

Oral sex is still the most common type of unprotected sex.

You should know about oral sex and HIV/STD infection.

In this brochure, we define ORAL SEX as:

SUCKING COCK (OR GETTING SUCKED)

Mouth-Penis Contact
"Head"
"Fellatio"

RIMMING

Mouth-Anus Contact
"Analingus"

Photograph by Jim James

INFORMATION & SERVICES

STD Testing, Treatment and Counseling

San Francisco City Clinic (415) 487-5500
356 7th Street (between Folsom and Harrison)
San Francisco, CA 94103
www.sfcityclinic.org

HIV Prevention and Health Service Information

For a complete list of HIV prevention, care, and testing services in San Francisco visit the SFDPH, HIV Prevention Section web site at: [www. SFHIV.org](http://www.SFHIV.org)

Click on the *Our Services* button on the top of the page to find services

Other Resources

Syphilis testing made easy: Sign up on-line, drop by a nearby lab for the test, and get your results on line.
www.STDtest.org.

Let a sex partner know by e-mail that you have an STD and they need get checked out
www.INSPOt.org

Need help telling a partner they may have been exposed to HIV?
Partner Disclosure Assistance Program..... 866-606-7327
www.sfhiv.org/textPage/54.html

San Francisco AIDS Hotline.....863-AIDS

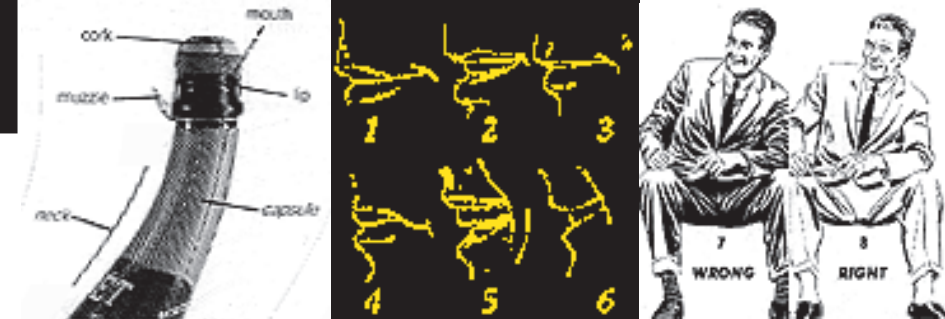
Sexual Health Services for Gay Men

Magnet
4122 18th Street (at Castro) 415-581-1600
San Francisco, CA
[www. Magnetsf.org](http://www.Magnetsf.org)

Developed by:
The San Francisco Department of Public Health, STD Prevention & Control and the HIV Prevention Section with special thanks to Mike Pendo, Frank Strona, Lisa Higdon, and staff of City Clinic and the STOP AIDS Project.

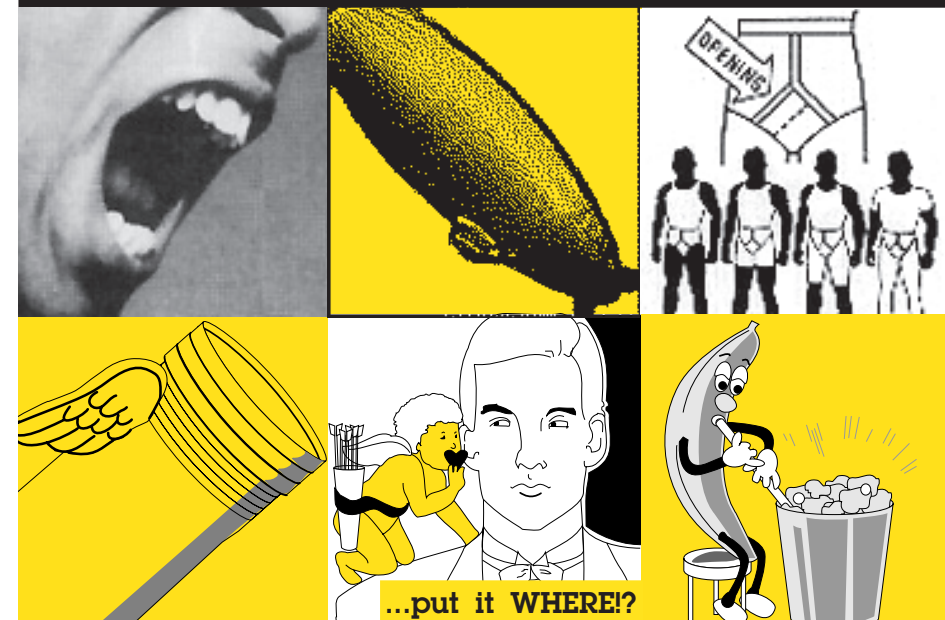
Graphic Design by Mario Mondelli.

