

Read the Guide

PRIMED:

The Back Pocket Guide For Transmen
and the Men Who Dig Us

Making it

This is a really exciting time for trans communities and this resource is one of the first of its kind. There is limited information available for trans people around sexual health and many misconceptions in various communities, including trans, LGBTQ and mainstream. This resource is an effort to combat this, to bring together important information and make it available to transmen so that we know what risks we are taking, what choices we have, what questions we should ask and to remind ourselves that our health and bodies matter. This is by no means exhaustive; there are many other issues that we could have included. We want this to be a work in progress, something that will grow and change as more research is done and more people get involved.

The Words

The biggest challenge in writing this resource was, "how can we make a sexual health resource dealing explicitly with fucking, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), Hepatitis and HIV while at the same time, using language that is clear and respectful to the wide range of transmen who will read it"? This wasn't easy. Most safer sex resources are not aimed at trans people, let alone transmen or gay/bi/queer transmen. There is no consistent language to use regarding body parts or identities. Even the use of the term "transmen" is not without controversy as there are many terms to describe people who were assigned female at birth but who live as men or male.

We tried to make a resource to talk about our bodies that made us feel comfortable. Still, we have so many different words to describe our genitals, some of us use words like dick or cock, others feel fine with cunt or pussy. We all know clever terms like cockpit and manhole and more abstract words like stuff, pieces and junk. Because there is no consistent term used by everyone, we use the word "front" or "frontal" to describe what is medically referred to as a vagina. In certain cases, we've used terms like "vaginal fluids" because we were unsure of how to discuss these aspects of our experiences with words that are comprehensive and respectful.

Since this resource was developed from our community, we have chosen the word non-trans to describe gay men who are not trans identified. There are other terms for this currently in use, including bio guy, biological male or cisgendered. However, we felt that bio- or biological sort of implies that transmen are not biological, which isn't true. Cisgendered has not yet been fully embraced and can be confusing to people who have never heard it before. Besides, when else do we get to privilege trans identities and bodies?

We have worked to be respectful and innovative, as well as clear and concise. We know that language is not static. If you are offended or don't see yourself in this resource, we apologize. This is part of our process as well as a process that is happening in trans and gay communities across North America. We hope you find this useful and engaging. This resource exists for you, so please send us your suggestions so we can make the next one better.

{mospagebreak title=Getting Started}

Getting Started

Who Are We?

Trans is an umbrella term for all kinds of identities. There is no way we could offer you an inclusive list without forgetting someone, for this reason we use transmen to refer to people who were assigned female at birth but who are living as men or as male. There is no one way to be a transman. Some of us pass, and some of us don't.

Passing“l’d say passing to me isn't essential, the piece that’s essential to me is, if I come out to you and you continue to treat me as male. Can I play in my body as a guy and be perceived and responded to as a guy? That matters. If someone is going to make me into a girl in their mind with their behaviour, it’s not happening.”

“Passing” is being recognized by others as the gender that you were not assigned at birth. For transmen, this means being seen as male. Passing is a matter of perception, the way that people perceive and treat your gender in day-to-day life and unfortunately, passing does not always go hand-in-hand with your gender. You can feel male or identify as a man and not pass, or only pass some of the time. There’s lots of ways that transmen express their masculinity, from binding their chests to changing their speech patterns to taking testosterone and having surgeries. Some transmen actively choose not to pass. Possibly they are trying to fuck with the gender binary, or they want to be seen as queer or they just don't care. There is often an emphasis on passing in trans communities but it can be helpful to remember that passing does not make you more of a man.

"I think passing for me, it makes a big difference. It makes a big difference to the men that I've been with that I appear or pass very well as a man"

For many transmen who are looking to fuck, or have relationships with other men, passing can be a huge issue. The reality is that gay and queer male communities generally respond more positively to transmen who pass. Some questions you can ask are, how does passing effect the decisions you make in regards to your sexual health? What does the pressure to pass mean for you when you're making choices about the sex you're going to have? Whether you pass or not, it's a good idea to think about if and when you will tell people you are trans.

Disclosure "I would say part of what I get off on is that it feels dangerous and risky and certainly there are guys in the community who have a negative reaction to this [being trans]."

When should you tell someone you're trans? Do you have to tell people you're trans? These are questions that we ask ourselves all the time and unfortunately, there are no easy answers. Transmen are men. But some non-trans gay men don't know anything about our bodies or our identities and they may say insulting or offensive things.

For transmen, if you are passing or not, you'll need to make a decision about whether you want to tell the person you are fucking that you are trans. There can be pros and cons to both disclosing and not disclosing. Each person will make their decision based on what kind of sex they want to have, where they are, if they feel comfortable and/or safe, and many other reasons.

If you decide to disclose, here are some things to consider:

- Are you in a space that is comfortable and/or physically and emotionally safe?
- Can you easily leave the situation?
- Are you prepared to educate someone who might not know a lot about trans people?

If disclosure goes badly:

- Do you have a place to go or can you leave the situation safely?
- Do you have support from friends or family?
- Can you deal with possible sexual/emotional rejection?

A lot of transmen never disclose. Other transmen disclose and continue to have great sexual experiences. It's hard to tell how a situation will play out but consider this an opportunity to tell your future partner how they can touch your body and what kind of sex you want to have.

Cruising

Cruising can be a great way to hook up for casual sex. Still, every time you cruise you face a variety of outcomes: the chance of a good time, great sex, bad sex and everything in between. Cruising also comes with the possibility of rejection. Fear of rejection can lead some guys to take sexual risks when they worry that the guy they are with will reject them if they insist on safer sex. Thinking in advance about how you will cope with rejection may help you to avoid situations where you feel pressured to compromise your safety for a chance at sex or intimacy.

Some General Tips for Cruising:

- Fucking under the influence: Some guys have a harder time playing safe when they are using drugs or alcohol. Others do not. If you have sex while drunk or high, think ahead about whether you are able to make the same choices you would make sober and plan accordingly. It can help to have safe sex supplies visible during sex to remind you and to signal to your partner you want to be safe.
- Protect yourself: Always carry condoms, water-based lube, and other safe sex supplies you need while cruising; don't expect the other person to have them regardless of whether you are the top or bottom (person getting fucked).
- Avoid flossing or brushing your teeth at least 30 minutes before you have oral sex as it can cause bleeding and irritation in your mouth, which increases risk of HIV transmission.
- Decide ahead of time if you are going to disclose that you are trans. Be prepared if you are outed by someone.
- Avoid body shaving. If shaving is part of a sex scene, do not share razors and avoid body fluids, especially cum or vaginal fluids on the parts of your body you have shaved.

