# **2.1**

**A Brief Intro: What is it?**

Sexual Intercourse is when the male penis enters the female vagina and is thrust back and forth repeatedly, with the purpose of sexual pleasure and reproduction. Intercourse is extremely stimulating for both parties involved.

Although it is natural and healthy, intercourse comes with a few risks that one should be aware of beforehand, such as sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and diseases (STDs) as well as the probability of pregnancy.

**Condoms and Contraception**

Contraception is a term that includes various means designed to prevent pregnancy. Contraceptive methods may be chemical, natural, surgical, or others. All these methods have one common aim; preventing the man’s sperm from reaching the women’s eggs. The most common contraceptive methods include

1. Use of condom

The condom is a thin rubber covering that a man can wear on his penis during sex. A female condom is a long plastic pouch that goes inside your body during sex. The condom lines the walls of your vagina and collects semen and other fluids. they aren’t always foolproof: realistically, condoms have a failure rate of 14% so it is very important to be informed and responsible when choosing contraception.

1. Intrauterine Device (IUD) Contraception

An Intrauterine device is shaped like a "T" and a bit bigger than a quarter, an IUD fits inside your uterus. It stops the sperm from reaching and fertilizing eggs.

1. Birth Control pills

Some people take the pill by mouth to prevent pregnancy, and when taken correctly, it is up to 99.9% effective.

**Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Infections (STDs and STIs)**

These are conditions that are contracted through unprotected vaginal, oral, or anal sex. Some common types are Chlamydia, HIV & AIDS, and Herpes. STDs travel through bacteria, viruses, and parasites, passing between bodies through blood, semen, vaginal and bodily fluids. STDs don’t always cause symptoms so it is fairly common to contract them from people who appear to be of good health. Some STDs are curable, such as Syphilis and Chlamydia, whereas others like HIV and Herpes are not. Some STDs cause obvious symptoms including:

* Pain or discomfort during sex and/ or urination
* Unusual or odd-smelling discharge from the penis or vagina
* Sores, bumps, or rashes on or around the penis or vagina, testicles, anus, buttocks, thighs, or mouth
* Itchiness in or around the vagina
* Painful or swollen testicles

The primary method in which you can avoid STDs is through the use of condoms. Another method actively encouraged by medical professionals is to have regular STD screenings, especially for someone who is sexually active.

# **2.2**

**STDs & STIs**

* Sexually transmitted diseases (or infections) are contracted through unprotected vaginal, oral or anal sex.
* However, STDs can be contracted through non-sexual acts
* They are among the most common infectious diseases
* The most common STDs you may have heard of include Chlamydia, HIV & AIDS, and Herpes
* STDs can travel through bacteria, viruses or parasites
* These diseases pass through blood, semen, vaginal and bodily fluids
* STDs don’t always cause symptoms; contraction of these diseases from people who seem perfectly healthy is very likely
* Some STDs are curable such as Syphilis and Chlamydia whereas others like HIV and Herpes are not.

**Symptoms**

Some STDs cause obvious symptoms including:

* Pain or discomfort during sex
* Pain or burning during urination
* Unusual or odd smelling discharge from the penis or vagina
* Sores, bumps or rashes on or around the penis or vagina, testicles, anus, buttocks, thighs or mouth
* Itchiness in or around the vagina
* Painful or swollen testicles

**Prevention:**

* STDs can be prevented through the use of condoms. Other types of contraceptives won’t work to prevent STDs as condoms prevent the transfer of bodily fluids and therefore reduce risk of STDs.
* Regular STD screening is encouraged for anyone who is sexually active, especially with multiple partners
* Lubricants can be helpful towards preventing STDs and STIs and the lubricant you choose is extremely important;
* Lubricant reduces friction during intercourse, which is important as friction can cause small tears in the vagina, creating openings for STIs
* Oil based lubricants such as petroleum jelly and baby oil are strongly discouraged when using latex condoms as the oil damages the latex, increasing the risk of the condom breaking.

