The Sexy Stuff



guide for girls who like girls



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If you see a star* by a word, you can look up the word's meaning in the Glossary on page 30.



What is Sexual Health?

Sexual health isn't just about your vagina's health; it also includes the person it's attached to! Sexual health involves the way you think and more importantly your feelings and emotions about sex and relationships. It affects us all, whether we're sexually active or not and can be about pleasure, excitement and love, not just the worries about things going wrong (like catching a Sexually Transmitted Infection – STI).

As teenagers, the whole idea of having sex can be new and exciting, but can also feel daunting, so this guide aims to discuss some of the issues you might be too embarrassed to talk about. If you are reading this guide, although you may not be sexually active it doesn't matter, because it's putting you in the know, which may come in handy one day.

Good sexual health is about being positive and respecting yourself and your partners, as well as making it safe and enjoyable. Sex should be fun, and no-one should put you under pressure to do int, whether it's your girlfriend, best friend or some random girl off the internet!

Everyone is equal and should be respected.

People should treat their sexual health as well as they treat their dental health! It's not just about popping down to your local Sexual Health Clinic; it's about being educated and aware of your sexual health all round. Remember your sexual health makes up part of your overall health, which is why it is so important.

You should not have sex until you feel ready. For all girls, the legal age of consent is 16 years of age in England, Wales and Scotland (17 in Northern Ireland). However, all sexual health services are available to under 16s, and they will never tell anybody you've been, with a few rare exceptions (explained later on page 21).





Girls, Sex & Relationships

There are lots of different types of (sexual and non-sexual) relationships that girls can have: they can be long-term, short-term, long or short-distance, over the internet or in person! Any type is fine as long as you are happy and safe, and consent to everything. One thing a lot of young people tend to forget to do before having sex is talk about it – talk about it to someone who you really trust or someone you're going to have sex with! If you're too uncomfortable to talk about it, are you really ready to have sex?

Remember that if you don't want to have sex you can always say no and at any point. It's up to you what sexual activities you do and more importantly don't do (and this includes oral and vaginal sex). You may like certain things being done to you which you may not like doing to someone else, and that's fine as well.

Sex isn't all about vaginas; sex can also be about being close; kissing, cuddling, snuggling and things like that! Remember you have a whole life ahead of you, so you don't need to rush into anything thinking you have to do it all at once!

Try and
avoid big age gaps – they
can put you in a vulnerable position
(why not talk about this with a youth
worker or sexual health nurse?)

Inside Knowledge...

Vaginas are very clever but also complex parts of your bodies. The vagina is part of the female reproductive system, which is very different to the male. Firstly, all the reproductive system is inside the body, rather than dangling between your legs! Whatever you look like down there, all girls are different and that is perfectly normal, but if you're worried you could always go to a Sexual Health Clinic (see page 21).

You may have heard of other girls or guys mention that vaginas can smell, or that vaginas can be referred to as being 'fishy'. Even though we are brought up to always be clean and wash, this smell surprisingly comes from over washing. Your vagina is very clever as it has a self-cleaning mechanism within it. Most girls will get some kind of discharge from the vagina, which can change throughout the month, don't worry, this is totally a normal. But if the discharge becomes abnormal. such as a change in colour, smell or just doesn't look right, then it could be thrush, Bacterial Vaginosis (BV) or a STI (see page 20), as well as other causes. It's always a good idea to use a soap which is pH balanced, like aqueous cream, to clean the outside of the vagina. Never clean inside the vagina as this could stop the vagina from being able to clean itself.





We all know about periods, although some may hear a doctor or nurse refer to your periods as menstruation or your menstrual cycle. A period will generally happen to every female once a month from puberty to menopause. There is no set time when you will start a period don't worry if you don't start when your friends do, everyone is different and it is perfectly normal.

Every month, your body prepares itself to get pregnant, your womb lining becomes soft and thick and your ovaries release an egg but if this is not fertilised by a sperm from a guy then this lining and the unfertilised egg is shed with a small amount of blood, this comes out of the vagina - this is what a period is. A period can usually last between 3 and 7 days. During the time of your period it is common to experience tummy ache, bloating, emotional changes and skin changes.