Bar/Nightclub

Bars and nightclubs are common places for cruising. Some gay clubs are trans friendly and others are not. If you can, talk to other transmen about their experiences at different bars or try to find the information online.

Tips:

- Talking to Strangers: If you're leaving with someone tell a friend or introduce the person to your friends.
- Sneaking a fuck: You might be asked to leave by management or security if you are caught having sex. Some clubs allow for this and others do not. Legally the law has shifted in Canada since 2005 so that back room sex in a gay

establishment is not generally considered illegal, especially in the context where it is obvious to people that if they go into a certain area where sex is happening. This does not prevent police from laying charges that are later withdrawn, especially if they receive community complaints and feel they need to react. While it is not true that anything goes, sexual acts are much more permissible now than before.

Parks & Public Washrooms

If you cruise in parks, be aware of your surroundings. For example, beer bottles might indicate that people are there to party and not to cruise. Try and read the body language of the person you're cruising and be careful. Cruising often starts in public places, like parking lots or nature trails, but the actual sex takes place in more isolated areas.

Some transmen who cruise decide not to disclose that they are trans. It is easy to give a blow job in a park and still pass. It is not uncommon for some guys to only suck dick and to not allow other guys to touch their genitals, whether they are trans or not. It is okay to decide ahead of time what you want to do and to stick to that in the moment. Sometimes, this can mean we lose a sexual opportunity because a guy wants something we are not prepared to do. Remember, there is always another guy coming along shortly and he may be into the same things you are!

Tips:

- Avoid carrying a lot of money and bank/credit cards.
- If you can, ask people who cruise or check online to see if there are any known problems with the cruising areas you use, like a heavy police presence, what the crowd is like, what you can expect, etc.
- Try cruising with a friend for mutual safety. You may split up to get action separately, but you're still in it together. Look out for one another. Carry a cell phone so you can call each other if something goes wrong.
- It is illegal to have sex in a public park or washroom. You can be charged with a criminal offence if you are caught or turned in. Always stay aware of your surroundings and be cautious about moving too quickly sexually until you have a signal from the other guy that he is into sex. Often, guys will make eye contact or touch their genitals through their pants to signal that they want to have sex. In a washroom, guys will sometimes tap their foot in the stall next to you to indicate they are cruising. If a guy is cruising at a urinal, he will likely start to stroke his cock subtly to show his interest. It can be smart to wait until the other guy makes a more overt sexual move, like reaching over to touch your genitals or taking his dick out of his pants. That way you know he is less likely to be a cop and he wants to play.

Bathhouses

Bathhouses are another common place where men go to have casual sex. In some cities, bathhouses are legally licensed spaces that are considered private (except where they serve alcohol). For those who have never been to one, bathhouses can be the sexual equivalent of a dinner buffet. Bathhouses have various rooms for different activities: rooms/cubicles, dark public rooms, public shower and toilet areas. Some will also have wet & dry saunas, gym rooms, porn video rooms, whirlpools, etc, all with the purpose of getting off. In addition to other sexual play spaces, there may also be non-sexual relaxation areas.

A lot of bathhouses have either formal or informal policies that ban transmen. A formal policy usually means "men only" and that sometimes excludes people who don't have flesh cocks. This can be a problem for transmen who haven't had genital surgery and who don't have legal identification with proper gender designation.

Informal policies are more about the attitudes to or treatment of transmen in the bathhouse and the way that certain bodies/body parts may not be welcome. If you haven't had chest surgery or when you attempt to sign-in you might be made to feel uncomfortable.

It is important to know that just because a bathhouse is an indoor, private space does not mean it is free of violence or harassment. Men of all sexualities, values and political perspectives go to bathhouses and it is not uncommon for men to experience racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination in the space. If you experience any problems, report them to bathhouse management. If they do not back you up, report them to community agencies with trans or HIV prevention programs that work in bathhouses. These agencies may have a relationship with the managers and can assist you in addressing concerns you may have.

Tips:

- If you don't pass you might not get through the door. If you do pass, you still might face harassment when you are inside.
- Most men in bathhouses walk around with a towel around their waist, but otherwise naked. Some bath houses will not let you be fully clothed when cruising; however, you can be partially clothed in most bath houses, and some non-trans guys do that too. Sometimes, wearing pants or other clothes is a way for sex workers to signal they are working in the space, so don't be offended or shocked if you are clothed and someone indicates payment for play. If you have chest surgery scars and feel self-conscious about them, chest harnesses or leather vests are acceptable attire in most bathhouses.
- There is often not a lot of verbal negotiation in a bathhouse. Often, guys will set their boundaries through touch, pushing unwanted hands away. If you want to "give" sexual pleasure, just remember there are a lot of non-trans gay guys who also really get-off on giving and don't expect any reciprocation. Or you can get in front of a

glory hole (where guys put their dicks through) and give as much head as you want.

- Check yourself for sores and rashes, which increase your risk for HIV transmission.
- Wash your hands regularly with warm water and soap and do not put your hands near your face or mouth, especially if you like to play in guy's asses with your fingers. Avoid over-using alcohol based hand sanitizers as they can dry out your skin and cause skin cracks.
- Avoid sharing towels. Make sure your towel is between yourself and the bench inside the sauna/steam rooms to avoid bacteria or infections.
- Even though many bathhouses offer free condoms, it's a good idea to bring your own condoms and lube as well.
- Consider showering between sexual partners. Some bathhouses have private showers that will allow you to remain safe, stealth, and healthy. You can learn about the specific amenities of a bathhouse through their websites or by calling ahead.

Meeting Online

The internet is a great place to find people to hook up with. Online communities, dating sites and online personal ads give transmen the opportunity to meet people for friendship or to find casual sex. For most of these websites, you can do online searches and see if there are other transmen on the site or if that particular website is trans friendly. Whatever the situation, keep in mind that it's the person you're connecting with – not the website. Just because the site is safe, doesn't mean the person is.