**Common Types**

*HIV/AIDS*

HIV destroys CD4 T cells — white blood cells that play a large role in helping your body fight disease. The fewer CD4 T cells you have, the weaker your immune system becomes. You can have an HIV infection, with few or no symptoms, for years before it turns into AIDS

*Chlamydia*

This can infect both men and women. It can cause serious, permanent damage to a woman’s reproductive system. It becomes difficult or impossible for her to get pregnant later on. Chlamydia can also cause a potentially fatal ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy that occurs outside the womb).

*Syphilis*

The disease starts as a painless sore — typically on your genitals, rectum or mouth. It spreads from person to person via skin or mucous membrane contact with these sores. After the initial infection, the syphilis bacteria can remain inactive (dormant) in your body for decades before becoming active again. If not treated timely, it can worsen greatly.

*Mononucleosis*

The most common symptoms of mono are a high fever, a severe sore throat, swollen lymph nodes (sometimes called swollen glands) and tonsils, and weakness and fatigue. Symptoms usually start 4 to 6 weeks after you are exposed to the virus. Mono can cause the spleen to swell.

*Gonorrhea*

Untreated gonorrhea can cause serious and permanent health problems in both women and men. In women, gonorrhea can spread into the uterus or fallopian tubes and cause pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). The symptoms may be quite mild or can be very severe and can include abdominal pain and fever

*Herpes*

Herpes infection can cause sores or breaks in the skin or lining of the mouth, vagina, and rectum. This provides a way for HIV to enter the body. Even without visible sores, having genital herpes increases the number of CD4 cells (the cells that HIV targets for entry into the body) found in the lining of the genitals

Do not self-diagnose yourself with a STD. Seek the advice of a medical professional and an expert diagnosis before administering any medication.

# **2.3**

**Consent**

Sexual consent refers to assent to partake in any kind of sexual activity. Prior to being sexual with somebody, you need to know whether they agree to be sexual with you as well. It is likewise critical to be straightforward with your accomplice about what you agree or disagree to.

Consenting and requesting assent are tied in with defining your own limits and regarding those of your accomplice — as well as checking in if things aren't clear. The two individuals should consent to sex — each and every time — for it to be consensual. Without assent, sexual action (counting oral sex, genital contacting, and vaginal or Anal penetration) is rape or assault.

**Clear indicators of consent**

**F**reely given

**R**eversible

**I**nformed

**E**nthusiastic

**S**pecific

**FRIES**

**The grey area of consent**

The term grey area refers to sexual intercourse that is not entirely consensual but cannot be classified as sexual assault either This includes sexual intercourse as a result of being emotionally blackmailed into it as well as consent given under the influence of intoxication. This grey area has often been termed as bad sex referring to the consequential emotional discomfort of the individual/individuals involved. It is a sort of begrudgingly consensual form of intercourse which is often a result of the individuals feeling sexually obligated to their significant others However it is to be noted that this is a misconception as an individual does not owe sexual pleasure to anyone against their absolute will.

**Rape**

Forced or coerced form of sexual activity is rape.

Unlawful sexual activity, most often involving sexual intercourse, against the will of the victim through force or the threat of force or with an individual who is incapable of giving legal consent because of minor status, mental illness, mental deficiency, intoxication, unconsciousness, or deception.

Lack of consent is the basis upon which rape is classified in most cases however sexual intercourse with a person below the age of consent is termed statutory rape, and consent is no longer relevant. The term statutory rape specifically refers to the legal proscription against having sexual intercourse with a child or any other person presumed to lack comprehension of the physical and other consequences of the act. In most countries the age at which an individual may give effective consent to sexual intercourse is commonly set in most countries at between 14 and 18 years (though it is as low as 12 years in some countries).

