

UPDATED

# Basic Guidelines for Safer Sex and SM Interactions

Presented by:

**NELEA**

NEW ENGLAND LEATHER ALLIANCE

**This Booklet Brought to you by:**

The New England Leather Alliance  
P.O. Box 35728  
Brighton, MA 02153

[www.NELAonline.org](http://www.NELAonline.org)

(617) 876-NELA(6352)

This booklet is only a basic guide based on current research and knowledge of safer sex practices. NELA is not responsible for the use or misuse of this information. Take additional time to learn more about the topics covered in this booklet before you delve into the world of SM.

**Safer SM \_\_\_\_\_ 8**

Basic information on how to make SM play safer, both physically and emotionally. Includes information on different types of play, tips on how to find other kinky people, and an analysis of the difference between SM and abuse.

**Safer Sex \_\_\_\_\_ 34**

Overview of body parts and types of sexual contact, giving information and suggestions on how to minimize risk and maximize pleasure. Contains detailed chart about STD symptoms, transmissions and treatment.

**More Knowledge \_\_\_\_\_ 48**

Resources to get more information about safer sex and safer SM. Includes suggested reading list and websites.

**Notes \_\_\_\_\_ 50**

For your convenience we've included two pages so that can keep any notes or information that is vital to you with this booklet.

**This booklet is a basic guide to SM/Leather/Fetish sexuality.** It has been put together with the help of medical experts, activists, and others experienced in safe, sane, and consensual SM. Wherever it is appropriate, we use the language that BDSM practitioners use in order to be most clear to our target audience. We also use language and words that reach a very broad audience in order to be clear and inclusive.

**This booklet is not intended as a replacement for researching these activities, attending workshops, mentoring, or other methods of learning.** Also, please always remember that people are individuals and have different tastes, limits, and lifestyles.

**If you realize that you find frank discussion of sado-masochistic activities offensive, please consider passing this booklet along to someone who may find it useful.**

## Basic Glossary

**B&D** - Bondage & discipline.

**D&S** - Dominance & submission. Indicates exchange of power, but not necessarily any physical activity.

**BDSM** - Umbrella term for SM/leather/fetish sexuality.

**S/M, S&M** - Sadomasochism (also see BDSM)

**Aftercare** - This is the tender time after a scene. It reiterates that we do these actions in love, and take time to make sure our play partners are centered and feel good about what they just did.

**Edgeplay** - Physically/emotionally risky BDSM play. Approach with care and experience.

**Player** - Someone who is having a SM interaction.

**Top** - The person higher on the power spectrum and/or giving sensation.

**Bottom** - The lower person on the power spectrum and/or receiving sensation.

**Switch** - Someone who enjoys being both a top and a bottom.

**Masochist** - Someone who interprets what would otherwise be negative stimulus as pleasurable; someone who “gets pleasure from pain.”

**Sadist** - Someone who enjoys giving pleasure through “painful” stimuli.

**Safeword** - A word that a player can use to immediately stop a scene in progress. Most people use a word like “red” or “mercy” rather than “no” or “stop”, since some people enjoy “protesting” what is happening to them - but really don’t want it to end.

**Scene/Play** - Words for SM interactions.

**SSC** - Safe, sane and consensual. A very important tenet of BDSM - See next heading.

**RACK** - Risk-Aware Consensual Kink. Similar to SSC.

**Please note that these are very basic definitions - use them as a starting point! Not everyone defines these words the same way.**

**RACK** stands for **Risk Aware Consensual Kink**. It's more than an acronym - it's a good way to be part of the community.

**Risk:** Risk means that everything we do - everything - carries a certain amount of risk. Sometimes that risk is very, very small. At other times and in other activities, risk can be quite substantial. While we might be able to reduce risk, there is no way that we can ever be certain that we are eliminating all risk. This is something all of us need to understand before we start to play.

**Aware:** Aware means that we have taken responsibility to educate ourselves in the most effective way we can in order to know that what we are doing (or about to do) is done with the risks fully out in the open and that we are practicing the activity with as much awareness as we can in order to minimize that risk.

**Consensual:** Consensual is something we all must be, with anyone we play with. Without consent, we may be violating other people and, in some cases, we might be breaking the law. Consent is easy to do, but not always easy to practice. Gaining full and free consent from all the players in a scene before anything happens makes for a better, hotter scene. It also helps ensure that everyone comes away feeling safe and secure.

**Kink:** It might seem obvious, but keep in mind that kink can mean something very different to different people. What is “kinky” for one person might be boring and vanilla to someone else. That means that consent and risk awareness are going to be different too! And that means we all need to work through the safe, consensual process of doing kink.