Tips:

- Decide ahead of time if you're going to disclose your trans status. You can do it in your online profile, in emails or in person.
- If you disclose, be prepared to answer questions about your gender and your body. For some people this can be an opportunity to let people know what you want sexually and what your expectations are for the encounter.
- If you're nervous about meeting in person, cybersex and webcams can really break the ice. These online approaches to sex can be fun and help you be more comfortable about having sex (on or off the internet).
- If you're inviting someone over to your apartment, meet them in the entrance lobby so you avoid giving out your entry code and apartment number.
- If you decide to meet up with the person, make sure that someone knows where you're going and that you have some way of contacting them if the situation is not what you were expecting.
- Be clear that you want safer sex and be prepared to assert that when you get together with your hook up. Some guys will say they are into safer sex and then when they get together will try to have unsafe sex. This may be particularly true if the guy you're with believes that trans guys are much less likely to have HIV.
- Know that guys with HIV will not necessarily disclose their HIV status. HIV carries a great deal of stigma and discrimination. The fact that a guy is willing to have unsafe sex with you does not mean anything about his HIV status. He may have HIV and think that you do too or that it is your responsibility to insist on safer sex if you want that. He may not have HIV and think that you don't either. And he may have HIV and not know it. About one-third of gay guys in Ontario who have HIV do not know it

{mospagebreak title=Myths About Transmen}

Myths About Transmen

Transmen Aren't at Risk for HIV

This is a really common myth. If you have unprotected sex you are at risk. This is because it is easy for cum, blood, or vaginal fluids that have HIV in them to be absorbed into your body during unprotected fucking. Think about the sex you have or want to have. Educate yourself about the risks associated with those sexual activities and learn about ways to reduce your risk while still enjoying the sex you want.

Transmen Don't Have Sex with Other Men

Like all men, we identify as straight, bisexual, gay, queer, pansexual, asexual, etc. There is a misconception that if you are a transman, you will automatically only want to sleep with women. Some of us do. However, some of us like sleeping with other men, trans and non-trans.

All Transmen Are Bottoms

This myth stems from the fact that people assume we don't have cocks. Not only do some of us have surgeries that allow us to penetrate our partners with our genitals but there are also other options, like strap-ons, dildos and our hands that we use to fuck with too. The way our genitals look doesn't determine whether we will be a top or a bottom. There are a lot of transmen who get off by being fucked, while others like fucking. Some will switch, giving and receiving depending on the time and person(s) we are hooking up with. Still others like to have sex without any kind of penetration.

{mospagebreak title=Doing it Safer}

Doing it Safer

Risk Reduction

There is still a lot we don't know about HIV and STI transmission in regards to the bodies of transmen. We're going to talk about different levels of risk for HIV. No one is perfect and everyone deals with risk in their lives in different ways and for different reasons. In the next section we're going to give you some info and tips to keep you in prime fucking condition.

No Risk Activities

Transmission happens when the HIV virus gets into your bloodstream from someone else's blood, cum, vaginal fluids, menstrual blood or breast milk. This means that there's NO risk of HIV transmission from things like coughs, sneezes, mosquito bites, toilet seats, swimming pools, water fountains, sharing eating utensils or casual contact.

Other no risk sexual activities include:

- Hugging/kissing
- Sensual massage
- Dry fucking (pressing your genitals against someone else through clothes, as long as no fluids contact the skin)
- Jerking yourself off (masturbation) is safe
- There are ways to lower your risk while having a hot time. Risk reduction means keeping yourself healthy so you can keep fucking, and keep enjoying it.

Safer Sex

Other than no-risk activities, there will always be some risk of HIV and STIs when you have sex. It's important to think about what you want to do (or might want to do in the future) and get an idea of what the risks are before you make a decision in the heat of the moment.

Please check the back of the resource for more info on STIs you can get during sex.

Tips:

- Have a stash: Make sure you have a supply of the kind of safer sex materials you think you might want to use. Keep condoms, barriers (dental dams/plastic wrap), lube and gloves in an easily accessible place. Don't just keep them at home, but think about what happens when you go out too.
- Be upfront: Inform a partner about what you will and won't do sexually. This isn't always an easy conversation to have, but it means that when you're in the middle of things, you won't have to stop the action.
- If you don't fuck sober, fuck smart: Remember, for some guys, when they are drunk and/or high it can be harder to make clear decisions and stick to them.
- Take care of the goods: Remind yourself that you need to care of your body as well as the body of the person (or people) you're planning on hooking up with. Regular STI testing is an important component of good sexual health. You should also get an HIV test as part of your routine health care.

Sometimes We Don't Have Safer Sex

Most queer or gay guys play safe most of the time, but it is not uncommon for some guys to have unsafe sex. For some it's rare or on occasion. For others it's more frequent. Transmen are no exception. Unsafe sex can happen for lots of reasons. Sometimes it's just accidental or we are caught up in the moment. Sometimes we are drunk or high and make different choices from when we're sober. Other times we are really upset and don't really give a shit or are really happy and feel invincible. In the needs assessment we did we found transmen face some particular barriers to having safer sex. Here are some of them:

Internalized Transphobia: Feeling Lucky to Get Sex "I think many (trans)guys go through what I did, which was that self-deprecating, 'wow, you'll sleep with me. Whatever you want to do is fine'"

Sometimes we feel we're lucky if other guys want to sleep with us and we get validation as guys and as gay men. There is a focus in gay communities on flesh cocks and the bodies of non-trans men. This can make us have a low sense of self-esteem and self-worth if we don't see ourselves represented and frequently we feel like we don't deserve to be thought of as hot and sexy. If you are horny and want to get laid it's easy to take what you can get. This sometimes means we have sex in a way that might be risky, let people do what they want so they won't reject us or we don't feel confident enough to say stop or suggest safer sex.

Fighting these feelings is really difficult and usually takes more than just saying, "I deserve this attention" or "I'm worth fucking." There are no easy answers. It might help to remember that even in gay communities of non-trans men there is a lot of variation, from cock size and weight, to hair distribution and height. Non-trans gay men also deal with a lot of these feelings of low self-esteem.