Using tampons or sanitary towels? Because a period can be a bit messy, there are options to keep you clean and comfortable. Sanitary towels are absorbent pads that you stick on to your knickers and will need changing on a regular basis. Tampons are bullet shaped and made from cotton wool-like material, these are inserted into the vagina either with your finger or a cardboard applicator and have a string attached so you can remove it easily but it needs changing on a regular basis. Choosing either option is perfectly normal: choose which ever is comfortable for you.

Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS) is a very rare but potentionally fatal condition caused by a bacteria that usually lives on your body but occasionally will release toxins that can make you very unwell. It has been associated with women that leave tampons in the vagina too long. Always read the information leaflet that comes with your tampons this will explain more about TSS.

Pregnant?

If you do get a pregnancy result that wasn't what you were expecting or want to know more about vaginal health, then you can always access support from your local Sexual Health Clinic, GP or youth project – all of which are confidential and trained to deal with these issues.

If you would like more information on pregnancy, the F-risky website (listed in the back of this guide) can provide further advice and information.



Wrapping the facts up...

Condoms

Condoms aren't just for penises; they also come in pretty handy when using sex toys. There are a huge variety of sex toys available for you from both the high street and the internet. If you do buy one from a reputable place, make sure the packaging is intact and is going to be comfortable for you. However, some girls are more creative than others and end up using anything they can get their hands on, but this is not advised. Just because you're gay and you've got a vagina, doesn't mean you have to use sex toys.

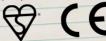
However, if you use your girlfriend's or anyone else's sex toy, a condom is a really useful way of making sure you don't end up catching or sharing STIs. Check out the handy checklist (on page X) to find out the best way to look after your condoms, so that they can safely look after you.

Dams

Dams or dental dams are small square sheets of flavoured latex, which go between the vagina or bum hole and the mouth when giving or receiving oral sex. They help to reduce you and your partner from sharing STIs. If you haven't got any dams, you could even use a piece of cling film (non-microwavable!). They should be used with lube. Whilst there are loads of reasons why you might not want to use dams, there is always one good reason why you should.

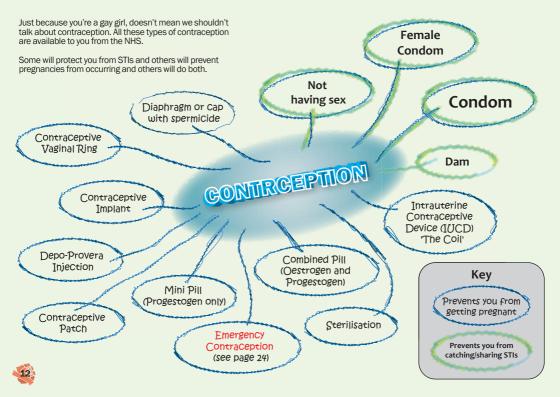
Condom Checklist

- ☑ Store condoms in a dry place not too hot or too cold!
- ☑ The right size condom for what you want to use it for
- ☑ If your hands are greasy (e.g. from eating greasy/oily foods!) then wash your hands, as grease/oil can cause condoms to split
- ☑ BRITISH KITE MARK and CE MARK (one or both) on the condom wrapper



- ☑ Make sure the date on the packet has not passed today's date (the year comes before the month e.g. 2010/09)
- ☑ Check the condom packet for any damage, like holes or tears, and if you find any don't use it as the condom will be more likely to split
- Open the packet carefully making sure you don't tear the condom with fingernails or your teeth





Tongue & Groove

It can be sometimes really difficult for a gay or bisexual girl to work out when it is that you've lost your virginity. When having sex with a guy, some straight girls think it is the first time you have sex. The joy with gay sex is, it is what you want it to be, don't worry about what you do, as long as it's safe and you both give your consent.

Just because there's no penis, doesn't mean to say there is no sex, in lesbian and bisexual relationships sex can be: mutual masturbation, oral sex, playing with sex toys or even just being intimate with each other. Oral sex between two girls is when one partner uses their mouth and tongue on your vulva, clitoris or vagina to pleasure you. Many women enjoy this but some won't even consider doing or receiving it. It might be a good idea to ask what your partner wants or likes when it comes to sex. The important thing to remember is that not all gay girls limit themselves to oral sex or even do it at all.

