

FACT OR A MYTH—1

Masturbation is Normal—Fact

Masturbation is the process of self-stimulation, designed to derive pleasure through any means except sexual intercourse. Regardless of the gender, caste and creed self-stimulation to achieve sexual pleasure and orgasm is effective and widespread. Surveys reveal that 75% adolescent boys and 20% adolescent girls admit to indulging in masturbation. If the person derives a positive feeling then there is no harm in indulging in it. Some people may feel guilty, as they were ashamed as children by their parents (they might have got caught by the parents for masturbating). It has no adverse effect on the health of the individual and may provide an alternate safe sexual outlet.

A lot of myths and misconceptions prevail in all societies about masturbation.

Excess of anything is dangerous. Anxiety may contribute to a disturbed state of mind. This may often lead to insomnia, compulsive thoughts and later on to lack of concentration. Hence if masturbation becomes an obsession and interferes with daily routines, then it is time for consulting a doctor/counselor.

To a group of girls you cannot say masturbation is abnormal - guilt feeling among those indulging in it.

Can't say normal - those not indulging may feel inadequate - 'Not abnormal' may be the right word.

MYTH OR A FACT—2

Homosexuality is Abnormal—Myth or Fact!

Homosexuality is often referred to as the capacity to feel love and sexual satisfaction with someone of the same gender. Homosexuality is a different sexual preference. It is not considered normal in our society. Even if we do not approve of the action, we need not have a hatred or negative feeling towards a person with such habits. However, it is the responsibility of the adolescent, to see that nobody uses him/her for some one else's different sexual preference.

Encourage more of group fun activities where teenagers have a chance to mix about, show off, etc. without focusing attention on any particular individual.

FACT OR MYTH!!!

1. Abstinence is the only method of birth control that is 100% safe—Fact

The only absolutely sure way of avoiding pregnancy is to avoid sexual intercourse. All other methods of birth control (including operations) are less than 100% safe.

2. A girl has only herself to blame if she is sexually abused—Myth

Sexual abuse is more common than people think. Many girls are subject to sexual advances usually by a male relative, friend or neighbor), which can be humiliating. The girl is afraid to talk about it because of fear or guilt feeling.

3. A girls can not get pregnant if she has sex just once—Myth

A girl can get pregnant with a single act of intercourse including the very first one

4. Myths and misconceptions about vaginal discharge

- Anemia
- Weight loss
- Sin
- Cancerophobia
- Melting of bones (Belief in Kerala).

Myth: A large penis is of greater importance to a woman's sexual gratification.

Fact: Size has nothing to do with sexual satisfaction.

Myth: One drop of semen is equivalent to 40 drops of blood, which in its turn requires a lot of nourishing food

Fact: Semen contains no blood. The more number of times the semen gets ejaculated the more will be the production. As it's a normal physiological process extra nourishment is not at all necessary.

Myth: Nocturnal emissions or wet dreams indicate a sexual disorder.

Fact: It's not a disorder, and it indicates sexual maturity in adolescent boys.

Myth: Presence of a hymen is a test of a woman's virginity.

Fact: This is true, but absence always does not indicate sexual activity.

Myth: Larger breasts produce more milk than smaller ones.

Fact: Size has nothing to do with production. When the baby suckles at the breast enough milk will be produced no matter if the size is small or large.

Myth: Menopause is the end of sex life.

Fact: No, sex life ends only when the couple desires. It depends upon the attitude, interests and well-being of the couples.

Myth: Sexual act should be avoided during menses.

Fact: There is no such rule. It is only a matter of choice. It would be better to avoid for hygienic reasons.

Myth: Sterilization reduces sexual desire and capacity of men and women.

Fact: No. Sterilization only prevents fertilization and it has no role in reducing or increasing sexual desire.

Myth: Masturbation is practiced exclusively by men and can lead to insanity, impotence, homosexuality, dark circles around the eyes, mental retardation, diminishing size of penis, and changes in the angle of the penis.

Fact: Masturbation is practiced by 99% of men and it is also the safest sexual practice recommended by WHO. It has not known to cause any physical change, unless the person is obsessed with masturbation.

Myth: Homosexuals can be identified by their appearance. **Fact:** No. They do appear like normal people only.

Myth: If a man with a sexually transmitted infection has sex with a virgin girl, he will be cured of the STD.

Fact: Infac the will be doing more harm than good. He is not going to get cured and will instead pass on the virus to the girl also.

Myth: HIV positive persons can be identified by their appearance.

Fact: There is no means to identify the positive person by external appearance. Only blood test can reveal.

Myth: A woman can't get pregnant if she doesn't have an orgasm.

Fact: Pregnancy occurs when a man's sperm fertilizes a woman's egg. This can happen whether or not she has an orgasm.

Myth: A man can't get a woman pregnant if he doesn't have an orgasm.

Fact: While it's true that orgasm releases the lion's share of the man's semen into the woman's vagina, it's possible for a man to release small amounts of semen prior to ejaculation. If this semen enters the woman's

reproductive tract, there's a chance (albeit a small one) she'll become pregnant.

Myth: A woman can't get pregnant when she has sex for the first time.

Fact: A woman who is ovulating can get pregnant, regardless of her age or her sexual history.

Myth: A woman can't get pregnant if she douches after sex.

Fact: Douching does very little to prevent conception. After sexual intercourse, the sperm enter the cervix and are thus out of reach of any douching solution.

Myth: Pregnancy can't occur if people do it standing up or with the woman on top.

Fact: Positions during sex have very little to do with whether or not fertilization occurs. When a man deposits sperm into a woman's vagina, biological processes guide the sperm toward the woman's cervix and uterus, regardless of her position.