SSC stands for **Safe, Sane and Consensual**. It too is much more than an acronym.

**Safe:** Safe means being knowledgeable about the techniques and safety concerns involved in what you are doing, and acting in accordance with that knowledge. Just as there are ways to reduce the risk in activities such as scuba diving or driving a car, there are ways to reduce the risk of SM behavior.

**Sane:** Sane is knowing the difference between fantasy and reality. Fictional accounts of SM are often distorted for fantasy's sake, and are not representative of real situations and relationships. Sane also distinguishes between mental illness and health.

**Consensual:** Consensual is respecting the limits imposed by each participant at all times. Consent is the prime ingredient of SM. The same behaviors that might be crimes without consent are life-enhancing with consent. The type and parameters of control are agreed upon by the people involved, and the ongoing consent of all participants is required.

Many common SM activities may be considered illegal, depending on the laws of your city and state. For example, spanking can be construed as assault or abuse by law enforcement. Your best protection from tangles with the law is to keep your play private and inside your home (windows shut, blinds drawn). Concerned neighbors could hear screams and call the police. If officers do come to your door, release the bottom from bondage, put on bathrobes or clothes if time allows, and politely inform the officers that you are just having loud sex. Stay calm and don't give "attitude". They may insist on speaking to both partners. Know your legal rights. You have the right not to incriminate yourself. If you are arrested, do not make any statements, and ask for an attorney. If the police come to your home, attempt to deal with the officers outside. Do not invite them in. You do not have to consent to a search. If the officer demands to enter or search the premises, voice your objection and stand aside.

## Meeting People

So you've realized that you have an interest in leather/ kink – now what? Meeting people is one of those things that comes easy to some, and is difficult for others. There are lots of places to meet folks who are “in the scene.” Some folks go to “munches,” which are low-key, plainclothes events that are usually held at an open place, like a mall or a local restaurant. Some join groups that focus on community, service, or a similar fetish (check the complete club list on NELA's website). Many get involved in activism, or check out the local leatherbar or a fetish night at a club. Kinky people are everywhere, from all walks of life; we are a diverse and wonderful community. When making your first venture out into the kinky world, remember to respect people's lives and personal space. Many kinksters prefer to not be greeted with their “scene names” in any non-scene (or “vanilla”) context. When in doubt, ask!

- » Stay away from the scening space of people who are playing, or are engaged in a scene dynamic.
- » Do not sit on or leave things on the equipment.
- » When watching a scene or sitting in the dungeon, speak softly. Sound carries and can cause distractions, which could lead to injuries.
- » Do not be afraid to ask people to play, and negotiate boundaries, including safewords. But if someone says no, do not harass them to change their mind.
- » Do not touch or play with toys or people without permission.
- » Do not join a scene without permission or interrupt to ask questions.
- » Give players recovery time and space after a scene. During or right after a scene is especially not the time for a critique.

## Scene Etiquette

- » Check to make sure you know who the Dungeon Master is and who the other people in charge are, and let people know before you begin a loud, rough or edgy scene.
- » If something looks or feels wrong, let the Dungeon Master or a Host, Hostess or Party organizer know right away. It is better to be wrong than sorry should something bad happen.
- » If you are playing with fluids, use a bedpad or towel under your partner.
- » Clean up your play area when finished. Use bleach and water mixtures or hospital sterilization sprays on equipment. Dispose of contaminated waste and sharps (needles, knives, etc.) in their appropriate containers.
- » Clean up after yourself when watching too. Leave the party space better than you found it!

Negotiation to gain consent is one of the cornerstones of SM activities. This requires an understanding of yourself and your desires, and an understanding that these desires are mutable and may change with your moods, stresses of your daily life/etc. Many people use extensive checklists to negotiate their scenes. Others who are more clear about what they want and have the ability to communicate clearly will be able to negotiate well without such lists. Sit down with your partner(s) and discuss your desires and interests. Then, as an exercise, take some time to learn to say “no” to certain requests. Being sex positive is not about saying yes all the time. It is also about saying “I’m not interested,” and having that heeded. Without this fundamental basis of consent, SM activities can cross the line to abusive behavior.

What is Abuse? Abuse is a pattern of behavior where one person tries to control the thoughts, beliefs, or actions of a partner, friend, or any other person close to them. Abuse is sometimes referred to as domestic violence, battering, and intimate partner abuse.

Abuse is not just an individual issue but a community issue. It affects all types of families and communities including S/M, traditional, straight, polyamorous, monogamous, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities. Abuse crosses all social, ethnic, racial, and economic lines.

