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[Home](#) > "Scat" play — Is eating feces safe?

"Scat" play — Is eating feces safe? ^[1]

Dear Alice,

I've always been fascinated with scat play. My question is this: is consuming (eating) your partner's feces safe? Or will it make me sick... or worse (is it poisonous)?

Answer

Dear Reader,

For those who have never heard of it before, coprophagia, or the practice of eating your own or another person's feces, may give new meaning to the term "sexual appetite." Coprophagia is often a component of the wider term coprophilia, which refers to getting sexual pleasure from the excretion of human feces, whether it's from its smell, touch, taste or sight. Scat is another term for feces, and scat sex or scat play refers to using scat in sexual activities. Although *playing* with someone's scat is generally regarded as safe if proper protection is used (think latex gloves, plastic wrap, dental dams, washing with soap before and after sex), *eating* someone else's scat can greatly increase one's risk of parasitic, bacterial, and viral infections. This does not mean that eating feces is necessarily poisonous, but it can make you very sick.

Shigella, campylobacter, salmonella and E.coli are four bacteria commonly present in fecal matter. These bacteria, along with parasites like amebas and giardia, can cause severe diarrhea, abdominal pain and cramping, bloody stools, fever, nausea and vomiting. The viruses Hepatitis A and E may also be transmitted through contact with fecal matter. There are very few cases of Hepatitis E in the United States, but almost half a million people contract Hepatitis A every year (though not always through scat play). Symptoms of Hepatitis A are very similar to the ones listed for the bacterial infections, and may also include jaundice, itchiness in parts of the body, and may cause enzymes in the liver to reach critical levels in the body. Relapses may also occur six months to a year after the first symptoms show up. All three types of infections can occur even without eating any scat. If one's mouth, nose, or any orifice or open cuts or sores touches something that has had contact with the feces (such as kissing an unwashed hand after using the bathroom), then it is possible for s/he to become infected as well.

The best way to prevent infection is to make sure there is no direct oral/orifice and fecal contact. This might mean refraining from licking of the anus (known as rimming) or using a dam or plastic

wrap to cover the anus, and making sure the any objects that are inserted in the anus are kept away from the mouth until it has been properly cleaned. Using condoms and dental dams can also help to prevent transmission. Women should take extra precaution when coming into contact with scat, because urinary tract and vaginal infections are commonly caused by the bacteria present in fecal matter. The idea of experimenting with scat play might heat things up in the bedroom (or bathroom, or anywhere else you choose), but it's always a good idea to consider the risks of a behavior before acting upon (or getting action from) it.

Alice!

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Published date:

Feb 22, 2008

Last reviewed on:

Feb 24, 2015

Footer menu

- ▼ [Contact Alice!](#)
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Links

- [1] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/scat-play-%E2%80%94-eating-feces-safe>
- [2] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/sexual-reproductive-health>
- [3] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/fetishes-phillias>
- [4] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/sexual-variety>
- [5] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/hepatitis-b-lowdown>
- [6] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/ouch-burning-pee-urinary-tract-infection-uti-0>
- [7] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/do-i-have-uti-how-do-i-know>
- [8] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/finger-anus-vagina-okay>