For information on obtaining copies of this brochure, contact the SFDPH, HIV Prevention Section or visit us at www.SFHIV.org



Oral Sex Using Your Head

FOR MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN



A Common Sense Question & Answer Guide to Oral Sex & HIV/STD Transmission

“Is Oral Sex Safe?”

ORAL SEX AND SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES

There are different levels of risk, depending on the STD and the type of oral sex.

- STDs that cause sores and blisters (like syphilis and herpes) are **easy** to get from **all** types of oral sex - **getting** or **giving**.
- Gonorrhea and chlamydia transmission is possible from sucking and getting sucked.
- Hepatitis A, intestinal parasites, and herpes can be **easily passed** through **rimming** without a barrier.
- Having an STD can increase your chances of getting or transmitting HIV.
- Having an STD can increase your chances of getting infected with HIV.

REMEMBER:
‘Low Risk’
Does Not Mean ‘No Risk’

ORAL SEX AND HIV

There have been a number of studies that have examined the risk of getting HIV from oral sex. However, because many of these studies have included people who also engaged in anal sex, it is difficult to determine if HIV infection was due to anal or oral sex. As of February, 2005 there have been two studies which have measured the risk of getting HIV from oral sex alone. In both studies, there were no HIV infections among participants. Until more studies are conducted, the actual risk from oral sex alone is not known. Meanwhile, available evidence suggests that:

- HIV is **not easy to get** or **transmit** from any kind of oral sex.
- It is **much much** easier to get HIV from anal sex without a condom than from oral sex without a condom.
- Although the risk is **very very** low, there have been some well-documented reports of people getting HIV from sucking, as well as a few from getting sucked, and one from rimming.
- Since most reports are about HIV being acquired from men who suck, it is assumed that **it may be much** easier to get HIV from sucking with ejaculation than from getting sucked.
- A number of things could increase your chances of getting or transmitting HIV:
 - Bleeding gums, gum disease, or sores in the mouth.
 - The amount of virus in the semen.
 - Having an STD.

(See chart on reverse for more information about HIV and each STD.)

Only you can decide what you will or won't do. Consider the following questions when making that decision.

“How easy is it to get HIV and other STDs from Oral Sex?”

- Not all STDs are easily passed through oral sex. Educate yourself on which diseases are more common and which are easier to spread through oral sex (see chart inside).
- HIV is **not** easily passed through oral sex. However, it is possible that bleeding gums, sores in the mouth, cum in the mouth or STDs could increase your chances of HIV infection. Be informed about what may increase the risk of infection.

“What are my chances of having sex with someone infected with HIV or another STD?”

- To get HIV or an STD from oral sex, your partner must be infected with that disease.
- Know what diseases you are likely to be exposed to and how they are passed.
- For example, about one-third (1/3) of gay men in San Francisco are infected with HIV. Therefore, your chances of having sex with an HIV positive partner are high. On the other hand, although the number of gonorrhea cases among gay men has increased dramatically over the past few years, the chances of having sex with a partner with gonorrhea is still much lower than with HIV.

“What can happen to me if I get the disease?”

- Even though the chance of getting HIV from oral sex is low, the consequences of HIV are life changing. You may decide that it isn't worth taking the chance and use protection. Or you may not feel that protection is necessary because the chance of transmission is low.
- Some STDs have more serious consequences than others. Know what these are to determine the level of risk that is acceptable to you and your partners.

The decisions are yours.
Once you've decided,
talk to your partner.

“How can I reduce my risk?”

Any of these methods may reduce your risk for STDs and HIV. Some are more effective than others.



FOR SUCKING & GETTING SUCKED

- For **maximum** protection, use **non-lubricated latex condoms**. If you don't like the taste, try flavored condoms.

IF YOU DON'T WANT TO USE CONDOMS:

- **Don't take cum in your mouth or shoot in someone else's mouth..**

- **Avoid sucking or rimming if you have bleeding gums, sores, or have just gone to the dentist.** These could make it easier for HIV and STDs to enter the body. Wait until they heal.

- **Keep your gums healthy. Do not brush or floss your teeth right before or after having sex.** Wait awhile.



- **Look closely for sores or blisters on the genitals, mouth or lips.** If sores or blisters are visible, avoid oral sex.

Remember: they are not always easy to see.



- **Avoid deep throating.** This may irritate the lining of the throat, making it easier for HIV and STDs to enter the body.

FOR RIMMING

- **Use a barrier like plastic wrap to prevent fecal matter (shit) from getting into your mouth.** This can protect you from intestinal parasites and hepatitis A.

- Using a barrier may also protect you from herpes.