Abusers may use a number of ways to control their partner, none of which are acceptable in the context of a consensual, negotiated S/M relationship.

**Just because you consent to play does not mean you consent to everything. You have the right to set limits.**

**SM is always consensual. If it's not consensual then it is abuse. You might be abused if ...**

- » you are afraid to say no or use your safeword.
- » You cannot withdraw consent and stop what's happening at any time.
- » You cannot set limits without being ridiculed, threatened or coerced into changing them.
- » Your partner threatens to out you for being into S/M.
- » Your partner ignores your safewords or tries to convince you not to use them.
- » You are confused about when a scene begins or ends.
- » You do not feel free to talk to family or friends whenever you choose.
- » Your partner has threatened to hurt you or themselves if you leave the relationship.

**If you think you or someone you know is being abused, contact the Network/La Red 617-695-0877 / tty: 617-227-**

**4911 [www.tnlr.org](http://www.tnlr.org)**

**[info@tnlr.org](mailto:info@tnlr.org)**

The Difference Between S/M and Abuse:

The most basic difference between S/M and abuse is **consent**.

“**Consent** in S/M is an active collaboration for the benefit, well-being and pleasure of all persons concerned.”

Dossie Easton, *The New Bottoming Book*, 2001

It is **not** consent if...

- » You are afraid to say no.
- » You say yes to avoid conflict.
- » You did not expressly give consent.

**S/M is...**

- » Always consensual
- » Done with respect for limits.
- » Enjoyed by all partners
- » Fun, erotic, and loving.
- » Done with an understanding of trust.

What Can You Do to Support a Friend? If a friend comes to you because they are being abused...

- » Listen without judgment.
- » Let them know that you are there for them and will remain there when they need you.

Abusers maintain control over their victims by isolating them and convincing them that no one cares about them.

- » Don't tell the person to "just leave," or assume you know what is best for them.

Statistics have shown that there is often an escalation in violence when the victim tries to leave. By leaving, your friend may risk: losing their children, violence against their family, friends, or pets, loss of their home, loss of their community, and much more.

- » Get support for yourself.

To get support for yourself or to get more ideas on how you can support a friend contact:

**The Network/La Red 617-695-0877 / tty: 617-227-4911 [www.tnlr.org](http://www.tnlr.org) /[info@tnlr.org](mailto:info@tnlr.org)**

It has been said that SM is like a drug. You are not taking any physical substances, but the manipulation of your body and/or your surroundings can often cause you to “go someplace in your head.” These altered mindsets can impair your judgement, and the addition of physical substances such as drugs and alcohol can cause you to believe that you have fewer boundaries than you actually do, or forget to use the appropriate protection. Also, some substances may interact badly with the chemicals released by your brain during a SM scene, causing higher risks for seizures, heart attacks, or impaired sexual judgement.

**Use of drugs and alcohol can impair consent, one of the primary things that keeps SM from being abuse. If you feel that consent is being violated, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at:**

**1-800-799-7233**

The following are some tips on impact play. Please do not engage in any play like this without knowing what you're doing! Temporary pain can be fun; permanent injury, not so much.

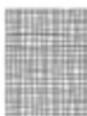
- » Stick to larger muscle groups.
- » Avoid places like lower back, kidneys and stomach, because hitting internal organs can cause dangerous internal bleeding.
- » Do not strike joints, bony areas, or spine. You can cause joint pain and troubles for your partner later.
- » Make sure your implement hits your target. Practice and communicate! Don't let the flogger or toy get out of your control and wrap around the shoulders, hips or other sensitive areas.
- » Make sure you are not hitting anything/anyone on your backswing.
- » Genitals and breasts can only take a light to moderate level of impact.

## Impact Play

There is a lot you can do with these areas that does not require heavy impact! Impact to the breasts can cause cysts to form.

- » Experiment with different sensations. There are things that thud, things that sting, and things that make a lot of noise but don't hurt at all.
- » Sometimes, after playing heavily for many years, your nerve endings in an area can get damaged. (This is sometimes called "leather butt"). You can avoid this by mixing up the parts of the body you play with, and giving yourself plenty of time to heal between scenes.
- » Watch for broken skin! If you do accidentally draw blood, keep the area clean with alcohol wipes, put on some gloves and clean your toys!

On the opposite page are diagrams of the front and back of the body showing which places are safer to hit. Please learn about this before playing!



These areas are NOT safe. These places should not be hit with any sort of toy.



These areas are OK for light or medium toys with not too much force.



These areas are safe for heavier play. Continue to use common sense caution, however.