It might be a good idea to ask what your partner wants or likes when it comes to sex. During sex, girls can orgasm like just guys can. An orgasm is when your muscles tighten around your genitals causing a feeling of intense pleasure; this can last for a small period of time to perhaps minutes. You may have heard of a term used before called female ejaculation. This can happen when a women orgasms but it doesn't happen to all women and don't worry if you don't – you can still have a pleasurable sex life! Female ejaculation is basically a fluid that comes from a gland and is usually clear and odourless but don't worry, it's not you losing control of your bladder and peeing! Women who ejaculate can produce anywhere from a teaspoon to many tablespoons of liquid!





Before you get yourself in a situation where you're **Destructive Behaviour** likely to have sex, think about what could affect you **Mental Health** (e.g. not caring about having safer sex? yourself or others) Here are a few ideas young people have come up with. Why not pick one and talk about it with a sexual health nurse or youth worker? **Bullying** Loneliness **Low Self Esteem** Lack of Resources (e.g. body image) and Education What do you **Stress** Drugs think affects (e.g. poppers, ecstacy 'E', coccaine) having safer sex? **Partner Pressure** Media Religion **Alcohol Peer Pressure Parents No Self Acceptance** (e.g. not accepting you have Misinformation feelings towards other girls) **Not Having Time**

HPV Vaccine

The Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine is an injection that is offered to all 12 to 13 year old girls (year 8) and protects you against two strains of the HPV virus that can increase the chances of you getting cervical cancer.

It is important to remember the vaccine does not protect you completely from cervical cancer and you will need to have cervical screening when you reach 25 years of age.

Remember the vaccine does not stop you from catching or sharing STIs.

Breast Awareness

Girls come in all shapes and sizes including their breasts! Everyone's normal is individual to them; so don't worry if you're different from your best friend. Breasts can be different in shape and size, lumpy or smooth, small or large, dark or light in colour and some may have hair around the nipples. It is not uncommon for breasts to be uneven or different sizes when you are growing; by the time you're fully developed they may look very similar but this is not always the case.

Sometimes during development, the nipples can invert (pointing inside rather than out) this is normal also but if an outward pointing nipple starts to become inverted its best you go and see your GP. In some cases, you can get stretch marks on your breasts which look like red wiggly lines – but don't worry they will fade eventually within a year or 2! Your breasts start to develop when you start puberty and it can take up to 5 years for them to fully develop. It's wise to become familiar with your breasts and knowing what they look and feel like, so you know what normal is for you.

It's important you perform a breast self examination every now and then. To see instructions and pictures demonstrating this log on to Over the Rainbow's website (listed in the back of this guide).



Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) are infections that can be passed on when you're having sex. Most STIs have no symptoms (asymptomatic), so you're very unlikely to know you have one without being checked out at a Sexual Health Clinic (see page 21). However, some STIs you can see, like Genital Warts and Genital Herpes, and these will be evident on the skin around your vagina and burn. Some STIs do have symptoms and if you get any of the following symptoms, you should definitely get it checked out: pain when you pee, lower

turmny pain, bleeding after sex or between periods, deep pain when you have sex, unusual discharge from your vagina, a painful or painless sore around the genital area or something that just doesn't feel right down there.

the best way to protect yourself from most STIs is to use a condom or darn, as this acts as a barrier between you and your partner or toy.

Worried you might have caught an STI?

The timescale between catching an STI and finding out whether you have one or not varies from STI to STI. However, in general, sexual health doctors and nurses recommend waiting until 2 weeks after you've had unsafe sex before having a sexual health screen and then returning in 3 months' time to cover the HIV 'window period'. Statistically, gay girls are the least at risk group of catching HIV.

The only way you will know if you have an STI is to get tested at a Sexual Health Clinic (for more information on visiting a Sexual Health Clinic, see page 21). There is loads of information out there on individual STIs, look near the back of this guide for local and national services that can provide this.

Visiting a Sexual Health Clinic

Sexual Health Clinics are places where you can go and get supported, tested and treated for STIs and HIV. Some clinics even offer contraception too! They can also offer counselling about pretty much anything to do with sex, as well as providing free condoms and lube! They are open to people of all ages and sexualities. It can be quite scary seeing other people there, but just remember that you're there because you're taking responsibility for managing your own health. Sexual Health Clinics are run by specially trained sexual health doctors and nurses. You may feel embarrassed at first and feel like the staff might judge you, but they won't; they're more interested in your health and well-being. Sexual Health Clinics will never tell anybody you've been to see them and anything you tell them will be kept completely confidential, even if you are under 16. The only time they will tell someone else (like social services) is when either you or another person is in serious danger of being hurt and they will only do this after talking about it with you first.

