

# Answers to the questions you frequently ask about sex and healthy relationships. Plus some more useful information.

## Q. At what age can I have sex?

The age you can have sex is called 'the age of consent'. In the UK it is 16 years old. This means that according to the law, only those who are aged 16 or over are able to freely agree to any sexual activity, in full understanding of the consequences of having sex. This applies to sexual activity between people of the opposite sex, or the same sex.

## Q. What is consent?

Consent is when a person freely gives their permission or agrees to something, after having carefully thought about whether or not they want to do something.

This decision should have been made without that person being:

- Pressured or bullied
- Encouraged to use drugs or alcohol to influence their decision, or;
- Manipulated or made to feel stupid.

In the UK the law says that both people must give their consent before any sexual activity.

This means that if you want to have sex, check that your partner wants to as well.

## Q. I'm 14 and my boyfriend/girlfriend is 15. By having sex together are we breaking the law?

Sex between anyone who is under 16 is illegal. The law is in place to protect young people from sexual exploitation and abuse. The law is not intended to punish consensual (i.e. both people have given their consent) sexual activity between two young people of a similar age, as long as it does not involve abuse or exploitation.

Sex or any sexual activity between an adult and a young person aged under 16 is against the law in the UK and the adult will be held responsible for their actions.

## Q. What is rape?

*Rape* is a crime which takes place when a male forces his penis into the mouth, anus or vagina of another person *when that person doesn't want him to do so*; the law calls this 'without consent'.

## Q. What is sexual assault?

A. Sexual assault is a crime that can be committed by both men and women against men or women. Different types of sexual assault include:

- Being forced or pressured into sex acts that a person doesn't want to do
- Objects or parts of the body (e.g. a finger) being put into someone's vagina or anus when that person didn't want it to happen.
- Someone being touched in a sexual way that makes him or her feel uncomfortable or frightened. This could be through their clothes (like bottom pinching).
- Someone being made to masturbate
- Any other form of physical closeness that happens without consent is known as sexual assault. It can also include; watching other people having sex, and forcing someone to watch or make pornography.

## Q. My boyfriend/girlfriend is 19. I'm 15. We have sex. Could they get into trouble?

It's illegal for anyone over 18 to have sex with someone under 16 and, depending on the situation, if this is brought to police attention, they could be prosecuted. This would be decided by the police (and possibly the court) based on the specific circumstances of the case.

## Q. Is it illegal for a child to look at pornography?

It isn't against the law for a child to look at pornography. If you have watched pornography, don't feel worried or ashamed. You won't get into trouble. However, young people have said watching pornography can be harmful and upsetting.

It is illegal for anyone over 18 to make a young person watch porn.

Sexual images and videos of under 18 year olds are NOT pornography – these are called indecent images of children. It is illegal to create, view, store or share indecent images of children.

## Q. What are 'indecent images of children'?

An indecent image of an under-18 is usually a nude or semi-nude image or video. It could also be a drawing or cartoon. For example, if it contains genitals or sexual acts, including masturbation, then it will be considered indecent.

Q. Is it illegal to take a naked selfie and to send it to my boyfriend / girlfriend?

It is illegal to take a sexual picture or video of anyone under 18, even if it is of yourself. It is also illegal to share it with someone else. However, the law is there to protect young people, not criminalise them unnecessarily. If you have shared an image as a part of a consensual relationship, and this comes to police attention, the police will consider that when dealing with a case. Source- [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

Q. What is the best sexual position?

This is personal preference, but the best sexual position would be one where both people are getting enjoyment from it, and whilst you're getting to know your partner one where you can see their face so you can gauge whether they are enjoying themselves.

Q. Is the 'The spider man ok?' (masturbating into your hand and throwing it at your partner)

The spiderman is sexual assault without consent, it is also something that you shouldn't bully your partner into accepting.

Q. Is it ok to pull a partner's hair whilst having sex?

If you pull a partner's hair without consent, they could prosecute you for assault, also this could really hurt them.

Q. If you have sex with someone and the condom splits?

You cannot force anyone to take the morning after pill, this is assault. Its always best to have a conversation about what you would do if the condom splits before you have sex- its important to know your partners views on the morning after pill and abortions before you are faced with making these decisions. There are lots of forms of contraception that you both should discuss before you have sex.

