



napwa

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Some information
may be out of date

REAL TIME:

**THE TRUTH ABOUT FUCKING
WITHOUT CONDOMS**

INTRODUCTION

This booklet will help you work out what is safe, as well as assist you to avoid taking risks. Reducing risks will reduce stress and worry associated with sex. For HIV-negative men this means not worrying about becoming infected with HIV. For HIV-positive men this means not having to worry about exposing sex partners to HIV.

Specifically, this booklet will cover choices about not using condoms based on finding sex partners who are the same HIV status as you.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

The workbook style of the booklet is designed to enable you to reflect on your choices and your past and present behaviour. It will also assist you in identifying patterns of behaviour that cause you anxiety or stress. The purpose of working through the booklet is to help you overcome ambivalent or contradictory feelings or thoughts that may get in the way of healthier choices.



REALITY CHECK

HIV is still a very real issue for gay men. There are about 800 gay men diagnosed with HIV every year in Australia. That means at least two more men every day are finding out they are HIV positive.

In Sydney, for example, 1 in 7 gay men is HIV positive.

If you are a young gay man, or if you live in particular areas of the country, HIV may not be very visible to you. And even if you live in the major cities you may not be conscious of HIV all the time. However, even though HIV is not as visible in the gay community like it once was, it doesn't mean it has gone away. In fact, in many states HIV infections are increasing.

Also, you may have had unsafe sex—maybe even a lot of unsafe sex—in the past and not become infected with HIV. This may have led you to think that you are invulnerable—the truth is you're not!

HOW OFTEN DO YOU THINK THE FOLLOWING THOUGHTS? I DON'T WANT TO GET HIV BUT...

- **if it happens I can take treatments and live a normal life.**
 always occasionally sometimes rarely never
- **if it happens then at least I won't have to worry about it anymore.**
 always occasionally sometimes rarely never
- **the chance of getting infected from just one time is quite small, isn't it?**
 always occasionally sometimes rarely never
- **I think the risk is over-exaggerated anyway.**
 always occasionally sometimes rarely never
- **I only fuck without condoms with guys who are disease free.**
 always occasionally sometimes rarely never
- **I prefer the feeling of fucking without condoms.**
 always occasionally sometimes rarely never
- **Everyone else is doing it so I don't want to be left out.**
 always occasionally sometimes rarely never
- **I won't get as much sex anymore.**
 always occasionally sometimes rarely never
- **I'm afraid people will think I'm obsessive if I make a fuss about using condoms.**
 always occasionally sometimes rarely never

PLAYING THE NUMBERS

If you are HIV negative, having unprotected sex only with other guys who are HIV negative too might seem like a good way of avoiding HIV.

However, how can you really be sure that he's HIV negative? If he has fucked without condoms since his last HIV test, he may have picked up, and be passing on HIV.

*Not long before that I had an experience where three of my fuckbuddies all seroconverted (became HIV positive) within ten days of each other. I'd had unprotected sex with all of them; they'd been fuck buddies for a number of years, and we had close connections. I know that we'd all had unprotected sex with each other within a month of their seroconversions. Out of the four of them, I'm the only one who stayed negative, and I don't know why, because I'm a very hungry-arsed bottom, and two of them were tops. I was unbelievably lucky.**

* from www.stayingnegative.net.au

REMEMBER:

You may have had unsafe sex in the past - maybe even a lot of it - and not become infected with HIV. This does not mean you are invulnerable.



