What's rimming? [1]

Alice,

What is rimming?

Answer

Dear Reader,

Rimming, also called anilingus or a rim job, refers to making oral-anal sexual contact. While sometimes a precursor to anal sex, rimming is a form of stimulation that may be its own means to an erotic end. Getting down anilingus-style involves penetrating with the tongue, licking, sucking, kissing, or otherwise orally stimulating a partner's anus. Folks of all genders and orientations may find rimming enjoyable due to the high concentration of nerve endings at the anal opening and the many sensations that the mouth, lips, and tongue are capable of producing through oral stimulation. Trust and communication, as with all sexual explorations between consensual partners, are key components to mutually enjoyable rimming.

Sometimes, rimming is seen as taboo, likely due to its perceived association with anal sex and queer men’s sexual practices. There are myths to bust here, as men who have sex with men have reported engaging in a wide range of sexual activities, which may include anal play for some and not others. Regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, partners seem to find pleasure in anal sex and rimming. In fact, heterosexual anal play has been documented for hundreds of years and has been on the rise in recent years.

Like many sex acts, there are some risks that come along with rimming. Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are often a concern with unprotected sex play, and rimming is no exception. Hepatitis A or B, gonorrhea, syphilis, and genital warts are all STIs potentially contracted through rimming. That being said, no known documented cases of HIV transmission have ever been connected to rimming. In addition, because the interior of the anus hosts intestinal bacteria, oral-anal contact [2] carries risk for giardia [3] and other intestinal maladies.

In terms of protection, dental dams offer great protection against sexually transmitted infections, and lube may be applied to the side that makes contact with the anus to increase pleasure. Fun fact: condoms can be cut carefully down the middle to become an impromptu dental dam.
Another aspect of rimming responsibly is understanding that the vagina and anus operate under very different hygienic house rules. Taking measures to prevent bacteria in the anus from making their way into the vagina, whether via fingers, tongue, penis, or sex toys can help reduce the risk of transmission. Washing up before and after rimming will help prevent unwanted transmission of bacteria and to avoid vaginal infections.

If you’re looking to explore rimming, it's wise to play it safe when it comes to protection and enjoy the cheeky new addition to your sexual repertoire.

Alice!
Category:
Sexual & Reproductive Health
Sexual Questions
About Anal Sex
About Oral Sex

Related questions
Anal ejaculate?
All about lube
Anal beads
Published date:
Dec 11, 1998
Last reviewed on:
Nov 15, 2019

Source URL: https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/whats-rimming-0
Links