

Crucial contacts

fpa runs a Contraceptive Education Service Helpline which can help you with:

- Information on contraception and sexual health
- Details of your nearest family planning or sexual health clinic
- Free leaflets on all the contraceptive methods

Ring or write to:

fpa UK
2-12 Pentonville Road
London N1 9FP
Phone 020 7837 4044
9am to 7pm

fpa SCOTLAND
Unit 10
Firhill Business Centre
76 Firhill Road
Glasgow G20 7BA
Phone 0141 576 5088
9am to 5pm

fpa CYMRU
Ground Floor
Riverside House
31 Cathedral Road
Cardiff CF11 9HB

fpa NORTHERN
IRELAND
113 University Street
Belfast BT7 1HP
Phone 028 90 325 488
Derry 028 71 260 016
9am to 5pm

BROOK ADVISORY CENTRES

0800 0185 023

for your nearest clinic for young people

YOUTH ACCESS

020 8772 9900

for your nearest counselling service

CHILDLINE

freephone 0800 1111

24-hour helpline for young people with any problem

SEXWISE

0800 28 29 30

Freefone giving the chance to talk to an adviser about sex and personal relationships

LESBIAN AND GAY SWITCHBOARD

020 7837 7324

for information and advice on being gay, lesbian or bisexual

RAPE CRISIS

020 7837 1600

for girls and women who have been raped or assaulted recently or in the past

NATIONAL AIDS HELPLINE

freephone 0800 567 123

24-hour free advice about HIV and AIDS

NATIONAL DRUGS HELPLINE

0800 776600

EATING DISORDERS

01603 621414

Monday-Friday 9am to 6.30pm

for concerns about your weight/eating

All
these
Helplines
are
confidential

A Below-the-Bra guide to the female body

4GIRLS



Sexual development can start around the age of 10 with pubic and underarm hair and breasts starting to grow.

Girls develop at different rates. Some girls may have their first period when they're 10, others may be 16. All these changes - known as puberty - take place over several years.

I never know when my period's due
Page 9

My boyfriend says I'm frigid because I don't want to have sex
Page 12

Is it wrong to touch myself?
Page 15

My period's late. What should I do?
Page 12

I think I fancy girls
Page 12

I've got a vaginal discharge. Have I caught something?
Page 11

Can my doctor tell my parents I'm having sex?
Page 13

Why do I feel so moody?
Page 8

Can you get a sexually transmitted infection if you've only had sex once?
Page 14