**Legal Aspects**

*Punishment for Rape/Sexual Battery:*

Rape is a criminal offence in Pakistan. Punishment for rape in Pakistan under the Pakistani laws is either death penalty or imprisonment of between ten and twenty-five years. For cases related to gang rape, the punishment is either death penalty or life imprisonment. Government officials who are found taking advantage of their official position to commit act of rape (e.g. custodial rape) are liable to imprisonment for life and a fine. According to the new law, anyone who rapes a minor or a mentally or physically disabled person will be liable for the death penalty or life imprisonment.

*Evidentiary Aspects:*

The prosecution of rape cases involves mandatory DNA testing. Recordings of the victims’ statements are taken by an Investigating Officer, in the presence of a female police officer, or a female family member of the survivor.

*Offence of Rape Act 2016:*

This was an anti-rape and anti-honor killing act that worked towards creating harsher conditions for enablers of these acts. Amendments made are the addition of legal aid for the survivors via Provincial Bar Council, trials for offences such as rape and related crimes being conducted in-camera and also allowing the use of technology such as video links to record statements of the victim and witnesses, to spare them the humiliation or risk entailed by court appearances. The media will also be restricted from publishing or publicizing the names or any information that would reveal the identity of a victim, except when publishing court judgements. The new bill also ensures that sex workers are also included in the law's protection. In 2021 the use of virginity tests on victims was banned.

**Impacts of Sexual Assault on an individual**

*Emotional:* These may include mental health effects such as

* Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), including flashbacks, nightmares, severe anxiety, and uncontrollable thoughts
* Depression, including prolonged sadness, feelings of hopelessness, unexplained crying, weight loss or gain, loss of energy or interest in activities previously enjoyed
* Suicidal thoughts or attempts. If you or someone you know is feeling suicidal, contact National Suicide & Crisis Lines:

Suicide prevention helpline: 042-35761999 (24/7)

Suicide hotline: 15 (24/7)

* Dissociation, including not being able to focus on work or on schoolwork, as well as not feeling present in everyday situations
* Emotional trauma may lead to
1. Changes in trusting others
2. Anger and blame
3. Shock
4. Numbness
5. Loss of control
6. Disorientation
7. Helplessness
8. Sense of vulnerability
9. Fear
10. Self-blame/guilt for “allowing” the crime to happen
11. Feeling that these reactions are a sign of weakness
* Physical trauma may include
1. Bruising
2. Bleeding (vaginal or anal)
3. Difficulty walking
4. Soreness
5. Broken or dislocated bones
6. Sexually transmitted infections and diseases
7. Pregnancy
* After effects observed in survivors may include
1. Chronic fatigue
2. Shortness of breath
3. Muscle tension
4. Involuntary shaking
5. Changes in eating and sleeping patterns
6. Sexual dysfunction
7. Changes in menstrual cycle and fertility rates for women
8. Substance abuse

# **2.4**

**Pregnancy: the biological definition**

Pregnancy occurs when a sperm fertilizes an egg after it's released from the ovary during ovulation. The fertilized egg then travels down into the uterus, where implantation occurs. A successful implantation results in pregnancy. On average, a full-term pregnancy lasts 40 weeks. In simple words, pregnancy refers to the period after ovulation till child-birth.

**Detecting pregnancy**

* Pregnancy can be diagnosed using a home pregnancy test as early as two weeks after conception.
* During your medical visit, you can have either a urine or blood test done to confirm the pregnancy.
* Fatigue, nausea, frequent urination and breast changes are all physical signs and symptoms of pregnancy.

**The First Trimester**

Pregnancy last 40 weeks and this period is divided into three trimesters which vary for expectant mothers. Usually, the first one lasts from week 1 to the end of week 12.

