Diminishing STI Transmission [1]

Week of:
Jun 28, 2019

Five kinds of condoms: A guide for consumers [2]

Dear Alice,

My boyfriend and I have recently decided that we will use condoms and spermicide for contraceptive purposes. We have begun experimenting with various brands/types of condoms, which has caused concern. Can you explain the various types of condoms, and/or the advantages/disadvantages of each, i.e., effectiveness, etc. Lambskin vs. latex vs. polyurethane??? We are monogamous and primarily concerned with pregnancy prevention.

Thanks for the help!

— Condom Confusion

Read more [2]

Does a good washing before anilingus remove bacteria? [3]

Dear Alice,

My professor was giving a lecture today about oral stimulation and she brought up anilingus. She said that the risk for contracting unwanted bacteria is high. I know that dental dams can be used, but how effective is a good washing before anilingus to rid you or your partner of bacteria?

Read more [3]

Where can I get dams for oral sex? [4]
Hey Alice,

Do you know where I can get dental dams for lesbian oral sex and why these are barely promoted compared to condoms?

— cedar

Reducing herpes transmission risk with Valtrex

Dear Alice,

I am a gay man, and my on-again, off-again boyfriend has genital herpes on his anus. He currently takes Valtrex to manage his symptoms (his outbreaks occur about once or twice a year). I love him and want to continue our relationship, but I also want to protect myself. Would taking Valtrex (or some other viral suppressing drug) reduce the chances of transmitting the disease to me?

Better information about dental dams

Dear Alice,

I've seen the recommendations. I've seen the suggestions for do-it-yourself workaround (cutting open a condom, plastic wrap...). What I "haven't" seen is practical usage advice — how to place the thing effectively, how to overcome the limitations of losing direct contact, how to arrange things to permit vaginal penetration with fingers while still maintaining protection and so on. Best-practice condom use isn't perfectly obvious either, but at the most basic level it's pretty straightforward. If you want to build acceptance for barrier use during cunnilingus, it needs to be at least as clear and/or at least as well-documented.
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