Sexual Health Clinics have their own health record system, which the rest of the hospital and your GP cannot access. When you go to the clinic for the first time, you will have to register, where they will need to take some personal details down like your name, address, date of birth, etc. You could even make up your name (like Daffy Duck, but if you do make up your name, make sure you remember it!), the fact is, it doesn't matter as long as you're receiving the right healthcare!



Get tested - how?

The doctors and nurses understand that getting tested might seem a bit daunting especially if it is your first time – before any tests are done, you'll start things by first having a chat with a health advisor or a nurse. Talking about your sexual life and history helps to identify your sexual health needs, and what tests are most appropriate for you.

There are lots of different ways to check you out for STIs this can involve taking a series of swabs from your vagina and cervix. An instrument called a speculum, maybe used to help the doctor or nurse examining you see up the vagina to the cervix to take a swab and make sure that everything is okay. The speculum is lubed up and inserted into the vagina, this doesn't hurt, but may feel slightly uncomfortable, and it certainly won't mean you've lost your virginity.

Any swabs taken will be used to help if identify any of the following STIs: Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, BV, thrush and Trichomoniasis. However, if the thought of someone else examining you is too off putting, then most clinics nowadays have the option of self taken swabs, which allows you to do the test yourself in the privacy of the toilet! In addition to having a swab taken, you may also be offered a blood test to check for viruses such as HIV and Syphilis.

Results - how do I get them?

Most clinics now give patients their results via text messages. However, you can opt to have these given to you over the phone or by letter.

Your result will either come back as being negative or positive: a negative result means there's nothing wrong, and a positive result means you have something.

You may be asked to call the clinic, this is not necessarily bad news.

Sexual Health Clinics can sometimes be called GUM, GU Medicine or Genito-Urinary Medicine Clinics

To find your nearest Sexual Health Clinic go to page 27.



EMERGENCY: HAD UNSAFE SEX WITH A GUY?

If you have unsafe sex with a guy; you're not sure whether you used condoms or not; or if there maybe a small chance that some of his semen may have got into your vagina in one way or another – there is a risk you could get pregnant – you need to act quickly so

that you don't end up making the wrong decisions Remember, if you've had unsafe sex, there's always a risk of sharing STIs too.

If you find yourself in this situation, you can take what is called the emergency contraception pill (ECP) which can prevent a pregnancy from occurring - this needs to be taken within the first 72 hours (3 days) of when you think you put yourself at risk of getting pregnant - the earlier the better! This is free from most NHS services such as sexual health clinics. Although available from most pharmacies, you may end up having to pay for it. Have a look on at the back of this guide for Local Services near you who will either be able to help you or know who can help you. Remember it can only be you who can obtain the ECP, not a friend or partner.

Whoever prescribes the ECP to you should also inform you about intrauterine devices (IID). This is another method of emergency contraception which is also commonly called 'the coil' which is very

effective. This can be used either 5 days after you've had unsafe sex or within 5 days from the suspected date of ovulation (if you have a regular menstrual cycle). You can go to any of the services mentioned above who will be able to help and advise on where this can be fitted.

If you suspect you are pregnant (even if it is a couple of months later), it's really important you go to any of the services as mentioned above to get the right support you need on whatever decision you make on the pregnancy. The option of having an abortion is available to you up until the 24th week of pregnancy, although it is unusual to have an abortion this late, most are carried out under 12 weeks which is less risky. If you can, try and talk to a trusted family member or friend, as it can help having someone with you to support you.

Rape and Sexual Assault

If somebody touches you or does something to you sexually that makes you feel unhappy, it can be very confusing and make you feel distressed. Some people may not be sure as to what exactly happened to them and may feel unsure about what to do next. It is very important that you seek professional help and support if you feel that you may have been raped or sexually assaulted. If you are in immediate danger then always phone 999 for the police.

