

## SAFE SEX AND COVID-19 IN TIMES OF VACCINATION



COVID-19 vaccines offer greater safety in our daily engagement with other people, in our close relationships and when having sex. We offer some strategies for reducing risk during sex that may be useful, whether you have been vaccinated against COVID-19 or not.

### 01 HOW COVID-19 SPREADS

SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, spreads when an infected person exhales very small respiratory droplets and particles containing the virus. These respiratory droplets and particles can be inhaled by other people or land on their eyes, nose or mouth. In some circumstances, they can contaminate the surfaces they touch. People who are less than 2 metres away from an infected person are more likely to contract the coronavirus.

COVID-19 can be contracted during sex because sex entails contact with saliva and close, intense breathing. The coronavirus has been detected in the semen of people with COVID-19. There is, however, no evidence that the virus spreads through semen or vaginal fluids.

The virus has also been detected in the faeces of infected people. The risk of SARS-CoV-2 spreading through faeces is nonetheless believed to be low. Further research is required to determine whether the virus can spread through sex involving mouth contact with faeces (such as anilingus or rimming).

### 02 COVID-19 VACCINES

Being vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2 is the best way to protect both yourself and your sexual partner or partners from COVID-19, being hospitalised and death, even the virus' most contagious variants (see Infovital No. 168, 2021). A person is considered completely vaccinated two weeks after having received the last dose of his or her vaccination schedule. People who are fully vaccinated can date, kiss, and have sex more safely.

Even when fully vaccinated it is nonetheless a good idea to be tested for COVID-19 if you have symptoms or have recently been in contact with a person with COVID-19. If you test positive, you should avoid having sex and close contact with other people until the confinement period ends.

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## REDUCING RISK THROUGH SEX IN TIMES OF VACCINATION

The risk of contracting the coronavirus during sex can be reduced by following a series of guidelines that will depend on a person's COVID-19 vaccination status.

Follow the general COVID-19 prevention measures if you or your partner are not fully vaccinated, are immunocompromised, are 65 years old or older, have a pre-existing disease that increases the risk of developing severe COVID-19 or live with a person in any of these groups.

**Before having sex, it is a good idea to talk with your partner to manage pleasure and risk. Issues you should address include:**



**Vaccination status:** the risk is lower if you and your partner are fully vaccinated.



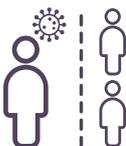
**Recent COVID-19 tests:**

if you have tested positive, avoid having sex and close contact. If you have tested negative, remember that tests only indicate whether a person may have been infected when the test was done.



**Recent infection with COVID-19:**

a person who has had COVID-19 is unlikely to contract the disease again within three months.



**Recent exposure to COVID-19:**

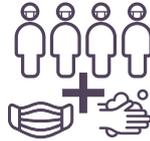
avoid close contact with other people for 10 days after exposure.



**COVID-19 precautions:**

safe options include wearing a mask and following other preventive measures during sex. However, measures that are useful for some people are not realistic for others. You should therefore consider the prevention measures best suited to your preferences and needs.

**Options for reducing risk and making sex safer could include:**



**Avoiding sex parties and gatherings with a lot of people:**

if you do decide to attend, it is a good idea to follow the general COVID-19 prevention measures.



**Limit the number of sexual partners:**

only people in your close social circle for example.



**Discover and have virtual sex:**

this includes dating by video call, sexting – voluntarily exchanging of erotic messages using technological devices- or erotic parties in chat rooms and by video call.



**Avoid kissing:**

people who are not in your close social circle.



**Wear a mask even while having sex:**

wearing a mask over the nose and mouth adds an extra layer of protection.



**Engage in more daring sexual practices:**

be creative with sexual postures and physical barriers by choosing positions that guarantee sexual contact while avoiding face-to-face contact.



**Masturbate with your partner:**

keep a distance in sex and wear a mask to reduce risk.



**Use condoms and dental dams:**

to reduce contact with saliva, semen or faeces during oral, anal or oral-anal sex.



**Wash before and after sex:**

wash your hands and sex toys with soap and warm water. You should also disinfect keyboards and touch screens of devices shared with other people.



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