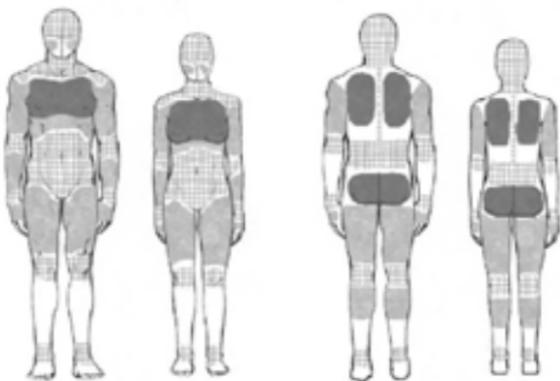


Photo © Black Kat Photography

## Bondage

Bondage materials can be anything from rope or plastic wrap to specialized SM equipment. In addition to your bondage equipment, always have materials like safety scissors and keys to free your partner quickly in the case of an emergency. If using ropes, learn how to tie knots properly so that they don't tighten more than you want. (There are plenty of books, demos, and groups who can show you how to do this.) Avoid shoddy equipment with sharp edges. Never submit to bondage with a person you do not trust with your life - it is up to the person getting tied to decide when this trust has been established. Always check circulation during a scene. If limbs "fall asleep" or turn cold and clammy, the circulation is impaired - this is dangerous. If at any point, you gently squeeze a limb and the natural color does not return to the area quickly, remove the bondage as quickly as possible - cut it off if you need to. Avoid putting ropes around the bottom's

neck, even loosely. Remember that breasts can lose circulation if bound too tightly. Also be concerned with existing joint and muscle conditions, and positions that can't be held for a long time. When using plastic/ pallet wrap, be aware that people can overheat - give them plenty of water and ice cubes. If the top has health issues, be sure to rig the bondage so that the bottom can free themselves in an emergency situation. In standing bondage, always release the bottom's ankles before the arms, so that they don't fall over. Bondage can be very intense for some people; when you are finished, make sure the bottom can stand on their own. Take your time, and walk them to a comfortable place if they need it.

**AVOID USING pantyhose, silk scarves and neckties (they can tighten uncontrollably). Be careful with steel handcuffs, the metal shouldn't press against the wrist, as it can cause nerve damage.**

## Power Play

Much BDSM play and roleplay is based on “power exchange”, with one person taking the “dominant” role and one the “submissive”. There are a wide variety of scenarios involving power dynamics — some examples are: master/slave, goddess/worshiper or sergeant/recruit.

Exerting aspects of mental or emotional control, even in role play, can be hurtful if not approached with care. When engaging in power play, it’s a good idea to agree upon time limits, and to find a ritual or signal such as a collar or a special instruction to mark the giving of power, and to close the scene.

If you do not know how to anticipate and contain the interaction or “roleplay” along certain paths, you may get more than you bargained for. Gender and personal history (such as prior physical or sexual abuse) are also factors to consider. Some people react negatively to personal humiliation, whereas

being called a “slut” is acceptable and desired by other people. Negotiate your shared understanding carefully, and explore the possibility of resurfacing emotional traumas triggered by particular words, positions, vocal styles, etc.

No matter if you are a top or bottom, never be afraid to use your safeword if you find yourself in an undesirable situation. If you feel your situation is abusive, remember that no power arrangement or contract is binding when the relationship is no longer fulfilling.

**Power play can be intensely positive for both partners when done with caution and communication. Avoid playing with power or head-games when you are depressed, tired, sick, or cranky. Never let real anger or shame enter into your erotic or punishment play.**

## Clips, Clamps & Candles

Just like anything else that can break the skin, the use of **clips and clamps** can present a risk for disease transmission. Be prepared with exam gloves, cleaning supplies (alcohol for skin, and a solution of 1 part bleach to 10 parts water for toys). Do not reuse the same gloves or touch multiple partners/unclean surfaces. Dispose of gloves properly by turning them inside out. Playing with **candles** can provide a “hot time” as long as no one gets seriously burned. A common activity is dripping the melted wax onto exposed skin. Tie back long hair, and make sure the area is clear of fabric and flammables. Avoid using plastic wrap, PVC clothing, latex and garments that melt/catch fire easily. Keep water, a damp towel, or a fire extinguisher handy. Use low temperature paraffin candles. Test the wax on the inside of your wrist before dripping on anyone else. Remove metal plates from votives and avoid candles that are ‘long-burning’, made of transparent gel, or have beeswax, metallic glitter or other additives.