THINK AGAIN:

- If you think positive gay men always tell their HIV status;
- If you think negative gay men always tell their HIV status;
- If you think someone who wants “unsafe sex” has HIV;
- If you think someone who wants “unsafe sex” does not have HIV;
- If you think that someone doesn't say they are HIV positive must be HIV negative



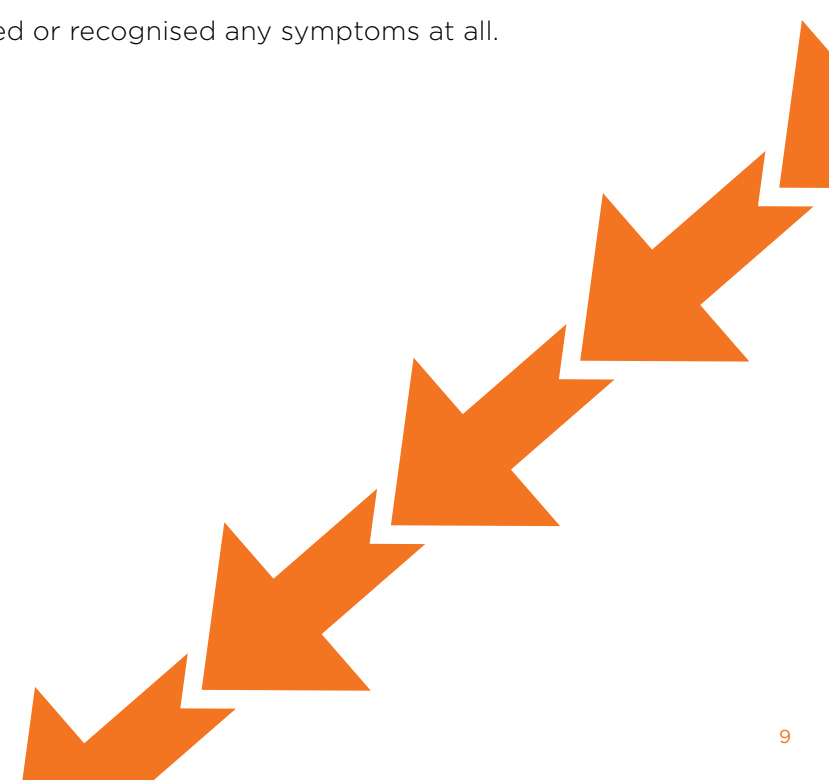


THE FLOW-ON EFFECT

If you've had unsafe sex lately, you may have picked up, and be passing on HIV.

The amount of the virus in blood and cum is very high in the first few weeks after being infected. This makes it more likely that HIV will be passed on to others.

If you have been infected with HIV you will sometimes experience physical symptoms between 2-6 weeks later. These may have been flu-like symptoms, or fever, or rashes. However some people who get HIV will not have experienced or recognised any symptoms at all.





- **1. In Australia, what proportion of new HIV infections comes from men who have also been recently infected?**
 - a) one in five
 - b) one in 50
 - c) one in 500

- **2. What proportion of new HIV infections come from men who don't even know they are HIV positive?**
 - a) one in three
 - b) one in 30
 - c) one in 3,000

