



MYTHS & FACTS ABOUT SEXUAL HEALTH

STUDENT HEALTH & WELLNESS SERVICES

Sexual health is the ability to embrace and enjoy our sexuality throughout our lives. Being sexually healthy includes: respecting the sexual rights we all share, making an effort to prevent unintended pregnancies/STDs and seek care and treatment when needed, and being able to communicate about sexual health and needs with sexual partners/healthcare providers. (American Sexual Health Association, 2018)

Please answer each statement with either True or False:

1. Masturbation has many health benefits including stress relief. _____
2. Testing is the only sure way to know if someone has an STI. _____
3. You can tell whether or not someone has an STD by looking at them. _____
4. The more sex partners someone has the more likely they are to get an STI _____
5. It doesn't matter where someone keeps or stores their condoms, they can all be 98% effective at preventing STI transmissions and/or pregnancy. _____
6. Dental Dams are not as effective as external condoms for preventing STI transmission. _____
7. Sperm can live up to 6 days after ejaculation in a vagina. _____
8. All birth control methods are equally effective at preventing pregnancy _____
9. If an unintended pregnancy occurs, abortion is a safe option to end the pregnancy. _____
10. If someone has HIV, their sexual partners will get it too. _____

1. **TRUE-** Masturbation is normal and common for anyone to do at any age. Research has shown that masturbation can help reduce stress, release sexual tension, help people sleep better, improve self-esteem and body image, relieve menstrual cramps and strengthen muscle tone in pelvic and anal areas. Masturbation can be the safest kind of sex! It can also help people figure out what they like sexually.
2. **TRUE-** STIs are very common among people under the age of 25, about 50% of sexually active young people have had an STI at some point. Many STIs don't cause any symptoms, the only way to know for sure is to get tested.
3. **FALSE-** Most STDs aren't visible, many have no symptoms. The only way to know if you have an STD is to get tested. People who are sexually active should get tested every 6 months to 1 year if they have multiple partners and/or change partners. You should get tested about 4-6 weeks after changing partners.
4. **FALSE-** Just because someone has multiple sex partners does not mean that they are more likely to have an STI. STIs are common and anyone who has vaginal, anal, or oral sex can get or transmit an STI. Practicing safer sex by using latex barriers, getting tested and communicating with partners can help protect someone from getting and STI.
5. **FALSE-** Practicing safer sex is about more than just having condoms, it involves storing them properly too. Condoms and other latex barriers should be stored in a cool place like a bedroom drawer. While it's important for someone to prepare for sex and carry latex barriers with them they should know that keeping them stored in cars and wallets can break down the material of the condom. Check out the condom checklist in the Wellness Center or schedule an appointment with a health educator to maximize the effectiveness of latex barriers.
6. **FALSE-** Both dental dams and condoms are equally as effective if they have been stored properly, have not expired, and are used with water based or silicon based lube. Dental dams work best for mouth to vulva or mouth to anus oral intercourse. External condoms work best for mouth to penis oral intercourse. Dental dams can also be made out of an external condom, ask a peer health educator or health educator if you'd like to learn how!
7. **TRUE-** If semen gets in the vagina, the sperm cells can swim up through the cervix and uterus and into the fallopian tubes, looking for an egg. They have up to 6 days to find an egg before they die.
8. **FALSE-** Each method has a different level of effectiveness. The ones that are best at preventing pregnancy (over 99% effective) are sterilization, IUDs, Implants, and inject-ables. Pills, patches and the ring are 91% effective. Condoms are 79-85% effective, emergency contraceptive pills are 89-95% effective, and withdrawal is 78% effective. Using birth control consistently and correctly each and every time will increase the chances of it working! For more info, check out bedsider.org or Planned Parenthood's website.
9. **TRUE-** Abortion is one of the safest medical procedures a person can undergo. Data shows that complications from medical or surgical abortion are extremely rare. There are no long term health risks from having an abortion, and it will not affect one's ability to become pregnant in the future. Additionally, the vast majority of people who have an abortion feel relieved and have no adverse mental health outcomes from the procedure.
10. **FALSE-** There are many ways to minimize the risk of contracting HIV from and HIV positive sexual partner. These include pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), condoms and other latex barriers, engaging in outercourse.

Resources:

Bedsider - <https://www.bedsider.org/>

Planned Parenthood - <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/>

Student Health and Wellness Services - once we get the new link

PrEP - <https://www.projectinform.org/>

Rev. 11/2018