Communication Problems: No Words for Our Body Parts "I think it's harder to negotiate condom use when you have trouble talking about your body"

Some transmen have a really hard time talking about our bodies or genitals. We might want to have sex in certain ways but don't have the words to ask for it or know how to communicate this to our partners. If there is a problem acknowledging our genitals it can be really hard to look at or touch them to protect ourselves and our partners.

Safer Sex Is Seen As Boring Sex'At some point I was just like…it like ruined the moment. Because it was exciting and fun and I was having fun and then you have to start talking about it and have to argue about it and have to be rational and go back to the real world or whatever. And you know, sometimes talking just ruins things”

Safer sex requires some communication to ask for what we want and that can sometimes seem like a mood killer. It's not always hot to stop in the middle of everything to have a conversation about what we will and won't do and about what barriers we're going to use. Even if when we are clear at the beginning of the hook up about this, in the heat of the moment we sometimes feel pressured or unable to assert what we already decided. This is a difficult situation and you shouldn't beat yourself up about it. If you don't want to stop or use barriers there are still things you can do and say that can help reduce your risk like, 'let's jerk each other off' or 'shoot your load on my chest'

Feeling Safe: Not Recognizing Our Risks'I definitely will forgo safer sex with other [transmen] whether I know them or not'

There is the assumption that transmen are low risk for HIV and STI transmission. It follows then, that transmen who are fucking other transmen might think that we are low risk. This might be true, depending on the sex we are having but it is not automatically true. Risk has less to do with identity and more to do with whether there is fluid exchange.

Making Safer Sex Easy and Fun

- Pillow Talk: Have the safer sex conversations during foreplay and the earlier stages of excitement, when you and your partner(s) will both be thinking clearer and able to make decisions. Fondling and rubbing while discussing safer sex can serve as a reminder that safer doesn't make it any less hot. Be clear that you want safer sex.
- Put safer sex on the table: Keep safer sex supplies close to where you'll be fucking and they will be visible to you and your partner(s). Some guys do this as a way of avoiding having to actual talk about safer sex. If you put the stuff out in the open, your partner will get the message that you expect safer sex. If you do talk about it, having it out in the open can be an opening to raise the issue. The more comfortable you are with bringing up safer sex practices, the more likely you'll be able to communicate confidently about how you like to fuck.
- Sexy, dirty and safe: Make safer sex appealing to you and your partner(s) by keeping it fun. Ask your partner to do three dirty things that involve safer sex. Experiment with new things and make safer fucking exciting. There's nothing better than being able to expand your sexual horizons while reducing the risks at the same time.
- Beyond rubbers: Make condoms a sexy and enjoyable part of sex for both yourself and your partner(s). Try putting on a condom with your mouth or ordering your partner to do it. Be careful with teeth, as not to tear or puncture the condom. Condoms come in all varieties of flavored, textured, colored and otherwise 'upgraded' forms; they're not your everyday rubbers anymore.
- Staying hard: Know that some guys have difficulty using condoms. It is not unusual for a guy to lose his erection when he puts on a condom. This can create performance anxiety and embarrassment, and can lead some guys to have unsafe sex rather than risk losing their erection or not being able to perform. If your partner's dick goes softer with the condom, let him know that's no problem for you. Make light of the situation and use it as an opportunity to do more of what got him hard in the first place. Tell him to keep the condom on and you'll play together to get him hard enough to fuck you.
- Staying strong: Some guys feel that condoms are a barrier to pleasure and intimacy. Some guys like to cum inside their partners or have their partners cum inside them. Be prepared to assert your desire for safer sex if you have a partner who is pushing the boundaries and wants to fuck you without a condom. Think of other ways to create intimacy, closeness, and pleasure that don't require you to drop the condoms.

{mospagebreak title=The Basics}

The Basics

What is HIV? What is AIDS?

The virus known as Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) enters your bloodstream and attacks your immune system. AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome – a condition or state of health that arises when HIV has killed enough of your white blood cells to cause more serious health complications

How is HIV linked to AIDS?

HIV attacks the white blood cells in our body's immune system, which is our defense against infections and diseases. This can weaken our immune system over time. By damaging the white blood or CD4 (also known as T4 or T-helper) cells, a person with HIV can lose the protection of their immune system and begin to experience health problems. How it affects a person's health varies from individual to individual and many people who have been diagnosed with HIV live long and healthy lives. Someone is diagnosed with AIDS when they meet certain medical criteria. There are treatments available now that have greatly improved the ability of people with HIV to fight the infection and live longer

lives.

How do you get HIV?

HIV is spread when one person's blood, cum, precum, vaginal fluids, menstrual blood and breast milk, enter into another person's bloodstream. This often happens when these fluids are absorbed through the mucous membranes of the body (ass, vagina, throat) during sex.

Who gets HIV/AIDS?

Anybody. There's no such thing as immunity to HIV or AIDS. Unfortunately, there are no indepth studies to date about rates of HIV among transmen. However, some research has shown that transmen (straight and gay/bi/queer identified) are at risk for HIV, Hepatitis A, B, C and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs).

Transmen and HIV/AIDS

Some of us are HIV positive. If you have tested positive or are living with AIDS remember that it is not a death sentence. Many people live long and healthy lives being HIV positive. Make sure you consider what you need, beyond healthcare requirements, as each individual will have very different needs in terms of support, services and education. Contact your local community AIDS group for a list of doctors who specialize in HIV primary care or to find out about all the services in the community to suit your needs.

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) refer to many different viruses and bacterial infections. Some of the most common include Chlamydia, Genital Herpes, Gonorrhea, HPV (genital warts), LGV and Syphilis. STIs are usually transmitted during sexual activities, like oral, frontal and anal sex. However, certain STIs, like Genital Herpes and HPV can also be transmitted by your hands if you touch an infected area and then touch your partner's genitals, ass, and eyes. You can have an STI and not know it, so just because you don't experience any symptoms does not mean you do not have an STI. You should get a regular STI check up regardless of symptoms. With genital Herpes, transmission can occur even when there is no sore or lesion present.

