

SEXUAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Tips and information

Good sexual health is fundamental for our overall health and wellbeing. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships free of coercion, discrimination, and violence as described by the World Health Organisation. It is important to feel in control and make decisions that are right for you to assist in healthy and positive sexual relationships. This tip sheet will cover the areas of healthy relationships, consent, sexuality, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and contraception.

Healthy Relationships

Healthy relationships are based on equality and respect whereas unhealthy and abusive relationships are based on an imbalance of power and control.

Healthy relationships involve:

- ▶ Communicating your needs freely and providing space to hear the needs of the other person
- ▶ Setting boundaries and limits that enable you to feel happy and safe in the relationship
- ▶ Having awareness of your emotions and taking responsibility for looking after yourself
- ▶ Able to spend time together and apart, enjoying activities together and your own separate interests

Consent

Consent is a clear and enthusiastic yes! It's about wanting to do the sexual activity, not feeling like you have to or should do it. Consent is freely given, meaning you are not pressured or manipulated into it. Consent is an ongoing conversation – saying "yes" to one sexual act, does not mean you've consented to further sexual activity. Consent can be withdrawn at any time, you are allowed to change your mind. Where consent is withdrawn or cannot be given (e.g. you're not awake, or under the influence of drugs or alcohol), sexual activity must stop. Consent cannot be assumed and needs to be given by words or actions which indicate clear willingness and enthusiasm to engage in sexual activity.

Sexual activity without consent is sexual violence. If you are concerned about something that has happened to you – please reach out for support. Griffith has dedicated [Counsellor's for Violence Response and Prevention](#) that you can contact to discuss your situation. You can also call [1800 RESPECT](#) (1800 737 732) for support.

Sexuality

Sexuality is diverse and is an important aspect of who we are as individuals. It is about your sexual feelings, thoughts, attractions and behaviours towards other people. You may find people sexually, emotionally or physically attractive and these factors form part of your sexuality.

Sexually transmitted infections

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are passed on from one person to another during sexual activity including oral, vaginal, and anal sex. STIs include but are not limited to chlamydia, syphilis, gonorrhoea, genital herpes, human papilloma virus and HIV. The good news is that with the right protection, correct information, and regular health checks, most STIs can be avoided or treated.

Sexual health screenings and STI checks can be completed as part of a routine visit to your GP, and it is also a good opportunity to discuss other matters of your sexual health such as contraception. [Griffith University's Health and Medical Services](#) have GP's available to discuss your sexual health matters.

If you're sexually active, it is recommended that you get tested for STIs once a year, even if you use protection.

It is also advisable to get a sexual health check-up if:

- ▶ You are starting a new sexual relationship
- ▶ You and/or your partner have more than one sexual partner
- ▶ You are concerned you have an STI (symptoms don't always present)
- ▶ You have had unprotected sex including vaginal, oral and/or anal sex
- ▶ You had a condom break or fall off during sexual intercourse

For access to a great online resource, check out [Stop the Rise of STIs](#)

Contraception

Contraception is using intervention methods to prevent pregnancy. There are many forms of contraception that when used correctly, are highly effective. Condoms are the only method that offers protection from both pregnancy and STIs.

It is recommended to discuss your contraceptive options with your GP. [Griffith University's Health and Medical Services](#) GPs are available to provide accurate information when considering contraception that is right for you.