**Watersports** - Piss play is safe on unbroken skin, on the outside of the body. Both feces and urine can transmit STDs and parasites. If there are any cuts, or abrasions on the skin, keep feces and urine away from them. Also keep in mind that with this play, a pimple, canker/cold sores, recent dental work, or even severely chapped lips will put you at risk for STDs.

**Enemas** - Never share your douche bag or nozzle with anyone else. Have one nozzle for each person -even the metal kind! Do not use fluids other than water, and keep both your nozzle and bag clean. Frequent use of enemas can wash away the lining and the friendly bacteria in your colon.

**Do not douche or have an enema after sex. You may think you are "cleaning", but you are actually pushing bacteria further into your body!**

Blood happens...sometimes intended, sometimes not. Always use sterile (disposable, if possible) tools, wear gloves and use clean working surfaces. Always clean the skin with soap, alcohol and antiseptics — before and after — if intending to cut, pierce, or otherwise break the skin. Do not participate in bloodplay with anyone under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or who hasn't been trained, or those without a good reputation. When you are finished, apply first-aid ointments and bandages as needed. Be sure to put the sharps (such as needles and knives) into a sharps container, and dispose of properly. In most bloodplay, bleeding should stop on its own – if it does not, seek medical attention.

**Bloodplay is advanced SM and requires a lot of training, common sense, and general first aid knowledge. Call the Red Cross and take a general First Aid Class, or organize one for your local SM group.**  
1-877-272-7337      [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

Fisting is an activity that can be done to either a vagina or an anus. Always make sure that your fingernails are trimmed and smooth (you can use small amounts of cotton covered with finger cots if you need to), and it is strongly recommended that you use gloves. Always remember to go very slowly, and to use LOTS and LOTS of lubricant. For anal fisting, be sure your colon is as empty as possible (avoid eating hard to digest foods like corn and peanuts), and no matter where your hand is going, remember to relax, communicate often, and take as much time as you need. When you are finished, remove the glove by pulling it over itself and inside out. Afterwards, be careful not to get anyone's fluids in or on your own body.

**Before trying fisting, spend some time with these books: TRUST, the handbook: A Guide to the Sensual and Spiritual Art of Handballing/ by Bert Hermann, for important guidelines for anal fisting, and for vaginal fisting, read A Hand in the Bush: The Fine Art of Vaginal Fisting by Deborah Addington.**

## Toy Care

Keeping your toys clean is a very important consideration for SM play. Very little research has been done in the realm of sterilization of SM toys. Often, this is difficult because the usual method of a 10:1 water-bleach mixture is not suitable for porous materials such as leather. Some tips for toy care:

- » If you use a porous toy on an individual's vulva or penis, consider reserving that toy for that person only.
- » You can wash ropes in the 10:1 water-bleach mixture and a regular laundry machine cycle.
- » Use concentrated antibacterial soap, tea-tree oil, or other chemical disinfectants at your own risk.
- » REMEMBER: Alcohol does NOT kill STDs.

**Non-porous toys can often be washed. Some toys shouldn't be shared. Check the care instructions that came with your toy.**

As a beginner, use common sense and do not rush. There is no prize for pushing yourself too far, too fast.

Just because you read about it in a book or online doesn't mean you know how to do it.

There are no rules that you must follow to be a “real” dominant, a “real” submissive or a “real” anything else. The only rules are the ones you make for yourself and with your partner(s).

If a potential play partner refuses to tell you his or her name or share personal details about themselves with you, it doesn't make sense to expose your body to them. Ask around about the person's reputation.

Make sure you inspect your toys and equipment before playing to ensure that they will not break apart or hurt someone in a way you don't intend.

One difference between BDSM sex education and standard sex education is that we deal with many more parts of the body. Because BDSM interactions are not just about your penis, vulva and anus, we embrace a more holistic view: BDSM is also about your skin, back, thighs and other muscle groups - and your psyche.

**Skin/Mouth** Your skin (including your mouth and throat) is your body's first defense against most sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS. Many STDs can be transmitted not only through genital contact and bodily fluids, but also through broken or abraded skin. Deeper scratches, cuts, a harsh caning, rope abrasion, singletail whips, even some lighter sensation toys can all break the skin and provide ways for STDs to infect your system. If you intend to break this barrier, be clean and be careful!

**You can't always see if skin is broken!**

Your anus (as well as the sphincter and the rectum) is one of the more fragile places to play, but with a little patience and a lot of lube it can be a pleasurable experience for all involved. Because the walls of the rectum are very susceptible to tearing (providing ways for AIDS and STDs to be transmitted), it is important to wear a condom or use gloves during assplay. It is important to use a barrier when “rimming” (using your mouth to stimulate the anus). There is little risk of AIDS from this, but other STDs, such as hepatitis B and C, anal warts, herpes and parasites can easily transmit themselves during unprotected rimming. When finished, be sure to turn all safer sex materials inside out and dispose of them properly.