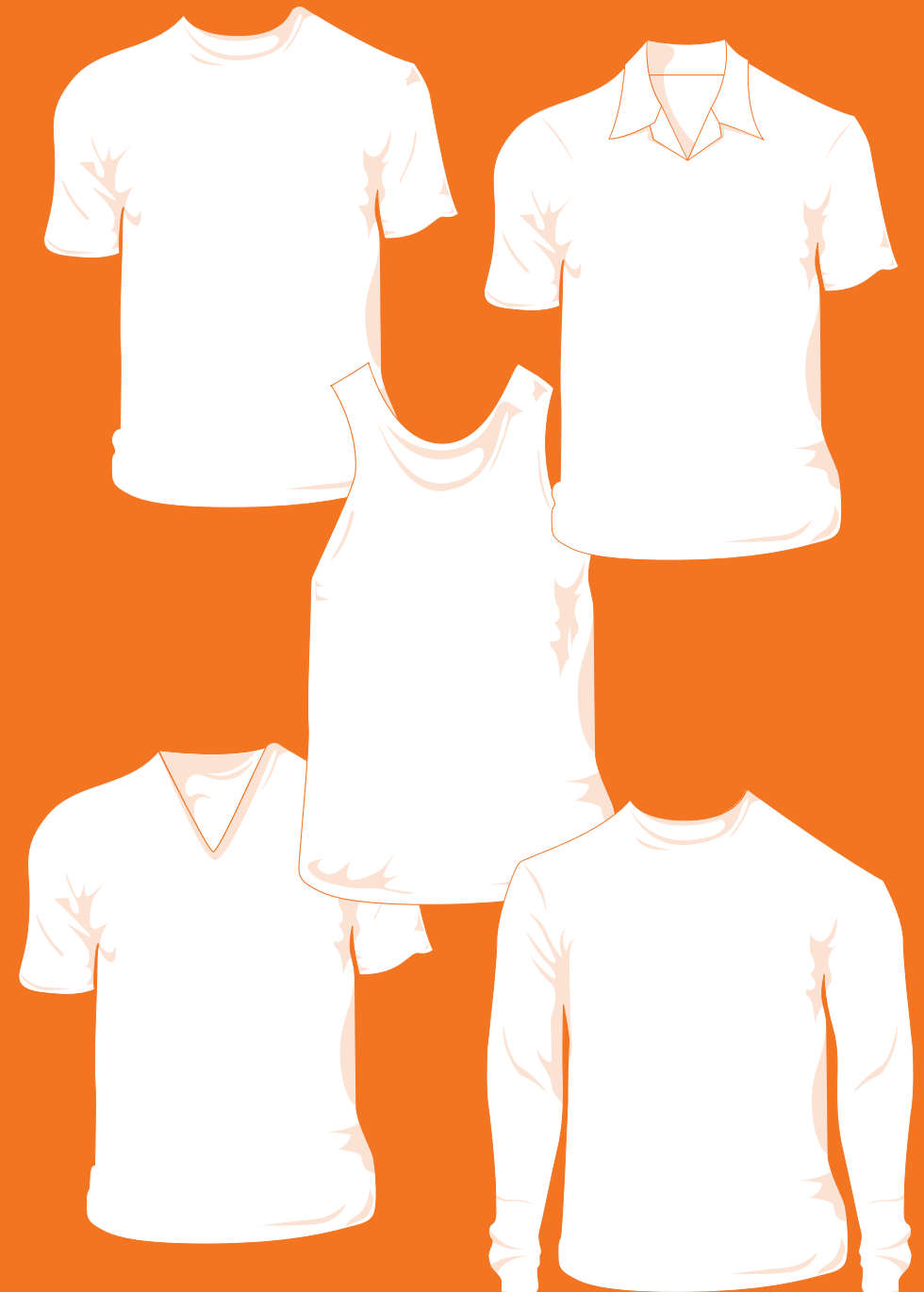
- **3. Having a sexually transmissible infection (STI) makes HIV transmission more likely.**
 - a) True
 - b) False. STIs don't make any difference at all.
 - c) Maybe. STIs make someone with HIV more infectious but they don't make someone who is HIV negative more likely to get infected.

- **4. What proportion of people who are infected with HIV get a 'seroconversion illness'?**
 - a) 100%. Everyone who is infected with HIV will experience severe symptoms such as a bad flu, or fever or rashes.
 - b) Less than 10%. Only a small proportion of people get any symptoms at all.
 - c) Up to 80%, but the severity of the symptoms varies so they may go unnoticed.

MAN SIZE

Our perceptions of “what it means to be a man” (masculinity) can sometimes influence our behaviour, especially when it comes to sex. The idea of ‘risk-taking’ or ‘being in control’ are both notions associated with masculinity, but are at quite different ends of the scale when it comes to what you’re prepared to do in bed.

The following are all terms associated with the idea of masculinity. Choose those that most closely match with your notions of ‘masculinity’ and write them on the t-shirts on the opposite page:




EXPECTATIONS AND STEREOTYPES

There are some images and ways of life that have attached to them connotations of danger and rule-breaking. There seems to be an association between how masculine a guy looks and what kind of sex he is into. How many times have you looked at a guy and thought, "He's rough lookin'! He must be into barebacking."

What do you think the pros and cons are of expectations and stereotypes of guys who look rough, masculine or dangerous?