* This is the most critical period since basic fetal cell differentiation occur during the [first trimester](https://www.medicinenet.com/image-collection/first_trimester_4_weeks_picture/picture.htm), so any harm done to the fetus during this period is most likely to result in [miscarriage](https://www.medicinenet.com/miscarriage_causes_and_symptoms/article.htm) or serious disability.
* It is in the first trimester that some women experience "[morning sickness](https://www.medicinenet.com/early_pregnancy_symptoms_pictures_slideshow/article.htm)," a form of [nausea](https://www.medicinenet.com/nausea_and_vomiting/article.htm) on awaking that usually passes within an hour. (occurs as a result of fetal movement).
* The breasts also begin to prepare for [nursing](https://www.medicinenet.com/breastfeeding/article.htm), and painful soreness from hardening milk glands may result.
* the mother may experience many physical and emotional changes, ranging from increased moodiness to darkening of the skin in various areas.

**Second Trimester**

This refers to the time period from week 13 to the end of week 28. For many expectant mothers, the second trimester is the easiest three months of pregnancy.

* The fetus’s physical parts become fully distinct and somewhat operational. As the fetus grows in size, the mother's [pregnant](https://www.medicinenet.com/pregnancy/article.htm) state will begin to be obvious. A bump appears between 12 to 16 weeks depending upon the health of the mother and whether she has undergone pregnancy previously.
* women may also have more energy than they did in the first trimester. This will come as a great relief if they have been struggling with sickness, tiredness or anxiety about getting through the [first trimester](https://www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/im-pregnant/pregnancy-calendar/first-trimester-weeks-1-12).
* The sex of the baby can be found at this stage through pre-natal scanning, though, a scan sometimes might turn out to be wrong!

**Third trimester**

This period lasts from week 29 to 40.

* The fetus enters the final stage of preparation for birth. There may be discomfort as the fetus moves into position in the woman's lower abdomen. [Edema](https://www.medicinenet.com/edema/article.htm) (swelling of the ankles), [back pain](https://www.medicinenet.com/low_back_pain/article.htm), and balance problems are sometimes experienced during this time period.
* Most women are able to go about their usual activities until the very last days of pregnancy. Some feel too much discomfort, although others report greatly increased energy just before the birth.

Pregnancy ends when the birth process begins.

# **2.5**

**Childbirth**

Childbirth or Parturition marks and end to pregnancy with the birth of one or more child. It is the process of bringing forth the child from the uterus or womb and is commonly known as labour.

**Stages of Child Birth**

The three stages of child birth can be divided as follows:

1. *Thinning (effacement) and opening (dilation) of the cervix*

During the first stage of labor, contractions help your cervix to thin and begin to open. This is called effacement and dilation. As your cervix dilates, the health care provider will measure the opening in centimeters. This first stage of labor usually lasts about 12 to 13 hours for a first baby, and 7 to 8 hours for a second child.

1. *The baby moves through the birth canal*

The second stage of labor begins when the cervix is completely dilated (open), and ends with the birth of the baby. Contractions push the baby down the birth canal. The length of the second stage depends on whether or not the individuals has given birth before and how many times, and the position and size of the baby.

1. *Afterbirth*

After the birth of the baby, the uterus continues to contract to push out the placenta (afterbirth). The placenta usually delivers about 5 to 15 minutes after the baby arrives.

**Types of Childbirth**

The assisted delivery procedures include but are not limited to Episiotomy, Amniotomy, Induced Labour and Vacuum Extraction. The most common types of childbirth are Vaginal delivery and Caesarean Section (C-section).

1. *Vaginal Delivery*

A *vaginal delivery* is the *birth* of babies through the *vagina* also called the birth canal. This form of delivery means shorter hospital stays, lower infection rates, quicker recovery and babies born vaginally have a lower risk of respiratory problems. The average length of a hospital stay for a normal vaginal delivery is 36–48 hours.

1. *The C-section*

It is the surgical procedure by which a baby is delivered through an incision in the mother's abdomen and then a second incision in the uterus. It is often performed because vaginal delivery would put the baby or mother at risk. A C-section might cause infection of the wound or the lining of the womb or cause excessive bleeding.

**Postpartum**

The postpartum period is commonly defined as the six weeks after childbirth and women undergo several physical and emotional changes during this time.