**Always use a flared base on all of your anal toys! Without the base, your toy could get lost inside, and you really don't want that to happen.**

There are lots of ways to prevent pregnancy, but many of those methods don't protect against AIDS and other STDs. In order to avoid these infections and diseases, remember to use latex or polyurethane barriers and condoms between you and your partner, and cover all your toys with condoms or gloves (be sure to change them for each new person that the toy is used on!) When possible, clean your toys by boiling, or soaking for at least 10 minutes in a 10:1 water to bleach mixture. If you aren't sure about how to clean your toys safely, consult the information supplied with the toy or ask vendor or the manufacturer. Rough sex, not enough lube, and nonoxynol-9 (an irritant/allergen for many) can all lead to abrasions that provide ways for STDs to get into your bloodstream. Also, if there have been any SM interactions that have broken the skin, be extra careful with fluids/toys from other people.

**The barrier is contaminated once it touches the genitals. Never flip it inside out and continue to use it, even if the condom just didn't unroll properly.**

While it is unlikely that you will contract HIV through your penis, it can happen, especially if there are any abrasions or cuts. Remember that you don't need fluids to contract infections like herpes. Know a little bit about your partner, and use a barrier to lower this risk. If you are playing with a penis and if the erection necessary to put on a condom isn't possible, take the condom and cover the tip of the penis to avoid any contact with pre-ejaculate fluid. If you plan on fucking afterwards, remove this condom, and put on a new one.

Be sure you know how to put on a condom properly. Squeeze the tip of the condom before unrolling it over the penis so that air doesn't get trapped (which can cause the condom to break).

**Always remember to change condoms/gloves/barriers between partners and orifices to prevent infections and STDs — if in doubt, use a new one.**

No matter what your gender is, oral sex presents a risk for passing along AIDS and other STDs. This risk increases when cuts, abrasions, sores or any evidence of STDs are present. (Remember that most STDs do not have visible symptoms!). It is a good idea to examine the genitals and mouth for cuts and sores and avoid wearing lipstick (which breaks down latex condoms), eating spicy or brittle foods, brushing and flossing for several hours before performing oral sex. Avoid performing unprotected oral sex when you have a sore throat; the roughness you feel is actually little abrasions, which is a way for AIDS and STDs to enter your bloodstream. Regarding oral sex performed on women: use durable plastic wrap or a dental dam, or cut open an non-lubricated condom or glove to create an effective barrier. Be careful not to damage barriers with sharp jewelry, teeth and fingernails.

**Where there is fluid there is risk.**

Unprotected penetrative sex puts you at the highest risk of transmitting and contracting disease. It is imperative for people to use “condom-sense” and to be careful with their bodily fluids in a public context. The fact that the skin most likely to contact infected skin and fluid is on a part of the body that is out of sight (and out of mind) increases the risk of disease transmission.

Get in the habit of asking if your partner(s) have been tested, and if the results are negative. If asked, don't lie about your status, and don't be afraid of a positive answer. There are plenty of things that partners can do together that minimize the risk of disease transmission and do not limit pleasure for anyone involved.

**Keep in mind that the Pill, contraceptive jellies, foams, cups, implants and the “withdrawal method” do NOT protect you from STDs.**

AIDS/HIV transmission can be prevented.\* HIV is passed from one person to another when blood, semen (cum), breast milk, or vaginal fluids of an infected person get into the bloodstream of another. Transmission of HIV can occur through very small cuts or abraded or broken skin anywhere on your body. The sensitive and internal nature of certain areas of your body (tears, ruptures or abrasion in the rectum, vagina, gums and mouth, and any mucous membranes including the urethra) can allow HIV into your bloodstream. You cannot transmit HIV via sweat or saliva on the outside of the body onto unbroken skin. (However these bodily substances may carry STDs other than HIV.) You can make any kind of sex safer by using common sense, recognizing risk, making clear choices about what risk you are willing to accept, and remembering the

**AIDS is transmitted through blood, semen,  
vaginal fluids, and breast milk.**

basics found in this booklet. Getting tested is the only way to know what your status is. Remember that the incubation period (the time between infection and when infection can be detected) are different for all STDs - call your testing center for current information. Whenever possible, get tested before entering into sexual relations with a new partner and get tested at regular intervals. Using latex or polyurethane barriers (not lambskin condoms) is the best and most effective way to protect yourself. These prophylactics are not foolproof, but if you are going to engage in sexual activities without taking the time for tests and a frank discussion about sexual histories in advance, condoms and other barriers are your best bet.