Symptoms for STIs can range from annoying and painful (sores, lesions, warts) to damaging to your body and life threatening (neuro-syphilis), they also put you at higher risk for HIV infection. Firstly, any STI-related sore (like warts, herpes or other lesions) offers open access for HIV to enter the bloodstream. Secondly, many STIs weaken mucous membranes, enabling HIV to enter the body directly through mucous membranes. Thirdly, cells in the immune system that target HIV are likely to be present in greater numbers at the site of an infection.

It's also important to know that transmen with HIV need to be aware that some STIs can compromise the immune system, increase the risk of transmitting HIV, and contribute to the progression of HIV.

Talk to your doctor about how regularly you should be testing for STIs. If you are sexually active with casual partners on a regular basis, you should consider an STI check up every 3-6 months.

Hep A, B & C

Hepatitis A, B & C are all viruses that can result in inflammations of the liver. They are transmitted in different ways and create varying degrees of health complications, from sickness (Hepatitis A, B, C) to, in some cases, death (HCV).

{mospagebreak title=Getting Action}

Getting Action

Finger Fucking

A lot of us — men, trans and non-trans — like when a partner puts their fingers in our asshole. Some of us also like being finger fucked in our front hole. Both anal and frontal finger fucking are negligible risk activities for HIV transmission. This means that there are no recorded cases of transmission in this way, but we can't rule it out completely because small cuts and sores on your fingers and hands can allow the virus access to the bloodstream. Finger fucking can also cause damage to your insides from fingernails, which means a higher risk if there is unprotected frontal or anal penetrative sex afterwards.

How you can reduce the risk:

- Use latex gloves and lubricants that won't degrade the latex or rubber (See “Condoms” and “Lubricants”)
- Trim and file your fingernails.
- The asshole does not self-lubricate and sometimes transmen have difficulty producing lubrication in the front hole. In both cases, lube can really help prevent rips and tears. If you're using latex gloves, make sure you use water-based lube.

Fisting (Handballing)

Fisting is when your partner inserts their entire hand into a front or asshole. Like finger fucking, putting your hand into

someone's front or asshole is negligible risk. However, fisting can easily cause tiny tears and rips in the front or asshole that can last for two weeks. This means that the person getting fisted needs to be aware of an increased risk during other sexual activities for some time after fisting. The person doing the fisting is also at negligible risk of HIV transmission, but cuts or sores on their hands may increase the risk, making the use of latex gloves a safer sex strategy.

How you can reduce the risk:

- Use latex gloves.
- Use lubrication (water based lube if you're using latex gloves) to reduce areas of sore, ripped or otherwise weakened skin. Some gay male fisting cultures associate better fisting with oil-based lubricants, such as Crisco. If you use oil based lube make sure you don't use it with latex. Instead, use polyurethane because it won't break down.

Rimming (Ass licking, Rim job, Tossing the Salad)

So you want to lick ass? Regardless of what you call it, rimming is described as oral contact with the anal opening and region. Many of us enjoy licking and sucking around the asshole. While this is not considered a high-risk activity for HIV transmission, giving is high risk for Hepatitis A and B, intestinal parasites, HPV, Syphilis, Gonorrhea, and Herpes. Receiving is high risk for Gonorrhea, Hepatitis B, Syphilis and Herpes.

How you can reduce the risk:

- Get vaccinated for Hepatitis A and B
- Wash thoroughly with soap and water around the asshole before rimming. Note: getting soap up your ass is an irritant so be careful.
- If a dental dam or latex barrier specifically for the purpose of oral stimulation is unavailable, you can improvise. Split a non-lubricated condom lengthwise and use it as a barrier between your ass and mouth.
- Regularly check your mouth, lips or ass for cuts and sores.
- Some guys like to douche their ass or front before sex for hygiene reasons. Douching is not recommended because it can wash away the natural flora that can actually help protect you against infections and it can also drive infections further up into your ass. If you do douche, use warm water only and gently rinse inside your ass or front. Do not use commercial douches that use chemical products as these can irritate the lining of your ass or front and increase your risk for HIV and other STIs.

Blow Job (Giving Head, Sucking Cock, Fellatio)

Many of us enjoy sucking cock. Sucking or licking a non-trans man's cock without using a condom is low risk for HIV, just a few people have been infected this way. Also, 'deep throating' (taking the cock to the back of your throat) can increase your risk for some STIs, which in turn can increase your risk for HIV.

How you can reduce the risk:

- Use a condom. You can find thin condoms and experiment with different flavoured condoms (but avoid spermicide such as nonoxyl-9)
- Make sure you don't have any cuts or open sores in your mouth. Don't floss or brush your teeth at least 30 minutes before giving a blowjob.
- Avoid taking cum or pre-cum into your mouth. Consider alternatives such as having your partner cum on other areas of your body (avoiding areas where fluids may still have the potential to enter your bloodstream. Tell your partner to let you know when he is about to cum so you can stop sucking and stroke him off.
- If you decide not to use a condom, avoid deep throating. Using one or both hands, lubricated, to stimulate the cock in addition to the mouth can take the place of deep throating.
- Suck and lick the shaft and balls but avoid the head.

Blow Jobs for Transmen

Transmen can get blowjobs too but some people use different language to describe the act of having someone's mouth and tongue on their genitals. It doesn't matter if you've had any surgery or not, you should call it whatever makes you feel most comfortable.

A blow job on a transguy is the same basic principle as a blow job on a non-trans guy. It is low risk. Even if you still produce fluid in the frontal area (you have not had the front opening surgically closed), and someone sucks you off, it is low risk to them and even lower risk to you.

Some transmen can ejaculate. There hasn't been any research done on the HIV risk of ejaculate that comes out of female assigned people, but it is pretty safe to assume that, like cum and vaginal fluids, ejaculate going into the front or assholes is higher risk than having it in your mouth.

How you can reduce the risk:

- Use a barrier. (See 'How to Make a Barrier')
- Don't floss or brush your teeth at least 30 minutes before or right after giving a blowjob.
- If possible, try to pee after oral sex. This can flush bacteria and viruses out of your urethra and assist in avoiding

getting an STI.

Ass Fucking

A lot of people like to get fucked in the ass. This penetration might happen with a flesh cock, a strap-on, dildo or other instruments. If you have unprotected sex with a flesh cock, you are at higher risk for HIV.

