

# Sex and Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

All New Yorkers should stay home and minimize contact with others to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

## But can you have sex?

Here are some tips for how to enjoy sex and to avoid spreading COVID-19.

### 1. Know how COVID-19 spreads.

- **You can get COVID-19 from a person who has it.**
  - The virus can spread to people who are within about 6 feet of a person with COVID-19 when that person coughs or sneezes.
- The virus can spread through direct contact with their saliva or mucus.
- **We still have a lot to learn about COVID-19 and sex.**
  - COVID-19 has been found in feces of people who are infected with the virus.
  - COVID-19 has not yet been found in semen or vaginal fluid.
  - We know that other coronaviruses do not efficiently transmit through sex.

### 2. Have sex with people close to you.

- **You are your safest sex partner.** Masturbation will not spread COVID-19, especially if you wash your hands (and any sex toys) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and after sex.
- **The next safest partner is someone you live with.** Having close contact — including sex — with only a small circle of people helps prevent spreading COVID-19
- **You should avoid close contact — including sex — with anyone outside your household.**
  - If you do have sex with others, have as few partners as possible and avoid group sex.
- **If you usually meet your sex partners online or make a living by having sex,** consider taking a break from in-person dates. Video dates, sexting or chat rooms may be options for you.

### 3. Take care during sex.

- **Kissing can easily pass COVID-19.** Avoid kissing anyone who is not part of your small circle of close contacts.
- **Rimming (mouth on anus) might spread COVID-19.** Virus in feces may enter your mouth.
- **Condoms can reduce contact with saliva or feces,** especially during oral or anal sex.
- **Washing up before and after sex is more important than ever.**
  - Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
  - Wash sex toys with soap and warm water.
  - Disinfect keyboards and touch screens that you share with others (for video chat, for watching pornography or for anything else).

**4. Skip sex if you or your partner is not feeling well.**

- **If you or a partner may have COVID-19**, avoid sex and especially kissing.
- **If you start to feel unwell**, you may be about to develop symptoms of COVID-19, which
  - include fever, cough, sore throat or shortness of breath.
- **If you or your partner has a medical condition that can lead to more severe COVID-19**, you may also want to skip sex.
  - Medical conditions include lung disease, heart disease, diabetes, cancer or a weakened immune system (for example, having unsuppressed HIV and a low CD4 count).

**5. Prevent HIV, other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unplanned pregnancy.**

- **HIV:** Condoms, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and having an undetectable viral load all help prevent HIV. For more information, visit [nyc.gov/health](https://nyc.gov/health) and search **HIV**.
- **Other STIs:** Condoms help prevent other STIs. Visit [nyc.gov/health](https://nyc.gov/health) and search **STIs**.
- **Pregnancy:** Make sure you have an effective form of birth control for the coming weeks. Visit [nyc.gov/health](https://nyc.gov/health) and search **birth control**.

For more information about COVID-19, visit [nyc.gov/coronavirus](https://nyc.gov/coronavirus).