* Women may experience physical problems after birth including infections, difficulty urinating, constipation and hemorrhoids.
* They might feel irritable, indecisive, anxious and prone to sudden mood swings. These are referred to as ‘baby blues’.
* Depression is common but Postpartum depression might occur when it is continuous and disrupts normal functioning. If left untreated, it can last for months. Early diagnosis and treatment is very important to the well-being of the mother.

**Miscarriages**

Miscarriage is the spontaneous loss of a pregnancy before the 12th week. About 10 to 20 percent of known pregnancies end in miscarriage.

* What causes miscarriages?
1. Most miscarriages occur because the fetus isn't developing normally. About 50 percent of miscarriages are associated with extra or missing chromosomes.
2. In a few cases, a mother's health condition might lead to miscarriage such as uncontrolled diabetes, infections, hormonal or uterus problem and thyroid disease.
* What does not cause miscarriages?
1. Exercise, including high-intensity activities such as jogging and cycling
2. Sexual intercourse.
3. Working, provided that the mother is not exposed to harmful chemicals or radiation.
* Symptoms of a miscarriage
1. Vaginal spotting or bleeding
2. Pain or cramping in the abdomen or lower back
3. Fluid or tissue passing from the vagina

A miscarriage usually does not result in any significant harm to the mother, however, the couple might undergo emotional distress. Doctors, therefore, encourage seeking therapy if depression intensifies.

# **2.6**

**Am I pregnant?**

If you’ve had penetrative sex\* and experience significant delay in your menstrual cycle, it’s possible that you’re pregnant.

Keep in mind that it takes up to a few weeks for pregnancy to happen after sex. So if the sex happened a few days ago, you can’t be pregnant yet, and actually there’s still something you can do to prevent it.

Missing one or more menstrual periods is the classic sign of pregnancy. But this can be tricky for teenage girls, whose periods aren't yet regular. It can also be tricky for girls whose cycles are off as a result of dieting or exercise, low body fat from sports, or anorexia.

**Symptoms and how to verify**

The full list of pregnancy signs includes:

* A missed menstrual period
* Nausea or vomiting -- called "morning sickness," though it can happen throughout the day
* Sudden, intense aversion to certain foods, especially meats or fatty, fried foods
* Sore nipples or breasts
* Unusual fatigue
* Frequent urination
* Unusual mood swings
* Feeling lightheaded
* Weight gain
* Swelling belly

The only way to know for sure will be taking a pregnancy test. Today's home pregnancy tests are generally considered accurate. These simple kits can be bought over the counter in drugs stores. They’re most accurate if you use them more than a week after your missed period. If a home pregnancy test indicates you’re not pregnant, wait a week, and take another test to make sure.

A pregnancy test can tell whether you are pregnant by checking for a particular hormone in your urine or blood. The hormone is called human chorionic gonadotropin (HCG). HCG is made in a woman's placenta after a fertilized egg implants in the uterus. It is normally made only during pregnancy.

**Now that I know, what do I do**

DO NOT keep it a secret. The journey of pregnancy is daunting and cannot be walked alone; if you are a teenager or adolescent. Pregnant teenagers require special understanding, medical care, and education--particularly about nutrition, infections, substance abuse, and complications of pregnancy.

**Your options**

Although you may feel hesitant and fearful to do so, the next step after informing your guardians would be to consult a doctor for a prognosis to determine what your options are. The choice for your pregnancy should always be up to you.

These choices include

* Abortion
* Adoption
* Or keeping and raising the baby

Before you make your decision, you should understand the process that goes into each of these options.

**Abortion**

The two types of surgical abortions are:

* aspiration abortions (the most common type of surgical abortion)
* dilation and evacuation (D&E) abortions

The type of abortion a woman often depends on how long it’s been since her last period. Medical terminations are not as effective after 70 days, or 10 weeks, of pregnancy. If you’re thinking about getting an abortion, make an appointment as soon as you can. Abortion is very safe, but there are more risks the longer you wait. And it can be harder to get an abortion as time goes by. Whatever you decide to do, go to a doctor right away so they can help you stay healthy.