**Where there is fluid, there should be barriers.  
Always use a latex or polyurethane condom!  
Natural (lambskin) condoms do not protect  
you from STDs**

AIDS isn't the only sexually transmitted disease you need to consider. There are more than 30 STDs which range from unpleasant to possibly fatal if they go undiagnosed or untreated. Only two methods of cleaning your toys promise full protection: boiling, and soaking in a mixture of water and bleach at a 10 to 1 ratio. So, whenever possible, cover your toys and hands with an acceptable barrier (see below) and minimize cross-contamination between yourself and others. Use new condoms, gloves, barriers and lube cups/packets for each partner, and do not touch yourself or anything that someone else will touch immediately after touching your partner.

**Acceptable barriers: Condoms (latex, polyurethane) Female (Reality) Condom. Dental Dams, Durable or 2 layers of Plastic Wrap (oral sex only) Gloves (latex, nitrile, vinyl)**

**For more information, or to find a testing site near you, call the AIDS/STD Hotline at the Center for Disease Control: 1-800-227-8922 (available 24 hours a day) or look online:**

Center for Disease Control: [www.cdc.gov/std](http://www.cdc.gov/std)

American Social Health Assn: [www.ashastd.org](http://www.ashastd.org)

Gay Men's Health Crisis: [www.gmhc.org](http://www.gmhc.org)

Lesbian STD: [www.lesbianstd.com](http://www.lesbianstd.com)

A word about testing: If you get an AIDS/STD test at a place where you are required to give personal information (a confidential rather than anonymous test), even information of negative results can be obtained and used against you by others – such as medical records for insurance. This doesn't mean you shouldn't get tested! Completely anonymous testing is available.

**Get tested! It is often the only way to know.  
Don't be afraid to see a doctor about your  
concerns.**

# STD Information Chart

Disease Name	Transmission Type of sex	Transmission Other fluids	Transmission Miscellaneous
<b>Chlamydia</b> <i>Bacteria</i>	Vaginal: yes Anal: yes Oral: rare	Blood: no saliva: no Sweat/Tears: no Breast Milk: no	Feces: no Shared Toys: no Clothes/Sheets: no
<b>Pubic Lice</b> <i>Crabs</i> <i>Parasite</i>	Vaginal: yes Anal: yes Oral: yes	Blood: no saliva: no Sweat/Tears: no Breast Milk: no	Feces: no Shared Toys: yes Clothes/Sheets: rare
<b>Gonorrhea</b> <i>Clap</i> <i>Bacteria</i>	Vaginal: yes Anal: yes Oral: yes	Blood: no saliva: no Sweat/Tears: no Breast Milk: no	Feces: no Shared Toys: no Clothes/Sheets: no
<b>Herpes</b> <i>HSV-2</i> <i>(Genital)</i> <i>virus</i>	Vaginal: yes Anal: yes Oral: yes	Blood: no saliva: no Sweat/Tears: no Breast Milk: no	Feces: no Shared Toys: no Clothes/Sheets: no
<b>Warts</b> <i>HPV</i> <i>virus</i>	Vaginal: yes Anal: yes Oral: rare	Blood: no saliva: no Sweat/Tears: no Breast Milk: no	Feces: no Shared Toys: no Clothes/Sheets: no
<b>Trichomoniasis</b> <i>parasite</i>	Vaginal: yes Anal: yes Oral: yes	Blood: no saliva: no Sweat/Tears: no Breast Milk: no	Feces: no Shared Toys: no Clothes/Sheets: no

- Always clean dildos and toys properly after each use.
- Never have oral sex after anal exposure or use dildos orally after anal exposure without washing thoroughly.
- Women should urinate after vaginal sex (especially rough sex) to prevent bladder infections.

Symptoms	If Left Untreated	Treatment/Cure
Usually none. ( <i>discharge or burning</i> )	Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID), Prostate Infection, Infertility.	Cured with antibiotics.
Public itching	Bites can become infected	Cured with specialized cream/ shampoo
Usually none. ( <i>discharge and burning</i> )	Same as Chlamydia but also can spread to skin, joints, blood and heart.	Cured with Antibiotics
Usually none. ( <i>painful genital sores</i> )	Increased susceptibility to HIV	No cure. Medications can help symptoms.
Usually none ( <i>warts are rarely seen</i> )	Certain types are linked to cervical cancer.	Wart removal does not cure, must get a PAP smear.
Usually none ( <i>discharge and burning</i> )	Increased susceptibility to HIV	Cured with antibiotics

- Many illnesses carried in the blood can cross vaginal, anal, and oral membranes that have little to no trauma.
- Non sterile tattooing and body piercing may transmit blood borne illnesses.