PROS



CONS



Reduce your risks and avoid the worries!

DIFFICULT TIMES

There are times when using condoms is difficult. Certain situations or previous experiences help shape our thoughts around condom use:

BREAK UPS

Recent Break ups may lead some people into having unprotected sex for various reasons.

Think about some of the thoughts or feelings you may be experiencing after a break up and see if any of these apply to you?

- I can't get used to them now - my ex and I never used them and we're both fine.
- I used to be so committed to using condoms with my partner - now its time for a change!
- I've been feeling really bad since the break up; I just can't be bothered to use condoms now - I don't care anymore!

- I'd be too embarrassed to bring up the subject with someone new- he might think I was HIV positive if I insisted on using condoms.
- The last guy I dated broke up with me because he didn't want to use condoms and I'm not risking that happening again.
- Ever since we broke up I've been on a sex binge - getting wasted every time I go out and pick up; I want to use condoms, but I'm just too wasted to insist on it.



REMEMBER:

By working out what's going on in your head, you have a good chance of sticking to your own safe sex rules and avoiding HIV.

WHAT'S MOTIVATING YOU TO HAVE UNPROTECTED SEX?

→ My drug/alcohol use

yes no sometimes

→ My self justifications/own reasons

yes no sometimes

→ My lack of confidence/anxious feelings

yes no sometimes

→ My 'heat of the moment' thoughts/actions

yes no sometimes

→ I don't want to lose them/be lonely

yes no sometimes

You know you need to change when there is a difference between what you want and what you are doing.

HARD TIMES

Erection difficulties can be caused by the following...

- Having anxiety/depression
- Having a mental illness
- Allergy to latex
- Being obese
- Smoking
- Using condoms incorrectly

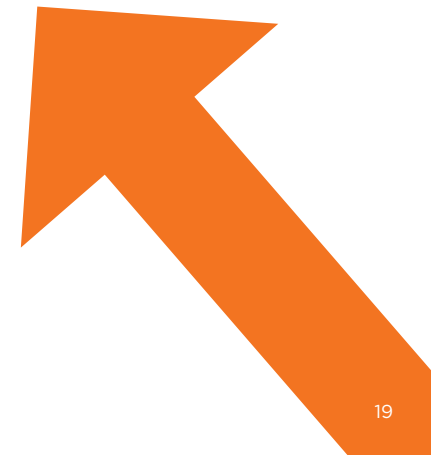
- Botched penis enlargement surgery
- Too many drugs and alcohol
- Using the wrong size condoms
- Embarrassment about sex
- The effects of ageing
- An excuse not to use condoms "I don't like them"
- Partner not hot enough
- Medication side effects
- Different expectations
- Being shy about cock size
- Performance anxiety

Have you ever had problems getting an erection or maintaining an erection during sex?

often occasionally never

If so, what have you done about it?

- taken viagra/cialis
- watched porn
- told him I'd taken too many drugs
- had non-penetrative sex instead
- left the situation
- panicked
- used a cockring
- told him he wasn't hot enough
- cried



WHERE ARE YOU AT RIGHT NOW?

By reading this booklet you may have learnt some things that you didn't know about HIV - like how easy it can be to transmit soon after infection, or how many guys have HIV already.

Just knowing that something is risky isn't always enough to avoid the behaviour that places you at risk. For example, everyone knows that smoking is seriously bad for your health, but many people still smoke. Our decisions about our behaviour and the risks we take are influenced by more than just knowledge about the risks and benefits of any one act.

In this booklet we have listed some of the reasons identified by other guys as contributing to their decisions to sometimes take risks during sex. You might have seen something that reminded you of thoughts or feelings you have experienced at times when you fucked without condoms.

By being more aware of the reasons why you sometimes take risks, it can be easier to work out how to avoid taking the same risks again in future.

In the spaces below, write down some of the factors that have influenced you at times when you have taken risks.

THINK ABOUT TIMES IN THE PAST WHEN YOU HAVE TAKEN RISKS DURING SEX.

