

**COVID-19 vaccines allow us to more safely engage in relationships, sex and everything in between! Practice these strategies to protect yourself and your partners from COVID-19.**

## Know how COVID-19 spreads

- The virus spreads by infected saliva, mucus or respiratory particles being inhaled or entering the eyes, nose or mouth.
- The virus can spread during sex since sex can involve close heavy breathing and contact with saliva.
- There is no evidence the virus spreads through semen or vaginal fluid, though the virus has been found in the semen of people who have COVID-19.
- The risk of spreading the virus through feces (poop) is thought to be low, though the virus has been found in the feces of people who have COVID-19. Research is needed to know if the virus can spread through sexual activities involving oral contact with feces (such as rimming).

## Get vaccinated

- COVID-19 vaccination is the best way to protect yourself and your partners from COVID-19 illness, hospitalization and death, including from more contagious variants of the virus.
  - Visit [vaccinefinder.nyc.gov](https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov) or call **877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692)** to find a vaccination site. Vaccination is free, safe and effective.
- People who are fully vaccinated (at least two weeks have passed since they got a single-dose vaccine or the second dose of a two-dose vaccine) can more safely go on dates, make out and have sex.
- Even if you are fully vaccinated, get tested for COVID-19 if you have symptoms or were recently exposed to someone with COVID-19. If you test positive, avoid having sex and close contact with others until your isolation period ends. For more information on COVID-19 testing, visit [nyc.gov/health/coronavirus](https://nyc.gov/health/coronavirus) and click on “[Testing](#).”



**Continue practices to prevent HIV, other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unintended pregnancy, including accessing sexual health care.**

NYC Health Department HIV, STI and contraception services:

- Call the Sexual Health Clinic Hotline at 347-396-7959 (Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.) to talk to a health care provider.
- Visit [nyc.gov/health/clinics](https://nyc.gov/health/clinics) or call **311** for Sexual Health Clinic hours and services.
- Call the 24/7 NYC PEP Hotline at 844-3-PEPNYC (844-373-7692) if you think you were exposed to HIV.
- Visit [nyc.gov/condoms](https://nyc.gov/condoms) to find out how to get free safer sex products.

## Tips for staying safe

Follow precautions if you or your partners are not fully vaccinated, are immunocompromised, are age 65 and older, have a health condition that increases the risk of severe COVID-19 or live with someone from one of these groups.

### Before you hook up, talk about:

- **Vaccination status.** If you or your partner is fully vaccinated, you are at lower risk.
- **Recent COVID-19 testing.** If positive, avoid sex and close contact. If negative, keep in mind a test only shows if a person may have been infected when they were tested.
- **Recent COVID-19 infection.** Someone who had COVID-19 is unlikely to get it again within three months.
- **Recent COVID-19 exposure.** Close contact with others should be avoided for 10 days after an exposure.
- **COVID-19 precautions.** Being intimate with people who wear a face mask and follow other COVID-19 precautions is a safer way to go.

### Play safer.

- **Avoid sex parties and large gatherings.** If you do attend, follow COVID-19 precautions.
  - Visit [nyc.gov/covidtest](https://nyc.gov/covidtest) or call **311** to find a testing site (many sites offer testing at no cost).
- **Limit your sex partners** to people in your social bubble.
- **Enjoy sex virtually**, such as video dates, sexting, sexy Zoom parties or chat rooms.
- **Avoid kissing** anyone who is not in your social bubble.
- **Wear a face mask, even during sex!** Wearing a face mask over your nose and mouth adds a layer of protection.
- **Make it kinky.** Be creative with sexual positions and physical barriers that allow sexual contact while preventing close face-to-face contact.
- **Masturbate together.** Use distance and face masks to reduce the risk.
- **Use condoms and dental dams** to reduce contact with saliva, semen or feces during oral or anal sex or rimming.
- **Wash up before and after sex.** Wash hands and sex toys with soap and warm water. Disinfect keyboards and touch screens you share with others.

For the latest information, visit [nyc.gov/health/coronavirus](https://nyc.gov/health/coronavirus).