There is a misconception that the person topping is at no or low risk. Both the top and bottom are at high risk for HIV when they fuck without a condom. HIV can enter the body through the head of the cock, especially during fucking when there is friction against the skin causing irritation. This is also true for transmen who have had genital surgery and are able to penetrate their partners. If your surgery involved urethra repositioning, you are also at risk for transmission to occur directly through the lining of the urethra (the opening at the tip of the cock). To date, there are no studies done on transmen, genital surgery and HIV transmission.

If you get fucked by a non-flesh cock (strap-on, dildo or something else) without a condom, you are at high risk for HIV and STIs when the toy (or instrument) has been used on other people and not properly cleaned. Sharing sex toys without properly cleaning them between partners is high risk for HIV. Fluids that are still on the sex toys or instruments can be transferred just as easily, particularly if the toy was shared recently (See “Sex Toy” section for more details).

So, you can fuck as raunchy as you want, but there are ways to keep it safer.

How you can reduce the risk:

- Use condoms. Try some different kinds to find out which ones suit you.
- Use plenty of water-based lube on the opening to the ass and inside the hole. Lube feels good and reduces friction, making it less likely to tear a condom or cause irritation and damage to the lining of the ass. If you fuck without a condom, lube may help reduce risk although there is no evidence to support this. Condoms really are the only proven way to protect yourself from HIV when you fuck.
- Avoid douching (rinsing out your ass) before anal sex. Douching/enemas removes the protective lining in the inside of your ass, making small tears and rips to the skin more likely when you are being fucked.
- Avoid sharing sex toys, or use condoms on your toys (remember to change the condom if you share toys).

Frontal Fucking

Some of us like getting fucked in our front holes (Some of us don’t want anyone or anything near that area). Penetrative frontal sex often occurs with flesh cock, a strap-on or dildo. If you are fucking a flesh cock without a condom, you are at high risk of HIV and STI transmission. Some guys use the “pull out” method, removing the cock before ejaculation, in an effort to reduce their risk. Unfortunately, research shows that this can still lead to HIV infection, likely due to pre-cum.

Just as with ass fucking, if you are being fucked in the front hole, even by a non-flesh cock (strap-on, dildo) - without a condom, you still have the transmission risk of its fleshy counterpart. HIV and STIs can still be contracted if the sex toy has been used on other people and not properly cleaned. (See “Sex Toy” section for more details)

Sometimes, the use of testosterone can mean that the front hole does not self lubricate that much. Without lubrication, you are at a higher risk for rips and tears that make HIV and STI transmission easier. Use plenty of water-based lube on the entrance to and inside your front hole when you fuck.

How you can reduce the risk:

- Use Condoms: If you are using flavoured condoms, keep in mind that some are sugar based and increase your chances of getting a yeast infection if you are being penetrated. Make sure to check prior to using.
- Use lube: The best idea is to use water-based lube with a condom.
- If possible, try to pee to after sex.

Sex Toys

They’re called toys for a very good reason. Sex toys can be exciting, fun and really complement a good fuck. There are lots to try including butt plugs, anal beads, vibrators, dildos and strap-ons. Some of us have particular attachments to our silicone, rubber or cyberskin™ cocks and do not really consider them “sex toys” at all, but rather extensions of our bodies.

If you are using sex toys that come into contact with bodily fluids these need to be properly cleaned before they are used again, to reduce the risk of HIV and STI transmission.

How you can reduce the risk:

- If you’re using the toy with different partners or it’s in contact with front or assholes use a new condom each time.
- Clean your toys properly after each use. Make sure to follow the care instructions for each type of sex toy, as

improperly cleaning or treating the material of a sex toy can increase the risk of it transmitting HIV and STIs. This is due to pitting or degrading of the material that allows it to retain fluids more easily.

- Use lots of water-based lube.

Cleaning

Silicone toys can be washed with a mild antibacterial soap and water, boiled for up to five minutes or put in the top rack of a dishwasher. Silicone toys can last a long time if they are taken care of properly. Make sure you use a non-silicone based lube.

For rubber and cyberskin toys you can wash or wipe them down. However, you cannot sterilize them because the material is too porous. For this reason, it's good to use a condom every time you fuck with these toys.

Condoms

Condoms are a good way to reduce the risk when you're getting it on. They can be used for oral, frontal and anal sex. Luckily, they can also be used on all kinds of cocks, not only on flesh ones but also rubber/silicone/cyberskin ones. A condom drastically reduces your risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections by creating a barrier to cum and blood. Although it is the most effective way to prevent HIV transmission if you have sex, condoms are not 100% reliable: they can break or be improperly used. Condoms don't have to be boring. You can find thin ones that increase pleasure, not to mention all the different flavours and textures.

Some tips on condoms:

- The first thing you should do is make sure the package around the condom is intact. Press in the middle. It should feel like air is trapped under your fingers.
- Check the expiry date on the back of the condom.
- Tear along one side of the foil (no teeth) and be careful to not rip the condom inside.
- If you are putting a condom on a flesh cock you need to make sure it's hard before you put it on (for guys who had metoidioplasty/meta or a centurion, you may need to get creative to make things fit). Practice on your own first to get used to how best to do it.
- Put a small dab of lube on the inside tip of the condom. This will reduce friction on the inside of the condom when you fuck and will also feel better, less like the guy is wearing a condom.
- Squeeze and hold the tip before you put the condom on. You can put a dab of lube on the inside tip of the condom to reduce friction and increase pleasure. While still squeezing the closed end, use your other hand to unroll the condom down the full length of the cock, all the way to the base.
- Make sure there are no air bubbles between the cock and the condom.
- Use water-based lube and apply regularly.
- Occasionally check that the condom is not rolling off during sex.
- If you fuck for a longer period of time, change the condom. This can be a particular issue when guys fuck on crystal meth or take erectile enhancing drugs like Viagra or Cialis.
- When you're finished getting it on, throw the condom away.
- Never use Spermicides. They have been proven to increase the risk for HIV transmission because they cause irritation on the lining of the ass or front.

Some people are allergic to latex condoms, which cause serious irritation and rashes. This usually means they have an allergy to spermicide or latex. There are non-latex and non-spermicide options. Check the packaging of condoms. Non-latex condoms will usually state that they are made from polyurethane or from other non-latex materials and they are stronger, more expensive and do not stretch in the same way that latex does.

