Dear Alice,
I have started "cock-stuffing" in the past year or so. I use a glass thermometer and insert it into my urethra. I know that this is wildly dangerous — as the glass could break — but I thought it safer as it is manufactured very smoothly.

I know other men who use a variety of implements — pens, markers, tubes, etc., but I have only done it a few times — and it seems that the glass — while not safe as it could break — is safer as it must surely be smoother.

I use my own saliva as a lube — as I am not sure if a personal lubricant — i.e., Wet, KY jelly, or the like, is safe. Not that putting a piece of glass into your urethra is all that safe to start with.

My question — in the end — is personal lube okay to use? Is this a common fetish — I don't do it often — and it doesn't seem to affect me adversely afterwards.

Thank you for any light you can shed on this.

Answer

Dear Reader,

Cock-stuffing, or "sounding" as it is called in the S&M community, involves inserting smooth, long, and thin surgical steel rods called "sounds" (hence the name "sounding") into a man's urethra. The two most commonly used "sounds" are the Van Buren, which has a J-shaped curve on the end, and the Dittle, which is straight. Other objects, such as thermometers, may do the trick, but metal sounds are recommended because they are easier to clean and have no chance of breaking when in use. While a glass thermometer may be readily available, the risk of breaking (and leaking harmful mercury) makes this a risky option.

Sounders use lots of lube, so the "sound" can easily slide in on its own (gentle guidance may be necessary; pushing or forcing can cause tearing of the fragile tissue). If you encounter a constriction in the urethra that the "sound" will not pass through (most likely scar tissue), do not try to drive it through. More lube and a narrower sound may be more safe and successful.
Saliva isn't generally recommended as a lubricant because it dries quickly (as you may have discovered already). Also, sugars from the mouth can be found in saliva that may cause urinary tract infections (UTIs). Sugars also can be found in some types of lube, sometimes listed as glycerin in the list of ingredients. Ultimately, a water- or silicone-based, glycerin-free lube with a thin consistency will probably work best for "sounding." Silicone-based lubes are longer lasting, but water-based lubes may have a thinner consistency. However, some people find silicone-based lubes to be a bit harder to clean up. Men find what works by experimenting.

People enjoy using "sounds" for the pleasurable sensations felt while being inserted. They are also popular in the S&M community as a form of power exchange. Some of the curved "sounds" make getting an erection extremely difficult. If a penis starts to become erect, the person inserting the sound must wait until the erection subsides before continuing. Often sounds are locked into place so that a submissive partner cannot get an erection.

The main risks with "sounding" include tearing or cutting the urethra and infection. Anything inserted into the urethra is to be cleaned to reduce the chance of infection. Some discomfort may be felt later if the sound has stretched the urethra. If that happens, people use smaller "sounds." Some men also feel burning when urinating, due to irritation. If the feeling continues for an extended period of time, the urinary tract may have become infected. If this occurs, or if there is blood in the urine, the person needs to see a health care provider. For those who use sounds, being open and honest with the provider is vital, in order to discuss alternatives for avoiding infection if they plan to continue "sounding."

Just because you "don't do it often" doesn't mean you needn't do it safely each time. Leave the thermometers, with the risk of broken glass and mercury poisoning, behind and invest in a "steel" sound. They can be found at some adult toy stores or online.

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