

## Are New Yorkers Having Safe Sex?

**M**ost adult New Yorkers were sexually active in the past year (72%), with one in nine reporting multiple (two or more) sex partners during that time.

Sexual activity is a normal part of life. However, it can also put people at risk, and many New Yorkers who are sexually active do not take precautions to avoid sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or unplanned pregnancies. Approximately 60,000 new STI cases, including 3,745 new HIV diagnoses, were reported in New York City in 2006. Untreated STIs have serious consequences, including increased risk of HIV infection among those with other STIs, infertility, poor birth outcomes, some cancers and death. Also, more than half of

pregnancies are unplanned (not desired at that time). Unplanned pregnancies are associated with adverse outcomes for both women and infants.

Sexually active New Yorkers can reduce the risk of STIs and unplanned pregnancies by reducing their number of partners and using condoms with or without other contraceptives. Such precautions are particularly important for those with multiple partners because the risk of acquiring STIs increases with additional partners.

This report presents new information about sexually active New Yorkers and offers recommendations for health care providers and sexually active adults on how to prevent STIs and unplanned pregnancies.

## Many New Yorkers report having multiple sex partners

- Overall, 11% of New Yorkers, or 610,000 adults, report having multiple sex partners. Men are more likely than women to report multiple sex partners (17% vs. 6%) in the past year.
- Young adults (18 to 24) are four times as likely as older adults (45 and older) to report having multiple sex partners (25% vs. 6%).
- Asian adults are less likely to report multiple sex partners than other racial/ethnic groups.
- Adults not in a relationship are more likely to have multiple sex partners than those who are married or in a relationship.
- New Yorkers reporting same-sex partners are nearly three times as likely as those with opposite sex partners to have multiple sex partners (33% vs. 13%).

**Percent of New Yorkers with multiple sex partners (two or more) in the past 12 months**

	Women	Men	Overall
<b>Age (in years)</b>			
18-24	18	34	25
25-44	8	20	14
45+	2	11	6
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
White	7	15	11
Black	7	24	14
Hispanic	6	19	11
Asian	4*	8	6
<b>Relationship status</b>			
Married or in a relationship	3	7	5
Not in a relationship	10	32	19
<b>Sex Partners</b>			
Opposite sex only	7	20	13
Same sex only	12*	40	33

\*Due to small numbers, the estimate should be interpreted with caution.

Data presented in this report are from the New York City Community Health Survey (NYC CHS), conducted by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Bureau of Epidemiology Services, and are from 2006, unless otherwise specified. The CHS is a telephone health survey of approximately 10,000 adults ages 18 years and older. For full survey details, visit [nyc.gov/health/survey](http://nyc.gov/health/survey). Other data sources include The Bureau of STD Control's Quarterly Report (1Q2007), 2006 New York City HIV/AIDS Annual Surveillance Statistics (November 2007) and HIV diagnosis data from the Bureau of HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control. Unplanned pregnancy prevalence is calculated based on Guttmacher Institute methodology, and conducted by the Bureau of Maternal, Infant and Reproductive Health using NYC Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System 2004–2005 data ([nyc.gov/html/doh/html/ms/ms-prams.shtml](http://nyc.gov/html/doh/html/ms/ms-prams.shtml)) and Bureau of Vital Statistics birth data.

## Always use condoms to prevent STIs

### Four in 10 New Yorkers with multiple sex partners did not use a condom at last sex

- Less than two thirds of New Yorkers with multiple sex partners in the past year (60%) report using condoms the last time they had sex.
- Among NYC adults with multiple sex partners:
  - Reported condom use is similar between women and men (62% vs. 61%).
  - Condom use is higher among younger New Yorkers (18 to 24) than among older age groups.
  - Hispanic adults are more likely to have used a condom the last time they had sex than white adults (66% vs. 55%).
  - More than two fifths of NYC adults who are married or in a relationship (43%) and two thirds of adults who are not in a relationship (66%) report using a condom the last time they had sex. Fewer women who are married or in a relationship used a condom at last sex than women who are not (27% vs. 67%).

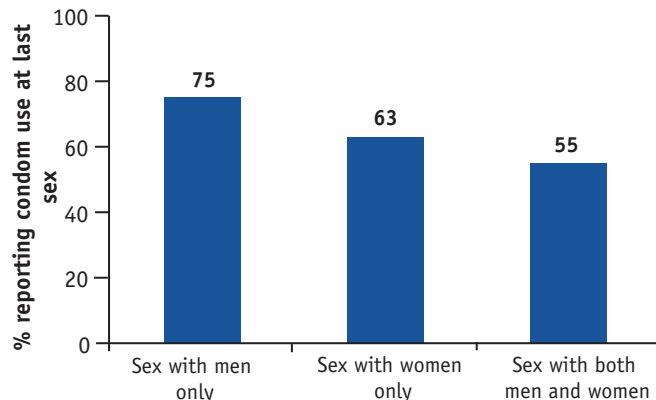
Percent of adults with multiple sex partners (two or more) in the past year who used a condom at last sex

<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Age (in years)</b>	
18-24	80
25-44	61
45+	56
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	
White	55
Black	60
Hispanic	66
Asian	67
<b>Relationship status</b>	
Married or in a relationship	43
Not in a relationship	66

### One in four men with multiple male sex partners do not use condoms

- More men with multiple male sex partners used a condom at last sex compared to men with multiple female sex partners (75% vs. 63%).
- Men who had sex with both men and women in the past year were less likely than those who only had sex with men to report using a condom at last sex (55% vs. 75%).
- Men who have sex with men were more likely to have five or more sex partners in the past year than men who have sex with only women (23% vs. 6%).
- Among men with five or more sex partners, less than two thirds report using a condom at last sex (62%).