**Adoption**

If abortion is not an option for you but if you still find yourself unfit to raise the child, offering up the baby for adoption may be a suitable choice for you. Offering up your child for adoption to a hospitable family when it is born can be a fruitful alternative to abortion. An adoption agency will help find a suitable family to take the baby upon birth. This family will be vetted and ensured to be safe for the baby.

**Birth**

If you decide to keep the baby, you must be absolutely sure that you have the resources to be able to look after it while also being able to look after yourself. If you do not have a supportive family that can help you raise the child, you may have to drop out of school to look after the baby full-time. Taking up the role of a parent is a big responsibility and should not be decided without due thought.

**Things to be cautious about, if you keep the baby**

Carrying out a teenage pregnancy comes with many different obstacles. The pregnancy will be very enduring and you will need to be educated about nutrition, infections, substance use and possible complications to have a healthy pregnancy. It is also extremely important that teen mothers receive prenatal care as soon as possible to avoid complications in the pregnancy.

A teenage birth can have different effects on the mother and the baby than on older mothers. Teen mothers are more likely to give birth to premature babies that lack complete development in either their body or brain. This could possibly lead to lifelong issues for the baby depending on how premature the birth is.

Along with this, premature babies often weigh much less than they should, which can lead to further complications that risk the baby’s life.

Teenage mothers are more likely to suffer from high blood pressure and anaemia, which could lead to further health issues later in life.

# **2.7**

**What is it?**

The hymen is a thin, fleshy tissue that’s located at the opening of your vagina.

There’s a lot of confusion about hymens out there. Many people think the hymen totally covers the opening of your vagina until it’s stretched open, but that’s not usually the case. Most of the time, hymens naturally have a hole big enough for period blood to come out and for you to use tampons comfortably.

Some people are born with so little hymenal tissue that it seems like they don’t have a hymen at all. In rare cases, people have hymens that cover the entire vaginal opening, or the hole in their hymen is very small — they may need to see a doctor for a minor procedure to remove the extra tissue. Just like other parts of our body, hymens are a little different for everyone.

**Configuration**

The second stage of labor begins when the cervix is completely dilated (open), and ends with the birth of the baby. Contractions push the baby down the birth canal. The length of the second stage depends on whether or not the individuals has given birth before and how many times, and the position and size of the baby.

**The Hymen and sexual intercourse**

Your hymen can be stretched open the first time you have vaginal sex, which might cause some pain or bleeding. If this happens to you, it is totally normal. If not, also totally normal.

But this doesn’t happen to everyone. And there are other ways that a hymen can be stretched open: riding a bike, doing sports, or putting something in your vagina (like a tampon, finger, or sex toy). Once your hymen is stretched open, it can’t grow back.

Some people are born with hymens that are naturally open. And many other activities besides sex can stretch your hymen. So you can’t tell if someone has had sex by the way their hymen looks or feels.

**Breaking your hymen**

Your hymen doesn’t “pop” or “break” when your vagina is penetrated for the first time. But it will stretch or thin over time. This means it’s probably already open, even if you haven’t engaged in penetrative sexual activity or used an insertable menstrual product.

If it’s totally closed, it’s called an imperforate hymen. This is a rare medical condition that surgery can treat.

**Imperforate hymens**

Approximately 1 in 1,000 girls are born with what’s called an imperforate hymen. This is a hymen in which no opening to the vagina is present.

Many girls won’t even be aware that they have an imperforate hymen until they begin their menstrual period and experience complications due to blood pooling in the vagina. Experts aren’t exactly sure why some girls are born with the condition, but it can sometimes run in

families.

**Symptoms**

Symptoms often appear when a girl reaches puberty and may include abdominal pain and swelling that can last days due to a buildup of menstrual blood trapped in the vagina. That blood can also spill into the uterus and fallopian tubes.

