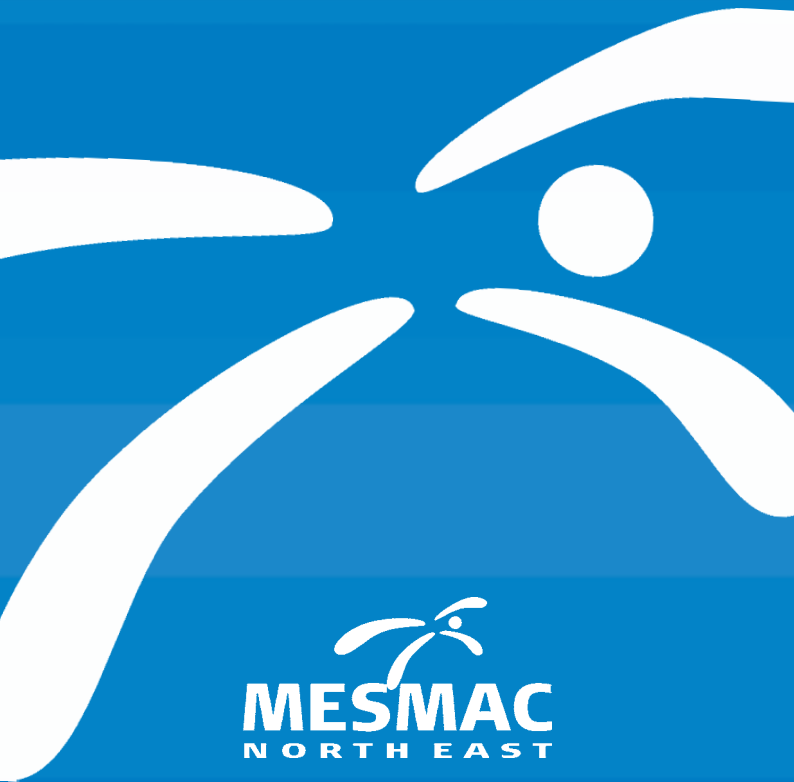


Sucking



MESMAC
NORTH EAST

Sucking

Many of us aren't sure about the risks involved in oral sex. In this leaflet we try and explain some of the risks. If you would like further info please contact any of the agencies at the back of this leaflet.

HIV

The bottom line is:

- Sucking is not totally safe from HIV infection.
- The latest evidence suggests that there is a small risk, because there are a number of cases each year where infection could only have occurred through oral sex.
- Compared to sucking, unprotected intercourse with men or women is definitely still the most risky kind of sex.

Can HIV enter my blood through the mouth or throat?

The linings of the mouth and throat are very thick, and they don't absorb much, even if they're damaged. They also contain few cells that are vulnerable to HIV infection. Fluids stay in contact with these linings for a very short time because you swallow frequently. **This suggests it's unlikely that infected blood or cum could be absorbed through the mouth or throat.**

However there may be an increased risk if your gums are damaged, if you have cuts or sores in your mouth, or if you've got an inflamed throat caused by a cold, flu, or a sexually transmitted infection (STI) like gonorrhoea.

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So should I let someone cum in my mouth?

The decision is yours, but the risk of HIV infection can be reduced if you avoid getting cum in your mouth.

Why?

HIV is found in cum, and the risk of HIV infection through sucking may be significantly increased when the amount of HIV in the cum of a man who is HIV positive is especially high. It's thought this happens at two particular times:

- During the period just after he's become infected with HIV
- If he starts to develop HIV related illnesses (which could be years later)

Most people who've just been infected probably aren't aware of the fact, so they won't realise there may be risk of passing on HIV through their cum.

If he does cum in my mouth, should I swallow?

Swallowing cum takes it away from any damaged tissue in the mouth, and acids in the stomach probably kill HIV

However, if you do swallow cum it will also make contact with any inflamed tissue in your throat.

If you decide to spit, the cum is in contact with gums and ulcers longer.

There is no evidence to suggest either way is safest. The best way of reducing the risk of infection is by avoiding getting cum in your mouth.

Does saliva kill HIV?

