

# Take a sexual history of all patients: **GETTING THE CONVERSATION STARTED**

Post in  
your  
workspace

Some patients may not be comfortable talking about their sexual practices. It is critical to put them at ease by informing them that this is a routine conversation you have with all patients as part of their medical exam and anything they say will remain confidential.

## **WHO?**

- Number of partners in the past year
- Gender
- Steady and/or casual partners
- Partner's risk factors (multiple sex partners, incarcerated, HIV +)

## **HOW?**

- Types of sex (vaginal, oral, anal)
- Sex while under the influence of drugs and alcohol

## **WHAT?**

- Methods to protect yourself from STDs/HIV
- Methods to prevent pregnancy
- Previous history of STDs

## **TIPS FOR HAVING CONVERSATIONS ABOUT SEXUAL HISTORY:**

- Emphasize this is routine for all patients
- Ensure confidentiality
- Be non-judgmental (verbal and non-verbal)
- Make it conversational (ask open-ended questions)

“To provide you with the best service I can, I ask all of my patients about their history. I’d like to ask you some questions regarding your sex life. I recognize this is a sensitive topic, but know that this information will be between us.”

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS

### WHO?

- Who are your sexual partners (male, female, transgender)?
- How many sexual partners have you had in the past year?
- Do you suspect your partner(s) have other partners besides yourself?

### HOW?

- How do you have sex? Vaginal? Oral? Anal?
- How often do you mix alcohol or drugs with sex?

### WHAT?

- What ways do you try to protect yourself from STDs?
- What STDs have you or your partners had in the past?
- Would you like to become pregnant in the next year?

For more information, visit

[https://effectiveinterventions.cdc.gov/en/HighImpactPrevention/  
PublicHealthStrategies/AskScreenIntervene.aspx](https://effectiveinterventions.cdc.gov/en/HighImpactPrevention/PublicHealthStrategies/AskScreenIntervene.aspx)