How to Make a Barrier

Oral sex is low risk for the transmission of HIV. This means that there are reports of people becoming infected this way but it is relatively rare. For people who want to be extra safe you can buy these barriers in the store as "dental dams." Barriers should be used on any holes (anal, frontal) that you might be performing oral sex on (licking or sucking) You can buy these barriers in the store as "dental dams" or for a cheaper option, non-microwavable plastic wrap. The non-microwavable part is important, since microwavable plastic wrap has tiny holes that make it less effective as a barrier as fluids can get through.

You can also make safe and effective barriers easily yourself as a cheap and creative option. All you need are condoms or latex gloves.

- For Condoms:
1. Unroll the condom about half-way.
 2. Use scissors to cut the condom up the side.
 3. Take the final product and hold the sides with your hands and start licking!

Tip: Use unlubricated condoms and make sure they don't have spermicide (it tastes bad and can actually increase your risk of HIV because it irritates).

- For Gloves: 1. Cut the through the side, or;
2. You can leave the fingers on if you want to insert fingers too.

How to Make it Better

Put a few drops of water-based (latex-friendly) lubricant between the barrier and the hole. It will make it more sensitive and holds it in place better.

Lubrication (Lube)

Fucking without lubrication can increase the risk of ripping and tearing in either front or assholes. The anus never lubricates itself and some transmen find it difficult to produce natural lubrication from the front hole, frequently because of testosterone usage.

- Water-based lubricants (K-Y Jelly, Astroglide, Wet, etc.) are the safest option as they do not have any damaging effect to latex condoms, barriers, toys and people.

- Avoid oil-based lubricants (like Vaseline, Crisco, Baby Oil, butter etc.) because they dissolve latex, sometimes within minutes of fucking, and will reduce the effectiveness of latex condoms, which raise the risk of HIV and STIs. Oil-based lubricants are safe with polyurethane plastic condoms or the Reality (‘female’) condom, which are good options for people with latex allergies.

- Silicone lubricants are another option. They tend to retain lubrication longer than water-based lubricant and most are safe to use with latex condoms. Always check the label of the lubricant before use. Importantly, silicone-based lubricants are not recommended for use with silicone-based sex toys. This is because silicone lubricants dissolve the surface of the toys, making them sticky and causing them to slowly disintegrate.

BDSM (Sometimes just called S/M or S & M)

Some of us are really into BDSM. BDSM stands for Bondage & Discipline (BD), Domination & submission (DS) and Sadism and Masochism (SM) and encompasses numerous activities, many of which are not strictly sexual. BDSM should be based on informed consent, with an emphasis on being safe, sane and consensual. This applies to you if you are in a 24/7 D/s relationship or if you are interested in exploring spanking. A lot of BDSM activities are no or low risk in terms of HIV transmission such as the use of leather, whips, chains, floggers, paddles, clamps, masks, gags, and anything else that does not include the exchange of bodily fluids from one person to another. However, keep in mind that some of these tools can break the skin and create a site where HIV can enter your bloodstream. As well, you should never use these tools on more than one person without first properly cleaning them.

That being said, BDSM can also include activities like cutting and medical submission, play piercing, suspension and other activities that include blood. These activities are higher risk if one person's blood enters another person's bloodstream. Some people also enjoy scat play (involving human excrement), which can put you at risk for Hepatitis A and parasites.

If you are having oral, frontal or anal sex as part of a BDSM scene you are at the same risks as anyone else if it is unprotected.

How you can reduce your risk

- Avoid direct contact with blood, shit or other bodily fluids (Golden Showers/Getting peed on is no risk)
- Use(d) sterilized equipment (like needles, knives, blades, piercings) and don't re-use them on other people.
- For piercing, branding, or shaving, any drops of blood should be wiped away with sterile cotton balls.
- Use condom and/or other barriers with water-based lube for frontal or anal fucking, blow jobs/oral sex, rimming/ass worship, finger fucking, and fisting.

Non-Monogamy/Polyamory

Monogamous relationships are the current Western societal norm. That is, you marry or have one relationship with one person at a time and that you get your emotional, intellectual and sexual fulfillment solely from them. Certainly, this works for many people, transmen included. However, there are other ways of having relationships that challenge monogamy as the only option. Non-monogamy refers to different types of interpersonal relationships in which some or all of the people have multiple romantic or sexual partners. This might mean you are fucking several people at the same time, have threesomes or group sex or have multiple partners with an emotional attachment. That last example is more precisely called polyamory, and refers to the desire or practice of having more than one loving and intimate relationship at a time. Most people who practice polyamory put a lot of emphasis on communication and the consent of everyone involved.

A lot of sexual health materials and workers promote monogamy as a way of preventing HIV and STIs. But remember, it's not about how many people you sleep with but about what you're doing. If you decide not to have safer sex, be clear that this is happening so your partners can make an informed decision about their bodies and risks.

The majority of unsafe sex between men happens in relationships. Monogamy can put you at risk for HIV when one partner has sex outside the relationship and then fears the consequences of informing their primary partner. This may be

especially true when the primary partners do not use condoms for fucking. It can be pretty hard for the ‘cheating’ partner to then insist on condoms without arousing the suspicion of their partner. And this is where the risk comes in.

For some guys, dating and relationships can also lead to risk when they fear that insisting on condoms will lead a new partner to mistrust them or think they are having sex with other people. This can be especially true when you think a new partner is a potential longer-term relationship. Some guys see the removal of condoms as a sign of trust and intimacy in a new relationship. Taking condoms out of the relationship safely requires a great deal of planning, communication, openness and trust. If you are in a relationship and considering dropping condoms, speak to a sexual health educator or counselor about how to do it in a safer way.

Transmen and Pregnancy

In the last few years there has been more visibility for transmen who are pregnant. It is impossible to tell whether there are more or less transmen getting pregnant than before, nonetheless, it is a decision made by some of us.

For transmen who are HIV positive, it is important that we consider the risks of vertical transmission from parent to child. People with HIV can have children with very little risk of transmission if they have proper pre-natal care with an experienced HIV physician. If you are HIV positive and considering having children, speak to an HIV physician about your options.

