



COVID-19 (Coronavirus) and Sexual Contact

The Oklahoma HIV and Hepatitis Planning Council is encouraging all Oklahomans to minimize contact with others by following the CDC recommendations of social distancing, staying at home and decreasing further exposure to COVID-19. Here are answers to frequently asked questions regarding sexual contact during the COVID-19 pandemic.

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a virus identified as the cause of an outbreak of respiratory illness first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China in 2019 and has since spread globally into a pandemic.

How is COVID-19 spread?

While research and information collection regarding COVID-19 is ongoing, here is what is known:

- The virus is spread through:
 - Person-to-person contact with someone who is infected with the virus, and
 - Droplets of saliva or mucus from the mouth or nose after someone, who is infected with the virus, sneezes or coughs.

Can I have sex during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The short answer is yes. However, consider these options to avoid contracting and spreading the virus on to others:

- **Masturbation.** Masturbation is a 100% effective way from spreading the virus to others when performed on oneself. Remember to wash your hands (as well as sex toys) thoroughly with soap and warm water for 20 seconds or more before and after masturbation.
- **Mutual Monogamy.** One way to limit the spread of COVID-19 is through sexual contact with someone who lives in the same home with you. This also helps to drastically decrease the spread of HIV and STDs.
- **Avoid one-night stands, meeting sex partners online, and sex working.** Your chances of COVID-19 infection increase when an individual exposes themselves to other people outside of their home. This includes individuals who have anonymous sex, going out on dates, and those who use sex for work.

It is best to use other options such as sexting, social media chat rooms and other resources that prevent individuals from in-person exposure.

If I perform/receive oral sex, am I at risk of infection and transmission of COVID-19?

Because COVID-19 is currently spread through saliva droplets and mucus from the mouth or nose, you should:

- **Avoid kissing.** Kissing someone outside of someone with whom you live greatly increases your chances of being infected with and spreading the virus.
- **Minimize oral sex.** Currently, there are no research studies available to determine if COVID-19 can be transmitted through oral sex. However, using a dental dam (mouth to vagina and mouth to anus) or an external/male condom (mouth to penis) during oral sex can help minimize possible exposure to the virus and STDs.

Am I at risk of infection if I have vaginal or anal sex during COVID-19?

Currently, there are no research studies available to determine if COVID-19 can be spread through sexual contact. However, you can take precaution to decrease the possible infection and spreading of the virus through:

- **Barrier use.** Using a condom (external) and/or dental dam can help safeguard against the possible infection and spread of COVID-19, as well as decrease the transmission of HIV and STDs.
- **Cleaning before and after sex.**
 - Washing your hands before and after sexual contact is essential to preventing the spread of COVID-19. Wash hands using warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds.
 - Ensuring sex toys are properly cleaned and disinfected between usage decreases the possible spread of COVID-19 and STDs. Sex toys can be cleaned with warm water and soap.

What if my partner or I experience symptoms of COVID-19 before having sex, what should we do?

If you or your partner report flu-like symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat, and/or shortness of breath:

- **Abstain from sexual contact.** Do not have sexual contact, including kissing, oral, anal, or vaginal sex.
- **Call your doctor or medical provider.** Reach out to your medical provider for further directions, or contact the OSDH COVID-19 Call Center at 877-215-8336. You may also dial 2-1-1 to be directed to the call center.
- **Stay at home.** If you begin experiencing symptoms, stay at home and self-quarantine (separate yourself from others). You may leave your home once symptoms improve, or symptoms worsen and you need to seek medical attention.

For additional information on COVID-19, please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

For additional information regarding COVID-19 in Oklahoma, please visit <https://coronavirus.health.ok.gov/>.

