

## Life with an HIV Positive Partner

Sexually active couples use condoms to prevent unwanted pregnancies and to stop the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV. What do you do, however, if your partner informs you he/she is HIV positive? Does that mean you need to get out of the relationship immediately or just never have sex again? Not exactly. There are some definite precautions you will need to take to keep yourself HIV negative while in the relationship, but that should not stop you from pursuing and maintaining a loving and trusting relationship.

First and foremost, advise your physician of the situation so that you can get his/her advice on extra precautions you should take with your partner. If possible, you and your partner may want to research and join an AIDS support group to have others to talk to about your particular situation.

It goes without saying that you will need to be vigilant and consistent about practicing safe sex with your partner. Here are a few issues you and your partner will need to keep in mind:

- Always, always, always wear a condom (male or female condoms) when having anal or vaginal sex with your partner. If extra lubrication is desired, always use a water-based lubricant and avoid oil-based lubricants as they tend to weaken latex, causing breakage. Make sure that you always have a stash of condoms on hand so that you will be ready at a moment's notice. If you run out of condoms or are in a situation where you do not have access to condoms, maintain a strict rule that no condoms means no sex.
- There is no need to be worried about snuggling, kissing, or hugging. These are all safe ways to be intimate without having sex. Masturbating is also safe, as is ejaculation on skin, as long as there are no open cuts or wounds.
- Going along with the first condom rule, be sure to put on the condom before vaginal or anal sex is initiated. Many couples feel that as long as they pull out or withdraw before ejaculating, their partner will be safe. That is not true. Pre-cum also contains traces of HIV which can infect a partner, so play it safe from the get-go.
- When it comes to oral sex, your best bet would be to use a condom or dental dam on your partner. While physicians and AIDS researchers deem oral sex a low-risk for HIV transmission, that risk grows if you have any open cuts or sores in your mouth. Even flossing your teeth before performing oral sex should be avoided. In order to keep your mind at ease, simply use a condom or dental dam each time you and your partner will be having oral sex.
- If you and your partner enjoy using sexual toys or vibrators, avoid sharing them. If you both want to use the toys during a sexual encounter you can either wash the toys with warm water and soap before sharing or simply use a different condom on the toy for each partner.

The best thing you can do to enjoy a long, healthy relationship with your partner is to speak about these issues before embarking on a sexual relationship. Be open and honest about any feelings you each are having and you will be able to pursue the relationship you both desire.

For more information visit: [Life with an HIV-Positive Partner](#)

## About the Author

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