



Oral Sex *Isn't* Safe Sex

Oral sex without using condoms or a protective barrier has become a common way to spread sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Many people believe that it is “safe” sex, but it is **not**. Body fluids contain bacteria and viruses that live in and are exchanged between the mouth and penis or mouth and vagina. Having bleeding gums or sores in the lining of the mouth can increase your risk of getting or passing on an STD.

All genders and ranks can suffer from unprotected sex. STD's resulting from oral sex can be a significant **mission impactor** just like unintended fatherhood and unintended pregnancy.

Some oral problems from STDs make it painful to eat or drink hot or spicy foods and compromise your nutrition. They affect your ability to fulfill your duty.

Some STDs that are transmitted through oral sex:

- Herpes
- Syphilis
- Gonorrhea
- Human papilloma virus (HPV) also called genital warts
- HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus which causes AIDS)

- Oral sex can cause damage to the mouth such as bruises, cuts, and sores on the tongue or lips.
- Symptoms of the STDs that affect the mouth, lips, throat and tongue are:
 - Syphilis – painless sore or bump on inside of lip
 - Gonorrhea – prolonged sore throat pain, or sore, bleeding gums
 - Herpes – fever, sore or blisters
 - HPV (genital warts) – cauliflower-like growths
 - HIV – bleeding gums, mouth sores, thrush (fungus infection)
- Genital warts are a known risk factor for oral cancer.

Many people who are infected with STDs don't have any symptoms. They may not know that they are passing a disease on to someone else. Herpes is easily passed between the genitals and the mouth, even when there are no sores. Protect your oral health:

- Use latex condoms and/or other barrier during oral sex to decrease your risk of getting STDs.
- Barrier methods such as natural rubber latex sheets, dental dams, or plastic wrap offer some protection from contact with body fluids during oral sex.
- Practice good oral hygiene – floss and brush your teeth to prevent bleeding gums.

References:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Preventing the sexual transmission of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS; 2000.

<ftp://ftp.cdcnpin.org/Updates/oralsex.pdf>

American Social Health Association, www.ashastd.org



<http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/dhpw/OralFitnessMain.aspx>