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## Wants to have oral sex <sup>[1]</sup>

Dear Alice,

I want to have oral sex with my partner and she doesn't want to because she says she has a problem with it and she won't tell me what the problem is. Should I keep asking her to open up to me or should I leave the situation alone? I'm asking because she began to cry when I confronted her about it. She said that she wished that I could read her mind about it, so what should I do???????

Signed,  
Confused

### Answer

Dear Confused,

It's challenging in relationships when one person wants to try a new behavior and the other person doesn't. Our comfort and discomfort levels related to sexuality are intensely personal. Your partner feels uncomfortable with having and also talking about oral sex, and many possible known and unknown reasons could explain it.

It isn't clear from your question whether your partner is uncomfortable giving (orally pleasuring another person) or receiving (having someone orally pleasure her) oral sex, or both. Some people simply don't enjoy the sensations they feel or don't enjoy the act of going down on someone. Some say that it just isn't for them.

Some women grow up with misinformation about and discomfort with their vulvas. Negative messages such as, "It's dirty down there," create shame and disgust. As a result, when someone wants to give them pleasure, either by intimately touching or kissing, sucking, or licking, to some, it seems gross and disgusting. Some women worry that their vulvas are unattractive or unappealing, or that their own unique scent is "bad." If a woman has a woman as a partner, negative feelings about her own vulva could be projected onto her partner's, causing reluctance to go down on her. Some women believe that going down on a partner is against their religion. Others feel that having oral sex, especially with a male partner, alters the balance of power in their relationship. Given all this possible background noise, it is hard for some women to imagine

either receiving or giving pleasure this way.

Of course, those are not the only possible reasons. There may be something more specific to your partner's experience, such as a sexual assault or a bad experience where she felt exposed or humiliated. In this case, other *Go Ask Alice!* Q&As can be read together and the resources listed could be explored for further information and suggestions.

Yes, talking could bring the two of you closer. Letting your partner know how difficult it is for you to talk about oral sex and other personal things might help. Perhaps explaining what giving and receiving oral sex with her means to you is something to share. You might explain what you think you might like about it.

Counseling for the two of you could help address some of the issues that may be making oral sex such a hot subject in your relationship.

Of course, as you know, you can't force or pressure your partner to open up and share what is bothering her. But trust can be built by your assuring her that you care about her and would like to know, as difficult as it may be for her to tell you, about her feelings.

There are no guarantees about whether or not your partner's behaviors or feelings related to oral sex may change, but by talking in a non-pressuring way, actively listening, and giving her time, trust can be strengthened and intimacy deepened. You may find that oral sex simply isn't for her, and that her attitude won't change. She may feel guilty for not sharing your feelings about it, but ultimately it is her decision. You will have to decide whether to be supportive of her decision or to move in another direction.

Alice!

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## Resources

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