The police will always have someone for you to speak to about what happened which can be arranged by you calling or visiting your local police station. It is important to know that the police have a duty to investigate what has happened. This does not always lead to a prosecution or conviction but it may do so. There are also rape crisis and other appropriate agencies who can support you, which you can be referred onto either through yourself, the police or a sexual health clinic (as well as other young people services). There are many helplines listed in the back of this guide who can confidentially help you talk through your options and make sense of how you may be feeling.



Local Services in and around Dorset

Please ring the following services to check opening times **before** turning up, or if you have any questions you'd like to ask them.

Over the Rainbow, an NHS drop-in centre for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in Dorset providing health advice, information and support. Go to: 27 St Michael's Road, Bournemouth; 0.1202 25/478; Email: otrbournemouth@yahoo.co.uk: Web: www.rainbowbournemouth.co.uk

Healthy Gay Hampshire, an NHS LGBT health service in Hampshire, North Hants 0300 1239117, South Hants 0845 6439399, Email: gmhp@nhpct.nhs.uk Web: www.healthygayhampshire.com

Space Youth Project, a youth group open to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning young people (up to 25 years old) in and around Dorset, 07973 405280 or 01202 257478; Email: info@spaceyouthproject.co.uk; Web: www.spaceyouthproject.co.uk

Breakout Youth Project, a youth group open to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning young people (up to 25 years old) in Southampton, 02380 223344 or 07860 444673 Web: www.breakoutyouth.co.uk

Body Positive Dorset, a support centre that offers a safe, relaxed, confidential and friendly environment for anyone affected by HIV or AIDS, 01202 219386 or 01202 31.1166 (24-hour helpline)

F-risky, an NHS confidential helpline for sexual health advice and information from sexual health professionals in Bournemouth and Poole, text or call 07770 266366 (9am to 9pm everyday) Web: www.frisky.co.uk

Dorset Rape Crisis Line, a voluntary organisation for practical and emotional support for girls and women who have been or are being abused. 01202 547445 (Open Monday to Saturday afternoon to evening with a 24 hour answer phone service).

Web: www.dorsetrapecrisis.org.uk

Sexual Health Clinics

To find your **nearest** NHS Sexual Health Services visit: www.condomessentialwear.co.uk

Blandford, Blandford Community Hospital, 01305 361780 (Tues & Thurs) or 01305 762682 (at other times)

Bournemouth, G U Medicine, Royal Bournemouth Hospital, 01202 704644

Bournemouth, Over the Rainbow, 27 St Michael's Road, Bournemouth; a sexual health clinic for the LGBT community, 01202 257478

Bournemouth, The Junction235, 235 Holdenhurst Road, Boscombe, a weekly evening sexual health clinic, 01202 705100

Bridport, Bridport GUM, Medical Centre, West Allington, Bridport, 01305 762682

Dorchester, 55 High Street West, Dorchester, 01305 255511

Poole, Red Clinic, Poole Hospital, 01202 704644

Poole, Poole NHS Healthcare Centre (1st floor in Boots), Dolphin Centre, a weekend sexual health clinic, 01202 705100

Salisbury, GUM, Salisbury District Hospital, Wiltshire, SP2 8BJ, 01722 336262 ext 2120

Southampton, G U Medicine, Level B, Outpatients, Royal South Hants Hospital, St Mary's, Southampton, 02380 825701

Weymouth, The Park Centre for Sexual Health, Melcombe Avenue, Weymouth, 01305 762682

Winton, Alma Clinic, 31 Alma Road, Bournemouth, 01202 519491

Yeovil, Outpatient Department, Yeovil District Hospital, 01935 384382



Young Person's Advisory Clinics

Bournemouth Area

The Junction 235, 235 Holdenhurst Road, Boscombe, 01202 646915

Sussed Youth Advisory Clinic, 1442a Wimborne Road, Kinson, 01202 575096

Ladders Youth Advisory Clinic, 45 Bargates, Christchurch, 01202 477354

Poole Area

Quay Advice Centre, Hill Street, Poole, 01202 262291

Limelights Youth Club, Learoyd Road, Canford Heath, Poole. 01202 627318

Dorset Area

Highcliffe Medical Centre, Lymington Road, Highcliffe, 01425 272203

Treads Youth Advisory Clinic, 30 Salisbury Street, Blandford, 01258 450217

St. Swithun's House (next to Bridport Medical Centre), Bridport. 01305 267141 or 426815

