

**Safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines allow us to more safely engage in relationships, sex and everything in between! Practice these strategies to protect yourself and your partners from COVID-19.**

## Know how COVID-19 spreads

The virus spreads by infected saliva, mucus, or respiratory particles being inhaled or entering the eyes, nose, or mouth.

- The virus can spread during sex since sex can involve close heavy breathing and contact with saliva.
- There is no evidence the virus spreads through semen or vaginal fluid, though the virus has been found in the semen of people who have COVID-19.
- The risk of spreading the virus through feces (poop) is thought to be low, though the virus has been found in the feces of people who have COVID-19. Research is needed to know if the virus can spread through sexual activities involving oral contact with feces (such as rimming).



## Tips for reducing the risk of getting and spreading COVID-19 during sex

### Get vaccinated!

- COVID-19 vaccination allows for safer interactions inside and outside the bedroom. It is the best way to protect yourself and unvaccinated partners from COVID-19 illness, hospitalization and death.
  - Visit [vaccinefinder.nyc.gov](https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov) or call **877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692)** to find a vaccination site. Vaccination is free and appointments are not needed at many sites.
- People who are fully vaccinated (meaning at least two weeks since they got a single-dose vaccine or the second dose of a two-dose vaccine) can go on dates, make out and have sex without face coverings and other COVID-19 precautions.
- While everyone should get vaccinated, it is especially important to do so if you:
  - Are at an increased risk of severe COVID-19 illness.
  - Attend sex parties or get-togethers with large groups; have group sex, multiple sex partners or sex with people you do not know; or engage in sex work.
- Even if you are fully vaccinated, get tested for COVID-19 if you have symptoms. If you test positive, avoid having sex and close contact with others until your isolation period ends.





**Continue practices to prevent HIV, other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unintended pregnancy, including accessing sexual health care.**

NYC Health Department HIV, STI and contraception services:

- Call Sexual Health Clinical Hotline at 347-396-7959 (Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.) to talk to a health care provider.
- Visit [nyc.gov/health/clinics](https://nyc.gov/health/clinics) or call **311** for Sexual Health Clinic hours and services.
- Call the 24/7 NYC PEP Hotline at 844-3-PEPNYC (844-373-7692) if you think you were exposed to HIV.
- Visit [nyc.gov/condoms](https://nyc.gov/condoms) to find out how to get free safer sex products.

## If you are NOT vaccinated:

- **Talk about COVID-19 risk factors before you hook up**, such as:
  - **Vaccination.** If your partner is fully vaccinated, you are at lower risk.
  - **Recent COVID-19 testing.** If positive, avoid sex and close contact. If negative, keep in mind a test only shows if a person may have been infected when they were tested. See [COVID-19 Testing: Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information.
  - **Recently had COVID-19.** Someone who had COVID-19 (positive diagnostic test) is unlikely to get it again within three months after their infection. This makes them a safer partner.
  - **Recent COVID-19 exposure.** Unless fully vaccinated, close contact with others should be avoided for 10 days after an exposure, even if the person exposed tests negative for COVID-19.
  - **COVID-19 precautions.** Being intimate with people who wear a face covering and follow other COVID-19 prevention measures is a safer way to go.
- **Play safer.**
  - **Avoid sex parties and other gatherings.** If you do attend:
    - Go with a consistent sex partner.
    - Pick larger, more open and well-ventilated spaces.
    - Bring and use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
    - Wear a face covering and avoid kissing.
    - Monitor for symptoms and get tested before and after getting together with others. Visit the [COVID-19 testing page](#) or call **311** to find a no-cost testing site.
  - **Limit your sex partners** to people you live with or who are in your social bubble.
  - **Enjoy sex virtually**, such as video dates, sexting, sexy Zoom parties or chat rooms.
  - **Avoid kissing** anyone you do not live with or who is not in your social bubble.
  - **Wear a face covering or mask, even during sex!** Maybe it's your thing, maybe it's not, but wearing a face covering over your nose and mouth adds a layer of protection.
  - **Make it kinky.** Be creative with sexual positions and physical barriers, like walls, that allow sexual contact while preventing close face-to-face contact.
  - **Masturbate together.** Use distance and face coverings to reduce the risk.
  - **Use condoms and dental dams** to reduce contact with saliva, semen or feces during oral or anal sex or rimming.
  - **Wash up before and after sex.** Wash hands and sex toys with soap and warm water. Disinfect keyboards and touch screens you share with others.

For the latest information, visit [nyc.gov/health/coronavirus](https://nyc.gov/health/coronavirus).

The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves. 6.18.21