

# SaferSex4Seniors

Information you need to enjoy sexual pleasure, and protection

## How to Talk to Your Doctor about Sex

### 1. I'm embarrassed to discuss my sex life with my doctor, but I have questions.

If you can discuss your indigestion and bowel habits, you can discuss sex! When the nurse asks, "What brought you in today?" Mention that you have a question about sex. The nurse's notes will remind the doctor to bring up the subject. If it isn't, simply say, "I also have a concern about..." Don't wait until the doctor is ready to leave the room. Ask the question during your exam, in case the doctor needs to look at your body to answer the question.

### 2. My doctor got embarrassed when I asked about changes in my sexual desire. What should I do?

Ask anyway. Your doctor's reaction needn't worry you. If your doctor can't give you a useful answer, request a referral. Urologists specialize in men's sexual health or function concerns; gynecologists specialize in women's sexual healthy or function concerns. Sex therapists address psychological and relationship concerns. Sexuality counselors and educators provide information and practical suggestions. Find the professional for you at [www.AASECT.org](http://www.AASECT.org)

### 3. I have a same-sex partner, and I worry that my doctor won't approve of my sexual orientation.

Many lesbians, gays, and bisexuals have this concern, and sadly, some doctors are not open minded. It is ideal to be completely honest about your sexual history, but if you feel unsafe disclosing the truth, look for another doctor or keep your orientation secret while being honest about the sexual activities you participate in so you can be assessed and treated appropriately. People of any orientation may enjoy oral sex, body rubbing, anal sex, mutual masturbation, etc., so a discussion of your sexual activities needn't include your orientation.

### 4. I enjoy sex play that could be called kinky. Does my doctor need to know?

You need only mention activities that could affect your health. If you have circulatory problems, being bound could be risky. If you have heart problems, physically stressful sex may need to be modified. Blood clotting issues may mean avoiding activities that could break the skin. Multiple partners increase risk for sexually transmitted infection. Your doctor can alert you to health concerns; meanwhile, a sex therapist, counselor or sexuality educator can help you modify your favorite activities so you can continue to enjoy them.

### 5. My doctor is always in a rush, and there isn't time to discuss sex during my visits.

Doctors have very little time to spend with each patient, so they focus on acute problems, i.e., pressing health issues. Sexual concerns often take longer to assess and discuss. To ensure that all of your questions are answered, request a visit that will focus specifically on your sexual concerns. Mention what they are, so your doctor can do a bit of research ahead of time, if necessary.

**About the Author:** Melanie Davis, PhD, [www.melanieedavisphd.com](http://www.melanieedavisphd.com) consults with individuals and couples to help them build sexual knowledge, comfort, and pleasure through the New Jersey Center for Sexual Wellness. <http://www.njsexualwellness.com> She trains medical and other human services professionals and also offers consumer programs on self-esteem, body image, and on the sexual impact of cancer, menopause and aging. She is an AASECT-Certified Sexuality Counselor, Educator, and Educator-Supervisor and author of Our Whole Lives Sexuality Education for Older Adults, available at [www.uuabookstore.org](http://www.uuabookstore.org) © 2012, 2022 Melanie Davis, All Rights Reserved.