Swanage Youth Advisory Clinic, Swanage Hospital, 01929 422282

Rendezvous Underground, Cheap Street, Sherborne, 01935 814496



Terrence Higgins Trust, a national charity for advice, practical support and counselling on HIV and sexual health in the UK, 0845 12 21 200 (Monday to Friday, 10am to 10pm; Saturday and Sunday. 12pm to 6pm). Web: www.tht.org.uk

Queer Youth Network, a national organisation that is run by and for lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual and transgender (LGBAT) young people under 25. The UK's largest online LGBAT youth group, 0870 383 4796. Web; www.queeryouth.org.uk

British Pregnancy Advisory Service, a national charity for reproductive choice, advice and information on all aspects of termination of pregnancies, 08457 30 40 30 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 9pm; Saturday 8.30 to 6pm; Sunday 9.30am to 2.30am), Web: www.bpas.org

Brook, national free and confidential sexual health advice and services specifically for young people under 25, with advisory centres across the country, 0800 0185 023

Web: www.brook.org.uk

Condom Essential Wear, free NHS information helpline on HIV and sexual health, 0800 567123 Weh: www.condomessentialwear.co.uk

Sexwise, free and confidential helpline for under 18s for advice on everything to do with sex and relationships, 0800 282930, Web: www.ruthinkins.co.uk

London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard, free information and support for lesbian, gay and bisexual people anywhere in the UK, 020 7837 7324

Childline, free national helpline, advice on bullying and abuse, completely confidential (open 24 hours), 0800 1111 Web: www.childline.org.uk

FRANK, free advice and information on drugs, 0800 77 66 00 (open 24 hours) Web: www.talktofrank.com



Glossary

Bacterial Vaginosis – is a common cause of vaginal discharge which is not a STI. The discharge is not normally sore or itchy but can be cleared up with a course of antibiotics from your GP or local Sexual Health Clinic.

Casual sex – this is sex with a person who is not a girlfriend or a regular partner, e.g. a one-off.

Dam – also known as a dental dam, this is a small square of flavoured latex, which can be used for rimming.

Discharge – is a fluid (which is not urine, cum or precum) that comes out of a guy's urethra (the penis hole!) it can be clear, coloured and possibly thick.

Femidoms – also known as a female condom, this can also be used safely for anal sex. You can insert this into the vagina or by putting it on the penis first. Instructions are normally on the outside packet.

Mutual Masturbation - is where 2 sexual partners engage in foreplay.

Non-sexual (relationships) – it's totally up to you if you want to have sex when you're in a relationship. Some guys prefer not to for lots of different reasons.

Ovulation – is when one or more eggs are released from one of your ovaries during menstruation.

Partners – someone you are having sexual relations with, whether it be regular or a one-off.

Safer sex – is when you take precautions when you have sex to reduce the chances of getting infections, e.g. using condoms, dams *, having a Hep B vaccine, etc.

Sex life and history – a 'sexual history' is where you will be asked personal questions, such as when you last had sex, who with, what type of sex, etc. This is so a doctor or nurse can assess your sexual health needs and provide appropriate care.

Sexually active – someone who has started engaging in sexual activities with another person.

Thrush – is a yeast infection which can develop in the vagina. It can cause itchiness and soreness, sometimes with a white discharge. The yeast already lives in your body but can sometimes grow out of control, it can affect some women more than it can others. It isn't necessarily caught or passed on through sex.

Vaccination – an injection that could prevent a particular infection or disease, e.g. HPV.

Young Rainbows

Young Rainbows Project is a peer led sexual health project for young lesbian, gay and bisexual people between the ages of 13 and 19 in and around Dorset. Supported by



Over the Rainbow (NHS LGBT drop-in centre) in Bournemouth and the Terrence Higgins Trust.

This guide was written by Michael Fanner with the expert help and support from staff at Over the Rainbow and young people. All of the advice and information in this guide has been read and approved by a number of sexual health professionals and young people across the UK.

All of the advice and information in this guide was written to the best of the author's knowledge at the time of print.

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Want to know more? Email youngrainbows@live.co.uk









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