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In & Out

Answers to your most penetrating sex questions. By Debby Herbenick



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Q I'm a woman and I'm new to having sex with women. The girl I'm seeing and I are interested in trying a strap-on together. Do you have any suggestions?

A The Spare Parts harness (\$88 at Tulip, 3448 N Halsted St, 773-975-1515, mytulip.com) is a well-loved product that helps anchor a dildo to your body while you're having sex. This particular harness fits more body sizes than some models, thanks to the adjustable sides. It can be worn on dry land (like in the bed) or in the shower or bath. If you take it in water, make sure to use a silicone-based lubricant with the dildo, assuming the dildo itself is not made of silicone (if it is, apply water-based lubricant to the dildo and the vagina it's about to enter prior to getting in the shower or bath). As for a dildo to slip into your lovely new harness, check out the Talula (\$60 at Tulip). You might also like the Duoetto, a double dong that provides fun for two women and doesn't require a harness—just a little flexibility and imagination. Do make sure to get tested for STIs prior to sharing sex toys (or having oral sex or other types of sex play). If either of you are prone to vaginal yeast or bacterial infections, you might not want to share sex toys and just stick with strap-on play, always cleaning the toy according to manufacturer instructions before and after play. Have fun!

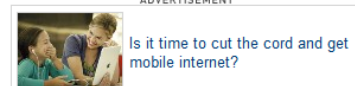
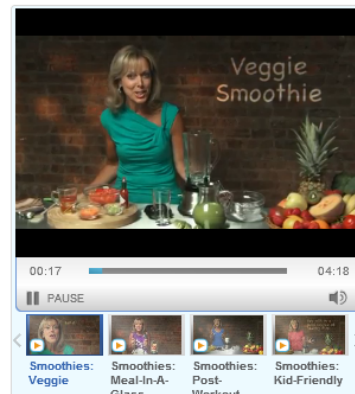
Q I am in grad school and my career goal is to become someone who works with teens and tweens who have issues with sex: difficulties talking with their parents, a lack of good information about sex, teen pregnancy, STIs, etc. In order for me to do this kind of work, what is the career path to follow? What courses or major should I choose in school?

A Yay! The world needs you! You can work with teens and tweens on these topics with different types of degrees. You could become a doctor or nurse and help them from the STI or pregnancy angle. Nurses tend to be strong on providing patient education about sexual health, puberty, STIs and such. Or you could pursue a master's in public health and perhaps take a job as a health educator at a place like Planned Parenthood or Family Health International and either get involved in sexual health or adolescent health research or education. You could also get a degree in psychology or counseling and see patients who are dealing with these issues; a master's degree in social work would take you in that direction, too. You can learn more about sex education, counseling and therapy through aasect.org. Advocates For Youth may also inspire your thinking along this path.

Q I don't come when I have sex. I'm tired of this! I've tried masturbation techniques, but still it's not happening. What should I do? Am I sick or what? I'm a married 25-year-old man with a four-year-old son.

A If your son is your biological son and you conceived him the old-fashioned way, then I'm assuming you have ejaculated at least once from sex. In other words, it's not that you cannot ejaculate, rather, you often find it challenging to ejaculate. Is that correct? If I'm wrong and you have never, ever ejaculated, please let your doctor know. Even if you have sometimes ejaculated but it's overly difficult for you, check in with your health-care provider just to make sure that all is well. If you feel shame, guilt, anxiety or worry around sex—whether you feel it is causing your ejaculatory difficulties or adding to them—consider meeting with a sex therapist (find one through sstatment.org). *The New Male Sexuality* (Bantam, \$17) may be a helpful resource as it deals well with performance anxiety. Some men find that they require a great deal of stimulation in order to ejaculate. This may be solved by trying different sex positions, using porn while you masturbate or holding a vibrator against your penis during masturbation. Low-level vibration can be found in products such as the vibrating condom rings available in many drug stores. For higher-intensity vibration, try the Acuvibe or Hitachi Magic Wand (the latter is \$49 at Early2Rise.net, a male-oriented online sex shop newly launched by the folks at Early to Bed).

Q I recently started dating a terrific guy. After the seventh date, we went back to his place and started making out, but he stopped and said he wasn't ready to sleep with me yet. I agreed (I'm all for taking things slower). Things progressed but when I went to touch his penis at one point, he wasn't hard. I asked him about it, and he told me that he really did want to have sex with me, but he has to know the person better. I said I was



...and I want to have sex with him, but he has to know the person better. I said I was fine with that. None of this has lessened my feelings for him. Our next date, everything was great conversation-wise, but when we went our separate ways I could tell that he was hesitant and nervous in kissing me. This seems like a problem that he's experienced before, but it's completely halted our ability to move forward as a couple (sexually or not). Is this no-sex-yet thing common for men in their late twenties? I'm getting the vibe that he's so embarrassed that he doesn't want to talk about it.

A It's not common for guys to reject sex after seven dates, but "not common" doesn't necessarily mean "red flag/weird." Some people prefer to wait because they worry about catching a sexually transmissible infection (STI) from a new partner and they want to get tested together. Others don't want to have their feelings hurt. Some find that they only want to have sex with someone when they are highly into them and like them as a relationship partner and not just a casual date. There are men who don't get erections easily from random hookups but when they're with someone who has potential as a relationship partner, they totally do. That said, there are other possibilities, too. Sometimes people delay sex with a new partner because they have an STI and want to wait until they've known their partner long enough before breaking the news. Other times people delay sex because they're harboring a crush on an ex (and can't get aroused by someone new) or because they're struggling with sexual-orientation issues. But there's no way of knowing if his delaying sex is a sign of nothing in particular, something desirable, or something red flag-ish at this point. What is important is that you try to talk about these things. In your own words, say something like "I'm definitely into you and I like the idea of taking things slowly, but I'd like to talk about your thoughts on us and the idea of us being sexual together, in any way." You could ask him what he wants in order to move forward and what kind of pace works for him and then share what you want. It's a nice opportunity to share your thoughts on sex and closeness.

Send letters to Debby Herbenick, Ph.D., c/o Time Out Chicago, 247 South State Street, 17th floor, Chicago, IL 60604, or send e-mail to inandout@timeoutchicago.com.

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