What was your state of mind before you had sex?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

What thoughts or feelings got in the way of sticking to safe sex, or contributed to taking a risk?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

What other factors contributed to fucking without condoms?

Was it something about the other guy, the place where it happened, or what you had been doing before you had sex?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

What did you think about after you'd had sex?

Did you think differently about the risks involved?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

WHERE DO YOU GO FROM HERE?

Hopefully this booklet has helped you think about:

- the reality of HIV and how it affects you
- your choices about not using condoms based on finding sex partners who are the same HIV status as you
- the associated risks of these choices
- some of the reasons that have affected your decisions around taking risks

THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT TO DO NEXT.

Now that you have an understanding of the risks associated with your choices, you can put a plan in place to make a change.

Change doesn't happen overnight - you have to think about what you want, what you've done in the past, and what you will do next time.

You may need to read this booklet again to keep the ideas fresh in your mind. One slip-up doesn't necessarily mean all is lost, so don't give up.

HELP IS AT HAND.

Working through this booklet on your own can help you understand the changes you need to make, but talking with someone else improves your chances of making changes that stick.

There are places where you can speak to someone, either on the phone, face-to-face or even by email and on the Internet (see the list on contacts at the back of this booklet).

MAKING A CHANGE

Write down your commitment to yourself to making a change. It sounds simple but it can make a difference.

What changes do you want to make to your decisions about sex?

What things will help you make changes that will stick?

I will seek assistance from:



CONTACTS

AIDS Councils

Australian Capital Territory AIDS Action Council of the ACT

02 6257 2855

www.aidsaction.org.au

New South Wales

AIDS Council of NSW (ACON)

02 9206 2000

TTY 02 9283 2088

Freecall 1800 063 060

www.acon.org.au

Hunter Newcastle

02 4927 6808

Illawarra Wollongong

02 4226 1163

Mid North Coast Port

Macquarie

02 6584 0943

Northern Rivers Lismore

02 6622 1555

Positive Living Centre Sydney

02 9699 8756

Northern Territory

Northern Territory AIDS and Hepatitis Council

Darwin 08 8941 1711

Freecall 1800 880 899

Alice Springs 08 8953 3172

Palmerston 08 8931 3676

Queensland

Queensland Association for Healthy Communities

07 3017 1777

Brisbane and South East Qld

www.qahc.org.au

Men's Line Freecall

1800 155 141

North Queensland

07 4041 5451

Central Queensland

07 5451 1118

South Australia

AIDS Council of South Australia

08 8334 1611

Freecall 1800 888 559

www.acsa.org.au

Tasmania

Tasmanian Council on AIDS, Hepatitis and Related Diseases

03 6234 1242

Freecall 1800 005 900

www.tascahrd.org.au

Victoria

Victorian AIDS Council / Gay Men's Health Centre

03 9865 6700

Freecall 1800 134 840

TTY 03 9827 3733

www.vicaids.asn.au

Western Australia

Western Australian AIDS Council

08 9482 0000

www.waaid.com

PLWHA Groups

Australian Capital Territory

PLWHA ACT

02 6257 4985

or 02 6257 2855

www.aidsaction.org.au/plwaha

New South Wales

Positive Life NSW

02 9361 6011

www.positivelife.org.au

Freecall 1800 245 677

Northern Territory

PLWHA NT

08 8941 1711

Freecall 1800 880 899

Queensland

Queensland Positive People Statewide Resource Centre

07 3013 5555

Freecall 1800 636 241

www.qpp.net.au

Positive Directions

07 3900 8000

www.positivedirections.org.au

South Australia

PLWHA SA

08 8293 3700

Positive Living Centre

www.hivsa.org.au

Tasmania

(TasCAHRD)

03 6234 1242

www.tascahrd.org.au

Victoria

PLWHA Victoria

03 9865 6772

www.plwhavictoria.org.au

Western Australia

HIV/AIDS Peer Advisory Network (HAPAN)

08 9482 0000



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