First sex for two virgins? [1]

Dear Alice,

Is it possible to have a penis that's too big to have sex? My girlfriend and I tried to have sex the other day (both of us are virgin) and my penis seemed too large to enter vagina. Is this possible, or is this because of some other factors, i.e. positions?

Don't know

Answer

Dear Don't know,

Genitals are like snowflakes: No two are alike. Thus, the mechanics of sex can be puzzling at times. There are many potential reasons why things may not be fitting perfectly. For women who have never had vaginal intercourse, the first few times experiencing penetration can be uncomfortable or painful. There are a few reasons for this: First, penetrative sexual encounters can be the first time that the hymen (a thin membrane covering the opening of the vagina) is broken, which for some can be painful and be accompanied by some slight bleeding. However, there are other ways a woman might have broken or stretched her hymen that are not sexual.

Being nervous might also have been a factor in your recent experience. Sometimes, when either partner is nervous and not relaxed, it may be difficult to for the body to respond in the way you were hoping. It can also make it difficult to have penetrative sex as well. Nerves can make it more challenging to achieve a full erection for a man. It can also prevent a woman from being fully aroused, relaxed, and produce enough natural lubrication to make penetration comfortable. Often, taking your time, talking to each other, and focusing on foreplay helps address this issue if that was a factor for either partner.

Another reason first time sex can be uncomfortable for women is that the walls of the vagina are being stretched beyond what they had been previously and this can be uncomfortable. There is much vaginal diversity and women experience first-time sex differently depending on their bodies. And just like vulvas, penises also vary in size. No matter the size of each of person's genitals, there are many ways of making sex work, with or without penetration. As previously mentioned, foreplay along with some communication can go a long way to make you and your partner feel more comfortable.

There are a few additional, somewhat less common reasons why penetration may be difficult. A condition called vaginismus affects about 2% of women and causes intense and painful
muscle contractions of the vaginal walls whenever penetration occurs. Additionally, some women have thicker hymens that cannot be stretched so easily without causing significant injury or bleeding. In these circumstances, a trip the gynecologist may be in order.

If penetrative sex continues to be uncomfortable, consider trying some other fun activities. Check out Definition of sex? from the Go Ask Alice! archives for some additional ideas. If you both have your hearts set on penetration, grab some lube (silicone or water-based), communicate, and go slowly. You might also consider, instead of jumping right into penile-vaginal sex, using fingers first. Sometimes, gradually increasing the size of what she inserts can help her build up to accommodating a penis. If anything starts to hurt (for either partner), don’t ignore it? and make sure to tell your partner! If that feels comfortable, move up to two or more fingers. From there, you might consider a shopping trip to a sex toy store to purchase a dildo or vibrator that's the next size up. Make it a fun, pleasurable, and pressure-free game for the two of you.

Happy exploration,

Alice!

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