Myth: Pregnancy can't occur if a couple has sex only on the woman's "safe" days.

Fact: Since each woman's menstrual cycle is different, it's almost impossible to predict which days are safe. Sperm can survive for several days in a woman's body, so a couple could have sex well before the woman ovulates and still run the risk of a pregnancy.

Myth: The birth-control pill is effective as soon as you start taking it.

Fact: Depending on the day you start taking the pills, it can take up to one complete menstrual cycle before you can count on the pill to prevent pregnancy.

Myth: The pill can only be taken for a limited time.

Fact: In most healthy women, the pill can be taken from puberty to menopause. Its effectiveness does not decrease as a woman gets older.

Myth: The pill makes you fat.

Fact: Studies have found that today's low-dose oral contraceptives do not cause significant weight changes in most women.

Myth: The pill causes cancer.

Fact: On balance, the pill actually lowers cancer risk. While it's true that the pill causes a slight increase in breast cancer in women under 35, the risk is still tiny. More significant is that the pill cuts the risk of both ovarian and uterine cancer by more than 50 per cent, a benefit that persists even after you stop taking it.

Myth: The IUD causes infertility.

Fact: The IUD can facilitate the spread of a sexually transmitted infection (STI) into a woman's uterus and fallopian tubes, which could damage her future fertility. As long as a woman doesn't get an STI, however, the IUD does not put her fertility at risk. Thus, the IUD is a suitable method of contraception for people in long-term, monogamous relationships in which neither partner has an STI.

Myth: Contraceptives protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Fact: The only contraceptive that offers such protection is the condom. Even other barrier methods, such as the diaphragm, do nothing to keep bacteria out of the vagina. Similarly, the Pill and IUD offer no STI protection at all.

Masturbation Myths

- "Masturbation isn't "real sex" and only losers masturbate."
- If you masturbate you will go blind or bald or get acne or hair on your hands - or lots of other anomalies
- People in relationships or married don't masturbate. Wrong again (Many couples masturbate mutually).
- "Masturbation will stunt your growth".
- "If you masturbate you'll never be able to have children."

TRUE OR FALSE

1. STDs can spread through dirty toilet seats—False. STDs spread through sexual intercourse with an infected person and through infected blood. They do not spread through other means.
2. A person will not get an STD a second time, if the infection is properly treated the first time—False. Some STDs do have symptoms (discharge from the penis or vagina, pain while passing urine, ulcers over the genitals) but a person can have an STD and not have any symptoms.
3. Other than AIDS all other STDs have a cure— True.

All STIs including HIV can be treated and some fully cured with proper medical treatment (and not self-medication or treatment from quacks). It is necessary to get the partner also treated.

4. It is not HIV, but the associated infection that develops, that kills a person with AIDS—True AIDS is the acronym for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. It is caused by a virus called the HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus). This virus damages the body's immune system, leaving it unable to fight opportunistic infections and thus kill the person.
5. Like other STDs HIV is transmitted through sexual intercourse or through infected blood— True.

The virus is passed on only by sexual intercourse with an infected person or through infected blood (usually through sharing of infected needles and syringes among drug users). An infected woman can pass on the infection to her baby before or during birth (and may be through breast milk). There are no other routes of transmission.

6. Mosquitoes do not transmit HIV infection—True. Mosquitoes serve as vectors for the organisms causing malaria, filariasis and yellow fever. They do not transmit any other infection, including HIV infection. If they did, many more people of all age groups, should be dying of AIDS.
7. In India 8 out of 10 people who are infected with HIV have got it through the sexual route—True. 80-90% of infections in India occur through sexual intercourse with an infected person.
8. If diagnosed early, AIDS can be cured—False. There is, as yet, no cure for AIDS , but early diagnosis of HIV help initiative of treatment. There is no vaccine either, for this illness.
9. There is a difference between being HIV positive and having AIDS—True.

A person who is HIV positive is a healthy carrier of the virus. AIDS is the final stage of the disease when the body's immunity is completely destroyed.

10. Many people who have the virus (HIV) can be perfectly healthy for many years—True. Many people with the virus continue to be healthy, active and useful members of society for several years. They can pass on the virus to another person, without having any signs of infection themselves.
11. It is possible to say by means of a blood test if a person has HIV infection— True.

Blood tests are available that look for antibodies to the HIV. These test are used to find out if a person is HIV positive. But during the short period after the person is infected with HIV virus, but before antibodies are formed

(window period) usual blood tests do not detect infection. Only PCR (Polymerize Chain Reaction) test is useful at this stage.

12. Boiling water and freshly prepared bleach solution can kill HIV virus—True.

Outside the body, the HIV is fragile and can be destroyed by heat and chemical disinfectants easily, unlike hepatitis-B virus.

13. All of us are vulnerable to HIV infection—True. HIV is a truly a non-discriminatory virus. So it is not who we are, but what we do that puts us at risk for getting infected.

14. At present behavior change is the only way to prevent HIV transmission—True.

A serious public problem like AIDS can only be prevented by behaviour change at the personal level, prevention includes

- Safe sex practices
- Testing of blood before accepting a transfusion
- Use of sterile needles and syringes.

15. Safe sex means use of condoms—False.

Safe sex is the concept and practice of sexual activity that keeps a person healthy. It includes a variety of options.

- Abstinence (saying no to sex)
- Postponing sexual activity
- Being mutually faithful to one partner
- Restricting the number of sexual partners
- Using condoms if mutual faithfulness is not possible.

Condom use is therefore only one of the safe sex alternatives.

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