Dear Alice,

If a man is performing anal sex, can he actually feel his partner's waste products? Please answer because I read somewhere that the proper thing to do is perform an enema first and I can't believe this is true.

? Thinking about the back door

**Answer**

Dear Thinking about the back door,

An enema prior to anal sex is not a necessary procedure, and it is uncommon. In fact, enemas should be used infrequently because they can irritate the anus and intestinal lining and disrupt your body's natural elimination rhythm.

It is a good idea, however, for the partner receiving anal sex to take a trip to the toilet (and possibly the shower for a soapy wash) before anything gets started. If the recipient has recently made a bowel movement and can claim a healthy digestive system (one free from diarrhea, constipation, or intestinal disorders), only trace amounts of feces will remain in the anus and rectum, far too little for the penetrating partner to "feel" during the act. What a penetrating partner performing anal sex with fingers or a penis does feel is the "tight" sensation of the anus, and the increased friction this causes. The anus is a highly sensitive area, rich in nerve endings. The anal sphincter responds to the initial penetration attempt with a spastic contraction, which is usually felt by the penetrating partner.

This tightness of the anal area is one reason why anal sex is a high-risk activity for the transmission of HIV and other STIs. Always use a barrier (condom, gloves, dam) and lots of lube to ensure the barrier doesn't tear. Be sure to use silicone or water-based lube. Avoid oil-based lubes, lotions, or petroleum products. These destroy latex! Many anal sex connoisseurs prefer silicone lubricants over water-based lubes because they tend to last longer and they never dry "sticky."

Following your backdoor romp, remember that bacteria from the anus can be on the penis, fingers, toys, etc., so it is critical to thoroughly clean all items that you played with in the back yard, especially before engaging in vaginal intercourse, oral sex, or other activities. Be sure to change out the condoms and barriers, too, 'cuz germs, germs, germs!
Have fun and be safe!

Alice!
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