Sex and Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

All Houstonians should stay home and minimize contact with others to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

But can you have sex?
Here are some tips for how to enjoy sex and to avoid spreading COVID-19.

   • You can get COVID-19 from a person who has it.
     o The virus can spread to people who are within about six (6) feet of a person with COVID-19 when that person coughs or sneezes.
     o The virus can spread through direct contact with their saliva or mucus.
   • We still have a lot to learn about COVID-19 and sex.
     o COVID-19 has been found in feces of people who are infected with the virus.
     o COVID-19 has not yet been found in semen or vaginal fluid.
     o We know that other coronaviruses do not efficiently transmit through sex.

2. Have sex with people close to you.
   • You are your safest sex partner. Masturbation will not spread COVID-19, especially if you wash your hands (and any sex toys) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and after sex.
   • The next safest partner is someone you live with. Having close contact — including sex — with only a small circle of people helps prevent spreading COVID-19.
   • You should avoid close contact — including sex — with anyone outside your household. If you do have sex with others, have as few partners as possible.
   • If you usually meet your sex partners online or make a living by having sex, consider taking a break from in-person dates. Video dates, sexting or chat rooms may be options for you.

3. Take care during sex.
   • Kissing can easily pass COVID-19. Avoid kissing anyone who is not part of your small circle of close contacts.
   • Condoms and dental dams can reduce contact with saliva or feces, especially during oral or anal sex.
   • Washing up before and after sex is more important than ever.
     o Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Adapted from NYC Health Department guidance issued 3-21-2020.
The Houston Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves. 3-26-2020
4. Skip sex if you or your partner is not feeling well.
   - If you or a partner may have COVID-19, avoid sex and especially kissing.
   - If you start to feel unwell, you may be about to develop symptoms of COVID-19, which include fever, cough, sore throat or shortness of breath.
   - If you or your partner has a medical condition that can lead to more severe COVID-19, you may also want to skip sex.
     - Medical conditions include lung disease, heart disease, diabetes, cancer or a weakened immune system (for example, having unsuppressed HIV and a low CD4 count).

5. Prevent HIV, other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unplanned pregnancy.
   - HIV: Condoms, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and having an undetectable viral load all help prevent HIV.
   - Other STIs: Condoms help prevent other STIs.
   - Pregnancy: Make sure you have an effective form of birth control for the coming weeks.

For more information about COVID-19, visit https://houstonemergency.org/covid19/.