Not exactly, but evidence suggests it contains an enzyme which makes it harder for HIV to infect vulnerable white blood cells. Saliva itself can't pass on HIV.

Can pre-cum pass on HIV?

Pre-cum (the clear, slippery liquid which appears before ejaculation) can certainly contain HIV, though some experts think it doesn't contain enough HIV to be infectious (and some men don't produce very much of it). This suggests that, although pre-cum might pass on HIV, it is particularly unlikely.

Can I get HIV from being sucked?

This is highly unlikely.

What about the risk of other STI's?

Other STI's though generally less serious than HIV are often more easily picked up through sucking. They include Gonorrhoea (the clap), NSU (Non-Specific Urethritis), Chlamydia, Syphilis, Hepatitis B and Herpes. Condoms when used correctly are the only way to protect yourself from these STI's.

Please see our leaflet on STI's for more information on these and other infections.

If you think you may have picked up an infection, or just want a routine check up, visit your local GUM clinic for a free & confidential examination. If you don't know where it is, give us a ring.

Making sucking safer

Only you can choose how safe you want to be, and only you can decide what precautions you're willing to take.

Here are some suggestions:

- You may decide that the risks of oral sex are low enough for you to continue your regular behaviour.
- You may prefer not to have oral sex because you do not wish to take even a low risk of HIV transmission.
- **Stop sucking him before he cums.** Some men will tell you when they're about to cum, others will groan louder, others will take their dick out of your mouth anyway. But some will shoot their load without warning, so be careful!
- **Don't suck if you've got cuts, sores, or inflammation in your mouth or throat.** It's also best not to suck if you've just brushed your teeth (because your gums might be bleeding).
- Lick the shaft of his dick or suck his balls instead of putting the end of his dick in your mouth (especially if you're worried about pre-cum).
- You may decide to reduce the number of partners whom you have oral sex with.
- You may decide only to have insertive oral sex (being sucked), as this is safer than receptive oral sex (sucking).
- Take regular sexual health screening. This will identify if you have any STI's which may increase the risk

Sucking

of you transmitting HIV to a negative partner, and reduce the risk of you contracting HIV if you are HIV negative.

- You can cover the dick, which is being sucked with a **flavoured condom**. Using a condom for sucking is the best way to minimise any risk (unless you choose not to suck at all). Women can also split a condom or use a dental dam to cover the vagina.

Your local gay/bisexual men's health project will supply flavoured condoms free of charge.

Flavoured condoms aren't designed for anal sex, as they are not extra strong.

Contacting MESMAC North East

Newcastle Office

3rd floor,
11 Nelson Street,
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 5AN
Tel: 0191 233 1333
Minicom: 0191 233 2112

Teesside Office

4th Floor,
Prudential House,
31-33 Albert Road,
Middlesbrough TS1 1PE
Tel: 01642 804400
Minicom: 01642 732 392

Email: all@mesmacnortheast.com
Website: www.mesmacnortheast.com

Sucking

For more information about condoms, safer sex or other things you may be concerned about, try your local service:

NEWCASTLE

MESMAC North East: 0191 233 1333
(MESMAC NE work throughout the region)
(Minicom: 0191 233 2112)

GATESHEAD

STAG Project: 0191 490 1708

NORTHUMBERLAND

LGBT Worker: 01670 523 701

COUNTY DURHAM

GAD: 01325 355 551
Health Promotion (north): 0191 374 4131
Health Promotion (south): 01325 746 141

TEESSIDE

MESMAC North East: 01642 804 400
(Minicom: 01642 732 392)
Teesside Positive Action: 01642 254 598



For more information contact:

MESMAC North East

Newcastle

Phone 0191 233 1333

(24 Hour answerphone available)

Minicom 0191 233 2112

Fax 0191 233 1551

MESMAC text service:

TEXT: MESMAC (space) MEN (space)

Then your message to 60003

Email all@mesmacnortheast.com

Teesside

Phone 01642 804400

(24 Hour answerphone available)

Minicom 01642 732392

Fax 01642 809800

Email: enquiries@mesmacnortheast.com

Website: www.mesmacnortheast.com

MESMAC North East is funded by Primary Care Trusts
across the north east