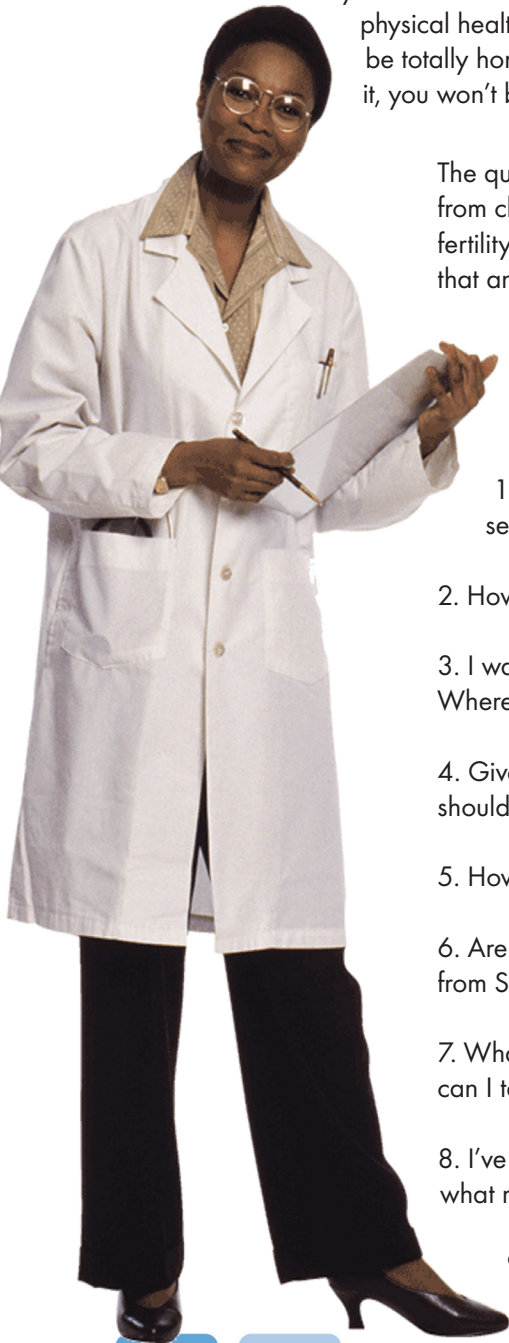


TEN THINGS TO ASK YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER



Talking to a healthcare provider about your sexual health can be intimidating. You might feel embarrassed about the questions that you have; you might not want to admit to certain feelings or fears about your health. However, being able to talk to your healthcare provider about your physical health as it relates to your sexual health is absolutely crucial. If you can't be totally honest about what's happening with your body and your feelings about it, you won't be able to get proper care.



The questions you may want to ask your healthcare provider can cover a wide range of topics, from changes in sex drive, dealing with sex during pregnancy, pain during sex, protecting your fertility, what form of contraception would be best, or other issues. There are few topics, however, that any sexually active person should be sure to discuss, including preventing sexually transmitted infections, getting tested, and more.

The 10 questions below are a great place to start the conversation with your healthcare provider.

1. I want to make sure that I'm taking all of the right steps to protect myself from sexually transmitted infections. Where should I start?
2. How can I talk to my partner about STIs? Can you give me some advice?
3. I want to make sure that my partner and I get tested before we have sex. Where should I go? How can I bring up the topic with him/her?
4. Given what we've talked about in terms of my relationship history, should I be tested for STDs/STIs? Which ones?
5. How often should I be tested for STIs? Which ones?
6. Are there any vaccines I should consider to protect myself from STIs? Are there vaccines that are recommended for me?
7. What are my options when it comes to birth control? How can I talk to my partner about birth control options?
8. I've been feeling differently about sex recently. Can we talk about what might be going on?
9. What screenings* are recommended for someone my age? (*such as STI tests, mammograms, prostate cancer screening, etc.)
10. I'm not always happy with the way my partner treats me. Can we chat about that?

If you feel uncomfortable with your healthcare provider for any reason, follow your instincts; find a new one. Your good health depends on your ability to communicate and rely on your healthcare provider! You might have to try more than one before you feel completely comfortable. But when you do, he or she will be an ally as you continue to learn more about how to remain in good health.



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