpregnancy.org**

for question and concerns



02.

## EVALUATING YOUR OPTIONS

**Confirm** your pregnancy and talk to your partner. There are a few options available when dealing with an unplanned pregnancy:

- Keep and parent
- Adoption
- Abortion

Evaluate and decide what the **best option** is for you based<sup>8</sup> on where you are in your life.

03.

## UGA RESOURCES

### University Health Center-Health Promotion

- Condom Express
- Gynecology Clinic
  - 706-542-8691
  - Unplanned Pregnancy counseling services, nutrition, and some prenatal care
- List of obstetricians in the Athens Area<sup>9</sup>

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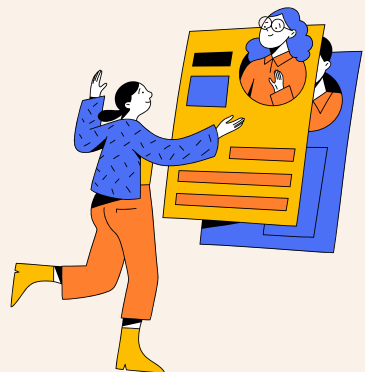
# CHAPTER FOUR

# CHAPTER 1 SUMMARY

- STIs are a specific class of infection spread by sexual activity, such as vaginal, anal, or oral sex.
- An STI left untreated could potentially cause long-term negative consequences on the body, especially the reproductive system.

STIs are very prevalent on college campuses. This is due to an increased level of unsafe sexual behavior, a lack of education, and stigma in utilizing resources.

It is important to get screened for STIs to prevent the spread of them!



# CHAPTER 2

## SUMMARY

- STIs are preventable. It is important to stay educated about safe-sex practices
- There are specific signs and symptoms that are caused by STIs
- It is best to have a screening at least once a year if you are sexually active, especially because STIs do not always present symptoms
- Testing can include blood, urine, or swab samples

Treatment depends on the type of STI you have. This can range from antibiotics, antivirals, or antifungals

Following a diagnosis of an STI, be prepared for you healthcare provider to have a talk about prevention counseling





# CHAPTER 3 SUMMARY

- Taking a pregnancy test differentiates between PMS and pregnancy symptoms
- The most effective contraception methods is an intrauterine device
- Prevalence of unplanned pregnancy in college students is 31.8%
- 34.1% of college students use male condoms as their primary contraception method

The majority of pregnancies in college students are unplanned.

It is important to educate yourself on efficient contraception methods and to differentiate between menstrual and pregnancy symptoms.



# CONCLUSIONS

## Reproductive Health

College students are the most affected by STIs, yet the least informed about topics surrounding reproductive health. Education and the promotion and resources are the basis of STI and pregnancy prevention.

STIs are preventable and treatable. While not all STIs can be cured, there are options for medicines and symptom management. Always ensure you are keeping yourself and others safe. Using protection and having regularly screenings are most important for prevention.

Pregnancy is preventable in college students. There are many effective contraceptive methods for both men and women to ensure safety. Safe-sex practices involve caution and communication from both partners.

Whether a partner is casual or long-term, it is best to have open communication about safe-sex practices in a comfortable and understanding environment.