

THE ABC OF ANAL SEX

Contents:

- 3 THE ABC OF ANAL SEX
 - 4 Anal anatomy
 - 5 Anal sex and hygiene
 - 6 Relaxing the anal region

- 8 DIFFERENT WAYS OF HAVING ANAL SEX
 - Rimming (licking the anus)
 - Inserting a sex toy into the anus
- 9 Anal intercourse
- 11 Anal intercourse positions
- 12 Fisting

- 12 ANAL SEX AND SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS
- 13 Protection from STIs

- 14 SEX AND DRUGS

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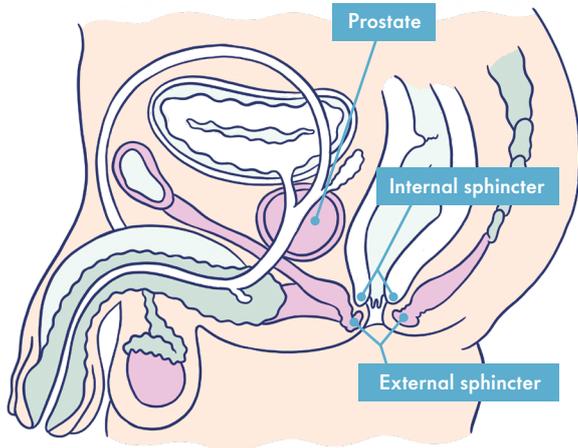
THE ABC OF ANAL SEX

Anal sex is part of normal sexuality and can be enjoyed by anyone regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

The anal region is a sexual part of the body. The area around the anus and the anal canal that opens out through the anus have a high concentration of nerves, and they can be stimulated to produce sexual pleasure and satisfaction.

Anal sex is a taboo in our society and associated with many beliefs, prejudices and negative images related to, for instance, dirtiness, unnaturalness and emasculation. It is important to get rid of these negative images and false beliefs, because anal sex is about pleasure and satisfaction, which are beneficial to human health and well-being.

The contents of this brochure are primarily aimed at men who have sex with other men, but the brochure may be useful for anyone interested in the topic. There are many types of anal sex, and it is also possible to engage in it without the risk of STIs. Unprotected anal intercourse between men, however, carries a high transmission risk of HIV and other STIs.



Anal anatomy

Getting to know the anal anatomy will help you enjoy anal sex. The anal canal is a tube that is a few centimetres long with a mucous membrane. It starts immediately after the anus and ends below the rectum. The anal canal connects to the anus and this area has the highest concentration of pleasure-producing nerves.

The anal canal has two ring-shaped sphincters, of which the external sphincter around the opening of the anus can be contracted and relaxed at will. The internal

sphincter is located about one centimetre from the anus. The actions of this sphincter are involuntary, but you can get it to relax by breathing deeply, relaxing and calmly inserting, say, a finger inside the anus. Relaxing the sphincters and pelvic area is important for pain-free and pleasurable anal intercourse. The rectum expands during arousal and becomes about the size of a fist in diameter. The rectum is not a straight tube, but forms an S-shaped bend, which is why it must be penetrated gently and at the right angle.

The rectum is less sensitive than the area around the anus, and the pleasure can come from the feeling of pressure caused by penetration. **The prostate, on the other hand, is highly sensitive** to touch and many enjoy prostate stimulation.

Anal sex and hygiene

Anal sex is associated with overblown and unnecessary concerns about hygiene. If anal sex involves rimming (anal licking), for example, just a normal wash in the shower is all you need. In many other forms of anal sex, it is often enough if you clean the anal area using a bidet shower or wet paper.

You should not insert the shower head into the anus, but place the shower head firmly against the opening of

Anal douching is easy to do with a bidet shower. Bidet showers are commonly installed next to toilet seats in Finland and can be used for this purpose.

the anus and spray warm water into the rectum at a suitable pressure. You should continue spraying water until you start feeling a light pressure. After this, release the water from your anus. You can repeat this a few times until the water that comes out is clear. Douching should not be done daily. There is a strain of bacteria living in the mucous membrane of the rectum, and excessive douching can disturb its natural balance and put you at risk of bowel diseases.

Relaxing the anal region

Locating and relaxing the pelvic floor muscles is important and can best be achieved through practice. These muscles surround the urethra, bladder and anus. Their function is to work together with the sphincters to control the release of urine and faeces. Regular relaxation exercises and strengthening the muscles will help you enjoy anal sex more. Exercises improve blood circulation throughout the pelvic area. Relaxing the pelvic area in between exercises is important. Muscle tension can cause pain during anal intercourse.



DIFFERENT WAYS OF HAVING ANAL SEX

There are many ways of having sex and intercourse is just one form of anal sex. You can try different ways of having sex alone or together with a partner or partners to see which ones feel good and give you pleasure. Simply caressing or licking the area around the anus can be arousing even without any other anal sex.

Rimming (licking the anus)

The nerves around the anus are particularly sensitive to touch and simply licking the anus can give a person an orgasm. You can lick the area with your tongue slowly or rapidly, varying the rhythm. Nibbling, squeezing and kissing the areas around the anus can also feel good. There are several positions that are suitable for rimming.

Inserting a sex toy into the anus

Sex toys of various types and sizes are available for stimulating and arousing the anal area. These include dildos, anal beads and anal plugs. It is a good idea to start with smaller sex toys and, after you are used to them, gradually move on to bigger ones if you want.

