

[COVID-19](#) is a new illness that causes respiratory illness, ranging from mild colds to severe illness and is spread mainly through coughing, sneezing, or direct contact with a sick person or with surfaces they have recently touched.

All Albertans are asked to practice [physical distancing](#), to help stop the spread of COVID-19. Physical distancing involves taking steps to limit the number of people you come into close contact with. It can help you reduce your risk of getting sick, and help prevent spreading the virus to others. Physical distancing also applies to sexual activity.

The close contact during sexual activity places you at risk for transmission of COVID-19. Wash your hands often and well, avoid touching your face, nose or mouth with unwashed hands and cover your cough/sneeze with a sleeve or tissue. Here are some tips for how to enjoy sex and to avoid getting or passing COVID-19



MASTURBATION

The safest sex partner is yourself. Masturbation will not spread COVID-19, especially if you wash your hands (and any sex toys) with soap & water for at least 20 seconds before and after sex. Masturbation in a private setting can also be a good source of comfort in this time of stress.



WHEN TO DELAY SEX

Delay sex, if you or your partner(s):

- have been a case or a contact to a case of COVID-19
- have travelled outside Canada in the previous 14 days
- have any of the symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g. fever, new or worsening cough, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, runny nose, or sore throat,)
- if you have any symptoms you should complete the online [self-assessment](#) tool to for more information and see if you should be tested for COVID-19



SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARTNERS YOU LIVE WITH

The next safest sex partner is your sexual partner(s) that you live with. Consent to sexual activity by all partners is essential.



SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARTNERS THAT DON'T LIVE WITH YOU

Avoid close contact, including sex, with anyone you don't live with.

If you do have sex with others, have as few partners as possible. Avoid sex with new or anonymous partners

Consider options such as:

- Video
- Texting
- Phone

Have ongoing conversations about consent and privacy



SAFER SEX PRACTICES

It's extremely important to practice safer sex to prevent sexually transmitted infection (STI).

- Gonorrhea and syphilis are on the rise in Alberta. Wearing condoms, talking with your partner(s), and getting tested are safer sexual practices.
- Use condoms and dental dams to reduce your risk of getting an STI.
- Contact your healthcare provider for STI/HIV testing if you have symptoms or have had new or anonymous partners.



FOR MORE SERVICES & INFORMATION

- www.ahs.ca/srh
- [My Health Alberta – Sexual and Reproductive Health](#)