Intimacy During COVID-19

How COVID-19 Spreads

COVID-19 is a disease caused by a novel coronavirus. COVID-19 primarily spreads from close contact with individuals via respiratory droplets that carry the virus and are shared when coughing, sneezing, or talking. Symptoms include fever, cough, and shortness of breath, among others. If you have COVID-19 symptoms, please contact your healthcare provider. Some people who have COVID-19 may not show symptoms.

Currently, there is no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best protection is to avoid or minimize exposure to the virus by limiting close contact with others, frequent hand washing, and cleaning and disinfecting surfaces. For more information on COVID-19 check the California Coronavirus Response website.

Intimacy during COVID-19

COVID-19 is a new disease that we are continuously learning about. Based on available science to date, it is recommended to take extra precautions when being intimate with someone or engaging in sexual activity. The coronavirus may be shed in saliva, feces, and semen. It is currently unknown if it sheds in vaginal fluids. COVID-19 can easily spread with activities that involve close contact, such as kissing, where respiratory droplets can be shared.

Tips to share with youth for Safer Intimacy

- You are your safest partner. Masturbation is safe and cannot spread COVID-19.
- At this time it is best to avoid close contact with people outside your home, if possible.
- If you are going to engage in intimacy, including sexual activity, limit your partners.
- When engaging in any intimate activity, always communicate and check for consent.
- Remember to use condoms, lube, and/or dental dams to reduce the risk of sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy.
- Wash hands before and after engaging in any sexual activity, including masturbation.
- Avoid engaging in any sexual or physical intimacy (kissing, hugging, making out) if you or your partner feel sick.
- Try virtual dates like watching a movie virtually or playing virtual games.

References:
1. WHO Names COVID-19
2. CDC COVID-19 Guidance
3. Planned Parenthood COVID-19 Guidance
4. Scarleteen. Masturbation