Why is one of my breasts smaller than the other?
Page 6

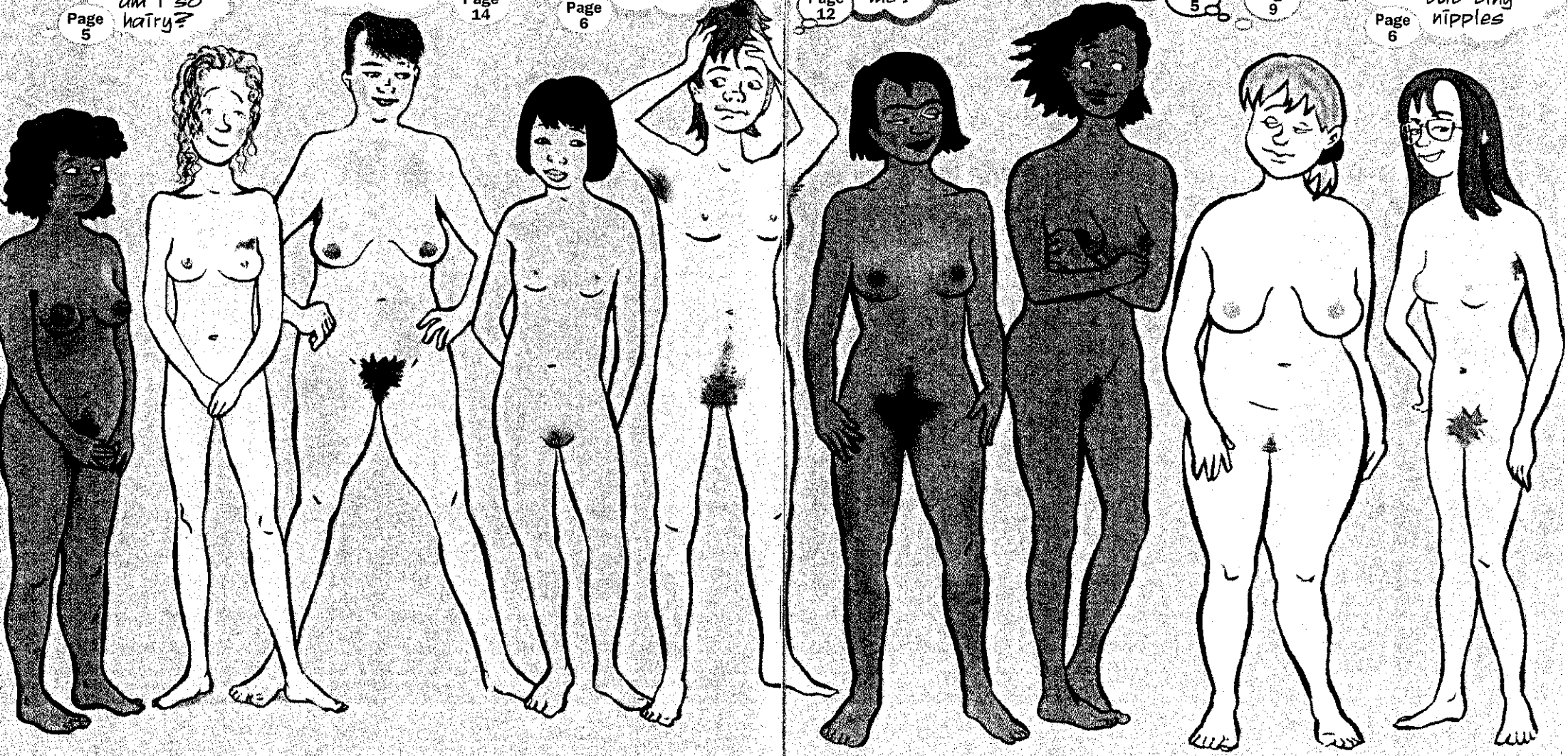
I don't want to have sex. Is something wrong with me?
Page 12

My thighs are huge. Should I go on a diet?
Page 5

My periods are really painful
Page 9

I've got C-cup breasts but tiny nipples
Page 6

Why am I so hairy?
Page 5



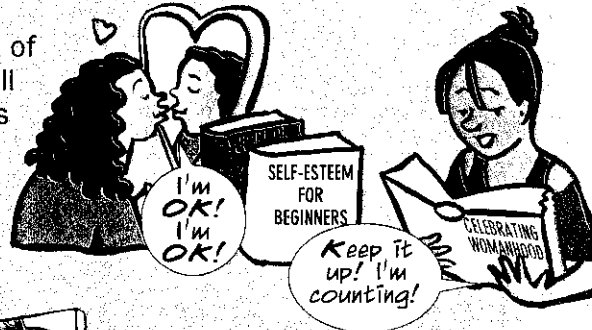
HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT YOURSELF

is much more important than how much you weigh or what you look like.

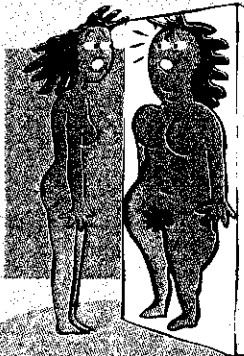
My life would be PERFECT if only I was taller/thinner/didn't wear glasses/had perfect skin!

With all the bodily changes that take place during your teens, it's easy to become obsessed with HOW YOU LOOK.

You do a lot of growing during your teens so the amount of body fat and muscle you have will increase – your body needs it. As your body changes from a girl's to a woman's you'll get taller, your hips will get broader and your thighs and buttocks fatter.



If you are tall or have a large frame then you will weigh more than if you are short or have a small frame. Remember that you may also weigh more just before and during your period.