Percent of men with multiple sex partners (two or more) in the past year, who used a condom at last sex, by sex of partner\*



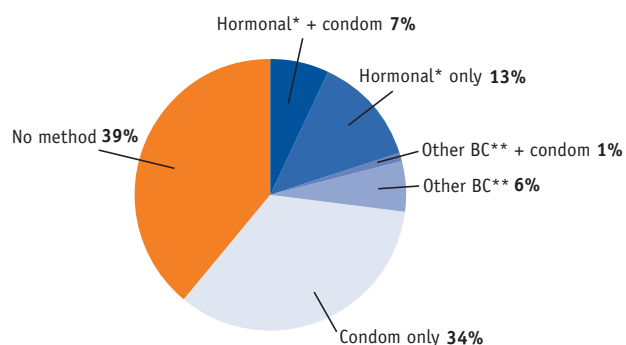
\* CHS 2005-06

## Use both condoms and hormonal contraceptives to prevent pregnancy

### Condoms are the most frequently used method of contraception among women of reproductive age

- More than one third of women (39%) did not use any form of contraception at last sex; yet, most of these women (83%) were not planning a pregnancy.
- One third of women (34%) used a condom as their only form of contraception the last time they had sex.
- 13% of women used a hormonal form of contraception at last sex.
- Dual method contraception, which includes using both a condom and another form of contraception (such as hormonal) is recommended to provide maximum protection against both pregnancy and STIs. However, dual method use is uncommon among NYC women. Only 7% of women of reproductive age used both a hormonal method and a condom at last sex.

Method of contraception used at last sex among women of reproductive age (18 to 44)



\* Hormonal methods: birth control pills, shots or implants, the patch/Ortho-Evera, or the vaginal ring.

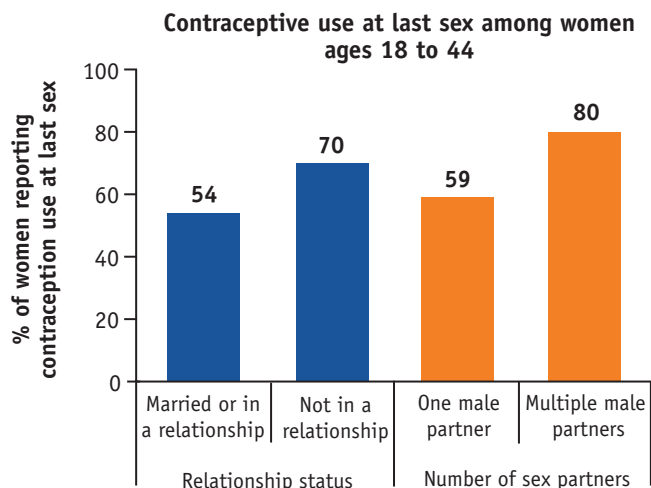
\*\* Other birth control (BC): withdrawal/rhythm method, IUD, foam, jelly, cream, sterilization and other methods.

#### Emergency Contraception

In cases of unprotected sex, emergency contraceptive pills (EC) can be used to prevent unplanned pregnancy. EC is most effective when taken within three days of unprotected sex, and is moderately effective up to five days. Few women (8%) and men (5%) of reproductive age report receiving information, counseling, or prescriptions for emergency contraception in the past year.

### One in five women with multiple sex partners are having sex without contraception

- Women not in a relationship are more likely to have used any contraception at last sex than those who are in a relationship (70% vs. 54%). The use of dual methods of contraception is twice as likely among women not in a relationship compared to women who are (10% vs. 5%).
- Women with multiple male sex partners in the past year are more likely than women with only one partner to have used any contraception (80% vs. 59%). Using dual methods of contraception is more likely among women with multiple sex partners than those with only one sex partner (14% vs. 6%).



## Recommendations

### Sexually active adults can prevent STIs by reducing their number of sex partners and using condoms.

- Having one partner in a mutually exclusive relationship is the best protection against STIs.
- Communicate with your sex partners about: number and gender of sex partners, using condoms every time you have sex, HIV/STI status, and getting tested for HIV/STIs *before* having sex.
- Avoid alcohol and drugs when you have sex.

### Sexually active adults can prevent unplanned pregnancies.

- Talk to your health care provider and partner about pregnancy intentions.
- Men and women are both responsible for practicing safe sex. If you do not want to become pregnant, use condoms and another effective method of contraception.
- If you have unprotected sex, use Plan B® Emergency Contraception (EC). Adults 18 and older can buy EC over-the-counter in pharmacies or at low cost from some health centers. Women 12 and older can get EC free at Health Department STD clinics within 72 hours of unprotected sex.

### Health care providers should conduct a complete sexual history.

- Ask about number and gender of sex partners, condom and contraceptive use, and STI risk behaviors.
- Urge sexually active adults who are not planning a pregnancy to use dual methods of contraception.
- Emphasize that having more sex partners increases the risk of STI infection.
- Urge all patients, regardless of risk level, to find out their HIV status. Free, confidential testing is available at Health Department clinics in all five boroughs, regardless of immigration status or ability to pay.

### Health care providers should discuss pregnancy planning with sexually active adults.

- Encourage sexually active adults to plan their pregnancies and to discuss contraception with their partners.
- Urge sexually active adults who are not planning a pregnancy to use dual methods of contraception.

Call 311 for more information or visit:

Sexual and reproductive health resources: <http://www.nyc.gov/health/maternity>

Emergency Contraception information: <http://home2.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/ms/ms6.shtml>

Free NYC Condoms: [www.nyccondom.org](http://www.nyccondom.org)

Free and confidential STD clinics: [www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/std/std2.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/std/std2.shtml)

Free and confidential HIV testing: [www.nyc.gov/health](http://www.nyc.gov/health)

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