Q. If you are having sex with someone and they change their mind half way through?

**You must stop. Continuing without consent is sexual assault/ rape.**

Q. Will my girlfriend get pregnant if we have anal sex?

No you cannot get pregnant from anal sex, but anal sex can be a messy and there are forms of contraception to reduce the chances of pregnancy for vaginal sex. Not everyone likes anal sex and this should be discussed and planned for before deciding to do it.

Q. If I just go in and out quick will that stop my girlfriend from getting pregnant?

**No** there are millions of sperm in the tiniest drop of semen (cum) and most men produce a small amount of semen known as 'pre cum' before they ejaculate. Remember it only take 1 sperm to meet the egg.

Q. Why does it take so long for girls to reach orgasm and men its really quick?

This isn't always the case, but for some women this is true. Often women need to feel very relaxed in order to reach orgasm, some women never experience an orgasm. For those women that do, they report needing to feel safe and relaxed with their partner and to be having sexual touch with a partner who understands their body and is patient.

Q. Will it help my partner reach orgasm quicker if I thrust harder?

This is probably not the case, but you will need to ask them how they feel, remember talking and being patient is important.

Q. Can you have sex with someone who is drunk?

Someone who is drunk is unable to give consent, they are also more likely to agree to something they wouldn't agree to usually. This could then lead to regrets, failed contraception and increases the risks of unplanned pregnancy and STI's.

**The best sex you will have will be with someone who wants to have sex with you, when you are both relaxed and you both feel confident. This means talking about what you both like and sharing any sexual worries. It means planning contraception and what you will do if the contraception fails. It means being ready and mature enough to deal with the outcome having sex can lead to, pregnancy and STI'S. It means you're able to be emotionally mature enough to manage the emotional rollercoaster of sexual relationships, and it means you're legally able to give consent.**

**Other information:**

**Measuring your penis**

Most men's view about their penis is formed during childhood. Growing up, they may see the penis of an older brother, friend or their father and mentally compare this to their own.

Fears and anxiety about penis size may also arise after taunts from other people during adolescence or following remarks from a sexual partner.

However, men often have the wrong perspective on their penis.

To see your penis as other people would, look at yourself undressed in front of a full-length mirror. The penis looks longer and larger than when observed from above.

At some stage, most boys get out a ruler or a tape measure to find out how long their penis is. There's little point in doing this when the penis is limp because the length of a flaccid penis can vary a lot, for example depending on how cold the room is.

To get a precise measurement, do it when you have an erection. It is standard to measure the penis on the top side, from the base to the tip.

### **Average penis size**

There are no average length figures for teenagers because people grow at different rates.

Most men's penises are somewhere around 9cm (3.75in) long when not erect, but it's normal for them to be shorter or longer than this. Some things can make your penis temporarily smaller, such as swimming or being cold.

Research has found the average erect penis size varies from around 13cm to 18cm (5in to 7in). You cannot make your penis larger or smaller with exercises or medication.

There is large variation in the angle of an erect penis. Some erect penises point straight up, others straight down. Some have a slight bend to the left or right. There is no right shape. If you have a more significant bend in your penis that may cause you pain or difficulty having sex, see your GP.

Each penis is unique and boys develop at different ages and rates. During puberty, usually between the ages of 11 and 18, the penis and testicles develop more rapidly, although the penis doesn't stop growing until the age of 21. [www.nhs.co.uk](http://www.nhs.co.uk)

## **Where to get help**

If you are worried that a crime has been committed and you need support, there is always help available.

CEOP helps young people who are being sexually abused or are worried that someone they've met is trying to abuse them.

If you've met someone online, or face to face, and they are putting you under pressure to have sex, share images or making you feel uncomfortable you should [report to CEOP](#).

This might be someone:

- Making you have sex when you don't want to
- Chatting about sex online
- Asking you to meet up face to face if you've only met them online
- Asking you to do sexual things on camera
- Asking for sexual pictures of you
- Making you feel worried, anxious or unsafe

If this is happening to you, or you're worried that it might be, report to [CEOP](#).

## Childline

Childline is a private and confidential service. Confidential means not telling anyone else what you've said. This means that whatever you say stays between you and Childline.

Call them on **0800 1111**. The number won't appear on your phone bill.

You can also visit [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) to speak to a counsellor online.