Breast Milk

Another issue that affects certain transmen who have given birth and who are still lactating is the issue of breast milk. HIV can exist in breast milk in large enough quantities to allow for transmission to a baby. Baby’s mouths aren’t as developed as adults and can leave them at a higher risk. For adults drinking breast milk, the possibility for HIV transmission is low. Furthermore, parents who are actively feeding infants may have cracked nipples that bleed, allowing the transmission of HIV. Recent studies have shown the importance of the parent and child bonding associated with breast feeding. If you are a trans man who is HIV positive, speak to an experienced HIV physician about breast-feeding as there is a risk of transmission to your baby

Sharing Needles

Hormones

Many transmen take hormones through injection. This means inserting a needle into your butt cheek or thigh and injecting the testosterone directly into the muscle.

Sometimes we will decide to share our needles with other transmen. There are lots of reasons why this might happen; to share an experience, because you only have one needle, you don’t know where to get more needles or you can’t afford to buy new ones regularly. However, sharing needles is high risk for HIV and Hepatitis B and C infections. This is because a needle’s syringe is vacuous (without air) and HIV infected blood can survive for a period of time in a used syringe. Hepatitis C can last even longer in the needle and syringe.

The best way to reduce your risk is to avoid sharing needles. However, if you do decided to re-use needles you should clean them with bleach. This is NOT 100% effective in killing HIV and does NOT kill Hep C.

Intravenous Drug Users (IDU)

Some of us take drugs like cocaine, heroine, amphetamine (speed, meth) and ketamine (special k) with needles. If you are injecting regularly or even just once, you are at higher risk of HIV and Hepatitis infection if you share injection equipment. The HIV virus can live in the water and cooker as well as remaining present in the blood in a used needle and syringe. Not only are you at risk for HIV transmission, but also other blood-borne viruses, such as Hepatitis B and C which can last even longer in the needle, syringe and other equipment.

It is high risk to share needles and drug works (cookers, filters). If possible, use a new needle every time you inject and never share. There are free needles available at needle exchange programs or you can usually purchase needles at a drug store. However, if you do decided to re-use needles you should clean them with bleach. This is NOT 100% effective in killing HIV and does NOT kill Hep C.

Using Bleach

Getting a new needle or not sharing your needles is the best way to reduce your risk of HIV and Hepatitis C. If you can’t get a new needle then you should consider cleaning it with bleach. As mentioned above, bleach is not 100% effective in killing the HIV virus and does NOT kill Hepatitis C. Still, if you don't have a new needle and you are sharing them, using bleach between users is the best option to protect yourself.

Here is how*:

1. Rinse the fit with water by drawing water all the way up to the top of the barrel, then squirting it

down the drain.

2. Do this twice.

3. Then do the same with the bleach. The bleach must be full strength to work best. Draw the bleach up to the top of the barrel, and shake it around for 30 seconds. Squirt the bleach down the drain.

4. Do this again. Do not squirt the dirty bleach back into the bottle.

5. Rinse the syringe 2 times again with new water (like in step 1)

6. If you have time to take the rig apart after you've cleaned it, and let it dry in the air, this can also help reduce your risk.

If you do the above steps immediately after you have used the needle and before the blood has a chance to dry out inside the fit - your cleaning system will be much more effective.

* Info courtesy of Keeping Fit: A Prisoner's Guide to Syringe Care (PASAN)

{mospagebreak title=Access to Medical Care}

Access to Medical Care“To find someone who knows anything about gay transmen is very hard. I mean even a lot of credible health people I’ve talked to who know a lot about trans people, trans women and transmen, are really misinformed when it comes to gay trans.”

Only recently has there been some development around trans health needs in regards to medical care. In the last few years there have been some studies around the risks of hormone usage, the sexual health of transpeople and HIV/STI prevention. Still, there is a huge gap of information/research and most medical professionals have very little knowledge about the sexual health needs of transmen, specifically gay/bi/queer transmen.

In addition to the lack of research is the reality that transmen often have extremely bad experiences with health professionals who disrespect their bodies or identities, who don’t listen, who discount their sexual health needs or risks, or who simply don’t know enough about transmen to offer useful care (i.e. don’t know what testosterone does, don’t understand that transmen can be at risk for HIV or STIs, etc.) For this reason it is important that you inform yourself about your own health needs so you can assert them with your doctor.

Health Care for Transmen

- If you are having sex you should consider getting tested for STIs and HIV on a regular basis. This might be uncomfortable at the time but a lot of STIs can be treated and it is important to know what is going on with your body.
- Transmen should have regular pap smears even if you have had your cervix removed (if there is a history of cervical cancer) and especially if you are having unsafe frontal sex.

If You Are Taking Testosterone:

- Pap smears are also important because testosterone usage can cause changes in the cervix that should be medically monitored.
- You should also consider having fairly regular blood work (tests to determine hormone levels, cholesterol, white blood cells and other things). You can ask for an HIV test to be done at the same time. If you are concerned about your anonymity, there are clinics that do anonymous testing.

Things to Think About When You Are Accessing Medical Care:

- Be clear about your symptoms, health issues and the medication you are taking (including testosterone). It may be difficult for you to discuss certain body parts but the doctor will be unable to treat you effectively if you are not clear.
- If you are having a pap smear think about what might make you more comfortable. You can ask the doctor to explain what they are doing or be totally silent.
- Remember that your doctor is there to treat you with respect and compassion. You are not their guinea pig or medical anomaly. You do not have to let them touch you in ways that make you uncomfortable or respond to questions that are none of their business/not medically necessary. They can’t be expected to know everything but it is fair that they show you the same respect and compassion as they would any other patient.
- If you have a bad experience with a doctor you are free to leave or change doctors. This is obviously easier to do in big cities where there are more options.
- Do your own research. Unfortunately, a lot of us are not lucky enough to have doctors or caregivers who are knowledgeable about our bodies or trans issues. Check the links section of the webpage.
- The internet is a really good place to get answers to particular health questions. A lot of medical information is passed through informal networks, like listserves, Yahoo! groups and liveJournal communities. You need to be careful with this information because the majority of people who will respond will not be doctors or medical experts and in some cases, the information they give you might be wrong or possibly damaging to your health. That being said, they will frequently be able to offer support, share their personal experiences, give you some insight, help you with questions you should ask your doctor, and give you other resources.