Other symptoms of an imperforate hymen include:

* Lack of a menstrual cycle despite having other signs of sexual maturity, such as developing breasts and pubic hair.
* Abdominal or pelvic pain often comes and goes each month.
* Back pain.
* Painful urination or no urination at all. This can occur when pooled blood presses against the urethra. The urethra is a tube that carries urine from the bladder to outside the body.
* Bowel problems, such as constipation.
* Painful abdominal mass.

**Diagnosis and treatment**

If a health care professional suspects an imperforate hymen, they may order a vaginal or pelvic ultrasound. An imperforate hymen can be mistaken for other pelvic conditions, such as a transverse vaginal septum. This is a thick mass blocking the vagina. An ultrasound can help confirm the diagnosis.

The standard treatment is to surgically cut away part of the hymen using a scalpel or laser. This procedure is called a hymenotomy.

If you feel as though you may have an imperforate hymen, please consult a medical expert before proceeding with a diagnosis.

# **2.8**

**What is it?**

Masturbation, or self-pleasuring, is touching and rubbing parts of your body for sexual pleasure with the intention of having an orgasm. Although masturbation is often stigmatised as something ‘dirty’ or ‘shameful’, the opposite is actually true.

Masturbation is extremely common among men and women of different age ranges; although they like to hide it, chances are that the people in your life masturbate or have masturbated at some point in their life.

Masturbation is often kept as a private matter, which is what allows this stigma of shame and guilt to surround the habit, but be comforted that there is nothing to feel shameful or guilty for, as masturbation is a completely normal and natural function of the body.

There is no such thing as a ‘normal’ amount of masturbation as this is something entirely dependent on you and your needs. Some people masturbate once a week while others, multiple times a day. As long as you are able to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle and are okay with your frequency of masturbation, there is no need to worry.

**Masturbation Benefits**

Masturbation has many health benefits, including:

* Relieving stress
* Helping you relax
* Improving mood
* Improving sleep
* Releasing sexual tension

Alongside this, masturbating can help you explore your body and discover your sexuality, the things you like, and the things you don’t. This can help to improve and develop your own body image.

**Masturbation issue**

However, like any habit, excess is always possible; masturbation may be an issue if it is actively disrupting your social life, stopping you from completing responsibilities and chores and inhibiting your social interactions.

Physically, rough and excessive masturbation at most will lead to tender or chafed skin, which can be helped by using lubricant.

Again, surrounding stigma may have you believe that masturbating is dangerous; common misconceptions about masturbation are that it may “damage your genitals” or “stunt growth”. However, none of this is true, and no such harm exists.

In fact, masturbation is considered to be the safest means of sexual pleasure as there is absolutely no risk of STDs or pregnancy.

**Masturbation for men**

For males, masturbation means rubbing or stroking the penis to create a pleasurable stimulus that eventually leads to a climax; an orgasm. Upon orgasm, the penis ejaculates, and releases a sticky, clear fluid called semen.

When you reach orgasm, endorphins, or ‘feel good chemicals’ are released in the brain, creating a very pleasurable response.

Masturbation is a completely healthy and normal practise among males of all ages, but becomes extremely common during puberty, when males start to produce testosterone, a hormone that leads to increased sexual arousal, thoughts and curiosity. During this time is also when semen production begins.

**Masturbation for males**

Although it is most common for males to masturbate without any additional aid, including the use of lubricants may improve enjoyment and reduce tenderness of the genitals from continuous friction. Although access to official lube products may be difficult for youngers adolescents, there are many different safe lubricant alternatives for males, including:

* Lotion
* Coconut oil
* Vaseline
* Aloe Vera gel

**Masturbation for females**

Female masturbation involves the stroking or rubbing of a woman's vulva, especially her clitoris, with an index or middle fingers, or both.

Sometimes one or more fingers may be inserted into the vagina to stroke its frontal wall where the G-spot may be located.

Females can masturbate with their hands, with the aid of sex toys like a vibrator, by rubbing their clitoris against an object, and through other techniques. As long as the act involves self-stimulation, it is a form of masturbation.