# STD Information Chart

Disease Name	Transmission Type of sex	Transmission Other fluids	Transmission Miscellaneous
<b>Hepatitis A</b> <i>virus</i>	Vaginal: no Anal: no Oral: yes	Blood: rare saliva: no Sweat/Tears: no Breast Milk: yes	Feces: yes (also food) Shared Toys: no Clothes/Sheets: no
<b>Hepatitis B</b> <i>virus</i>	Vaginal: yes Anal: yes Oral: yes	Blood: yes saliva: yes-bites Sweat/Tears: no Breast Milk: yes	Feces: no Shared Toys: no Clothes/Sheets: no
<b>Hepatitis C</b> <i>virus</i>	Vaginal: if blood Anal: of blood Oral: no	Blood: yes saliva: no Sweat/Tears: no Breast Milk: yes	Feces: no Shared Toys: no Clothes/Sheets: no
<b>HIV</b> <i>virus</i>	Vaginal: yes Anal: yes Oral: yes	Blood: yes saliva: yes-bites Sweat/Tears: no Breast Milk: yes	Feces: no Shared Toys: no Clothes/Sheets: no
<b>Syphilis</b> <i>bacteria</i>	Vaginal: yes Anal: yes Oral: yes	Blood: if sore present saliva: no Sweat/Tears: no Breast Milk: no	Feces: no Shared Toys: no Clothes/Sheets: no

The above information is care of American Social Health Association, an authority for sexually transmitted disease information as recognized by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Web site: [www.ashastd.org](http://www.ashastd.org).

Symptoms	If Left Untreated	Treatment/Cure
Flu-like illness	Short-lived illness. No permanent liver damage.	Vaccine available to at-risk people.
Usually none. (possible mild flu-like symptoms)	Small chance of permanent liver damage.	Vaccine available to all. medications for chronic illness.
Usually none until late stages	High chance of liver damage, small chance of cancer/death	No vaccine. treatment is long and difficult
Usually none until late stages	AIDS	No cure, medications can slow/ stop progression
Painless genital sores (sores are very contagious)	Rash, General illness, heart disease, blindness, insanity, paralysis	Cured with antibiotics.

**NELA is not responsible for the misuse of this information.**

## Books

Ultimate Guide to Anal Sex for Men, Bill Brent

Ultimate Guide to Anal Sex for Women, Tristan Taormino

New Good Vibrations Guide to Sex, Cathy Winks, Anne Semans

The Ethical Slut, Dossie Easton, Catherine A. Liszt

My Gender Workbook, Kate Bornstein

The Whole Lesbian Sex Book: A Passionate Guide for All of Us, Felice Newman

Come Hither: A Commonsense Guide to Kinky Sex, Gloria G. Brame

## Websites

Scarleteen: [www.scarleteen.com](http://www.scarleteen.com)

Coalition for Positive Sexuality: [www.positive.org](http://www.positive.org)

Society for Human Sexuality: [www.sexuality.org](http://www.sexuality.org)

Bisexual Resource Center: [www.biresource.org](http://www.biresource.org)

Gay and Lesbian Medical Assn: [www.glma.org](http://www.glma.org)

**Books**

The Bottoming Book: How To Get Terrible Things Done To You By Wonderful People, Dossie Easton, Catherine A. Liszt

The Topping Book: Getting Good at Being Bad, Dossie Easton, Catherine A. Liszt

Different Loving: The World of Sexual Dominance and Submission, Gloria G. Brame et al

Learning the Ropes, Race Bannon

The Loving Dominant, John Warren

SM 101: A Realistic Introduction, Jay Wiseman

Screw the Roses, Send Me the Thorns: The Romance and Sexual Sorcery of Sadomasochism, Philip Miller, Molly Devon

When Someone You Love Is Kinky, Dossie Easton, Catherine A. Liszt

# Notes



**This booklet is brought to you by:**

**The New England Leather Alliance**

**P.O. Box 35728**

**Brighton, MA 02135-0013**

**[www.nelaonline.org](http://www.nelaonline.org)**

**617-876-NELA**

Stamp Your Organization's Information here

Would your organization like copies of this booklet?  
Contact us by writing to the NELA address above or to  
[board@nelaonline.org](mailto:board@nelaonline.org)