The anus can be prepared to receive a dildo by rotating and pushing a finger against the sphincter. Apply plenty of lubricant in and around the anus and on the dildo. The dildo should be inserted carefully while breathing calmly. You should not insert anything into the rectum that could damage the mucous membranes, break or slip completely inside the rectum.

Anal intercourse

Before anal intercourse, you should talk about your wishes and any concerns you may have with your partner. You can start preparing for anal intercourse by applying lubricant, massaging the anal area and inserting a finger into the anus. It is a good idea to spend plenty of time on foreplay, because the more aroused you are, the easier it is to engage in anal intercourse. You should pause if you feel disturbing pain at the start or during anal intercourse. After pausing for a moment, you can try again cautiously and calmly. Applying more lubricant and changing positions may help reduce pain.

You will probably enjoy anal intercourse more if you are familiar with your anal area and have already tried other forms of anal sex either alone or with a partner before proceeding to intercourse.



Anal intercourse positions

Personal preferences and the anatomical structure of the anal area of the receiving party (bottom) affect which position(s) will suit you best. The size, shape and erection angle of the penetrating party's (top) penis also plays a role in which position feels the best. It is best to start anal intercourse slowly and cautiously, monitoring the sensations in your body and your partner's reactions. The bottom party often fondles their penis during intercourse, but this may not be a good idea at the moment of penetration, because it may contract the sphincter muscles, making it difficult to enter the anus and causing pain.

During intercourse, you can ask your partner how they feel and make sure that the sex feels good for both of you.

Even if you are exclusively a top, it is important to get to know your anal area. This gives you an idea of what anal intercourse feels like in different positions, how to insert your penis without inflicting pain and what different rhythms feel like. You can learn and practice using a dildo.

Fisting

The rectum consists of folds, making it extremely flexible and allowing you to insert several fingers or even a whole fist inside. Insert your hand so that your fingers, including your thumb, are bunched up together, pinched, as it were.

It's good to have a sexual partner who you can communicate with about your wishes, preferences and rules. Fisting should proceed calmly, but in a state of arousal to ensure maximum relaxation and enjoyment. Your nails should be short and all rings and bracelets removed.

When the sphincters give way, push your fingers in gently, one by one. Some feel it is enough to have only part of the hand inside. The rectum expands to its maximum diameter when the whole hand is inserted up to the wrist.

ANAL SEX AND SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) can be transmitted during sex without a condom. HIV is most likely to be transmitted during anal intercourse without a condom. If the mucous membrane is damaged or bleeding occurs during unprotected anal intercourse or fisting, the risk of an HIV or hepatitis infection is particularly high, and there is also a risk of chlamydia, gonorrhoea and syphilis.

There is almost no risk of HIV transmission in oral sex. Other STIs, such as chlamydia, gonorrhoea and syphilis, can be transmitted to either party during unprotected oral sex or rimming. All STIs can be asymptomatic, and getting tested is the only way to know for sure if you have an infection. Syphilis and HIV are tested from blood; chlamydia and gonorrhoea from urine or as a swab sample from the throat and anus, depending on what type of sex you have had.

A condom used with a water-based or silicone-based lubricant throughout intercourse effectively protects against HIV and other STIs.

Protection from STIs

Condoms are available in different shapes and sizes. If the situation involves multiple partners, you should change the condom every time you switch partners. There are lubricants that are specifically designed for fisting that have a thicker consistency and provide more lubrication. It is a good idea to use disposable gloves in fisting to protect the anal area and the mucous membranes from vari-

ous bacterial infections and blood-transmitted diseases. Desensitizing (numbing) lubricants should not be used, because they can make you more susceptible to injury due to a reduced sense of pain. You can protect yourself from STIs during oral sex with a condom or a dental dam.

PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) is medicine that prevents HIV, which is taken before being exposed to the HI virus. PrEP is taken by sexually active, HIV-negative people to prevent HIV infections. When used correctly, PrEP effectively prevents HIV infections.

Sex toys should be cleaned after use using warm soapy water. If the same sex toys are used by more than one person, you can avoid transmitting HIV and other STIs by placing a new condom on top of the sex toys every time you change users or by washing them in soapy water between users.

You should get tested for STIs regularly if you have multiple sex partners and a condom is not always used in all types of sexual activity.

A person with HIV who is on medication is a safe sex partner in terms of HIV, because effective HIV medication prevents the transmission of HIV.

SEX AND DRUGS

The use of drugs to increase sexual desire and pleasure is common.

Poppers refers to an inhaled substance that is used in anal intercourse to relax the muscles in the anus and increase the feeling of arousal. The effect of poppers only lasts for a brief moment and they contain harmful solvents and propellants.

Chemsex means using drugs specifically for the purpose of having sex. Drugs are used in the hopes that they will enhance the sexual experience and sexual prowess and increase pleasure and the duration of sex. You can develop a physical or mental addiction to intoxicants, and their safe dosing can also be difficult.

Being under the influence of drugs may lead to poor judgement, and you may take risks during sex that you would not take without drugs. Some drugs remove inhibitions, dull the sense of touch and reduce your judgement.

You always need the consent of all participants to engage in sex. Ensuring consent is even more important when sexual activity involves the use of drugs.

Maximize the pleasure of anal sex!

- Get to know the anal region.
- Learn to relax your anal muscles.
- Talk about your preferences with your partners.
- Do not forget the risk of HIV and STIs.

There are many types of anal sex

– experiment with them to see what works for you!



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More information about anal sex can be found at

hivpoint.fi/en

