

ANAL SEX

What is anal sex?

Anal sex is the penetration of the anus by a penis, finger or sex toy. It can also include anal stimulation with the mouth or tongue. There are a lot of nerve endings in and around the anus. It is a highly sensitive area for many people and therefore can be very pleasurable. It can also be very uncomfortable or painful if the person being penetrated is not relaxed or if there is not enough lubrication.

How risky is anal sex?

Anal sex is considered a high-risk behaviour for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). The delicate tissue in the rectum is prone to small tears that provide an entrance for bacteria and viruses. The anus is not self-lubricating and is less elastic than the vagina, so it is important to go slowly and use lubrication.

Fisting, which is the practice of inserting the hand into the rectum may cause severe tearing of the rectal lining that may last for several weeks. Fisting can be made safer by using a latex glove with lubrication.

How can I make anal sex safer?

There are a number of things you can do to reduce the risk of HIV and STIs during anal sex:

- Use condoms (latex or polyurethane).
- Use lubrication. Water-based lubricant will reduce the risk of condom breakage and tears of the anus.
- Try other anal sex activities that are less risky:
 - Anal stimulation with mouth/tongue is made safer by using a dental/safer sex dam and kissing or licking through the thin latex.
 - Use clean unshared sex toys. Use condoms over sex toys if you are sharing them or moving from anus to vagina. Sex toys should be cleaned after each use.
- Since moving objects from one person's anus to another person's vagina or anus can cause infections, wash the penis, finger or object first before and after inserting or use a new glove or condom.

What if I have had unprotected anal sex?

If you have had anal intercourse without a condom you should consider getting tested for HIV and other STIs. Talk to your partner about safer sex and discuss the possibility of exploring other, less risky activities.

Remember...

Anal intercourse is a high-risk activity. If you are comfortable engaging in anal intercourse it is essential that you use condoms, safer sex /dental dams and have STI testing.

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