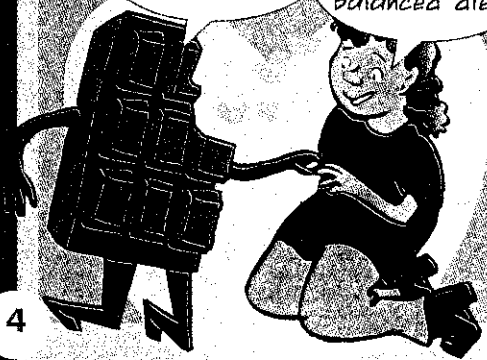
Most women who diet aren't overweight – the average British woman is a size 14. They're just not happy with their bodies – most women see their body as bigger than it actually is.

This means that many women have an unhappy and guilty relationship with food – denying themselves things they like, which they then crave, and counting every calorie.

It's okay to eat chips, cakes, chocolate and crisps – if you eat them occasionally and eat other foods as well that balance your diet. If you need to snack between meals go for fruit, nuts or cheese.

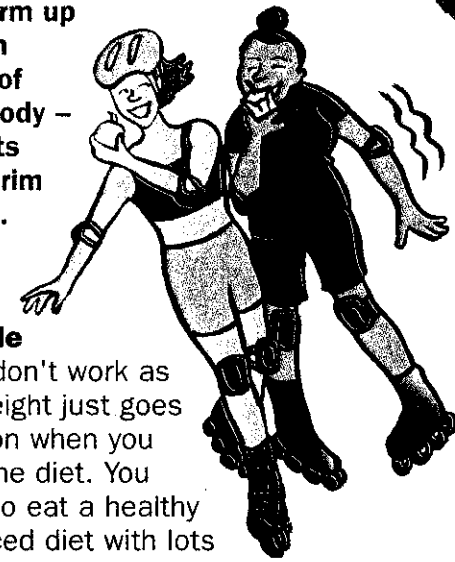
You can't go on eating me like this!

Yes I can – as part of a balanced diet!

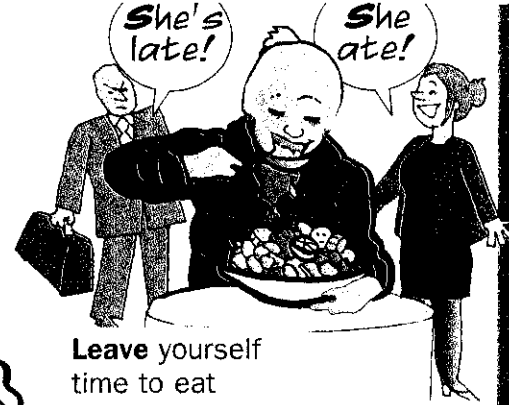


Many girls who want to lose weight

just cut down what they eat. If you are overweight you are taking in more energy than you use up, so you need to exercise. Exercise can also firm up or slim parts of your body – cyclists have trim thighs.



Miracle diets don't work as the weight just goes back on when you stop the diet. You need to eat a healthy balanced diet with lots of fresh fruit and vegetables. This 'diet' is what you eat every day for the rest of your life. If you eat healthily and make exercise a part of your life you can forget about "dieting".



Leave yourself time to eat breakfast. You need the energy to take you through the day.

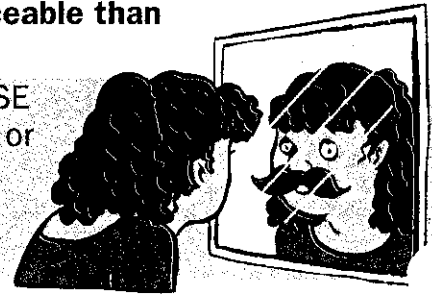
Worried about what you eat?

Extreme worry about your weight can cause health problems. If you think your concern about what you eat is taking over your life then seek help (see back page).

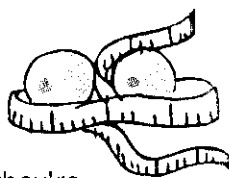


All women have BODY HAIR though some remove it. Pubic hair around the genitals appears first, then hair grows in the armpits, on the legs and sometimes on other parts of the body. Fair hair is much less noticeable than dark hair.

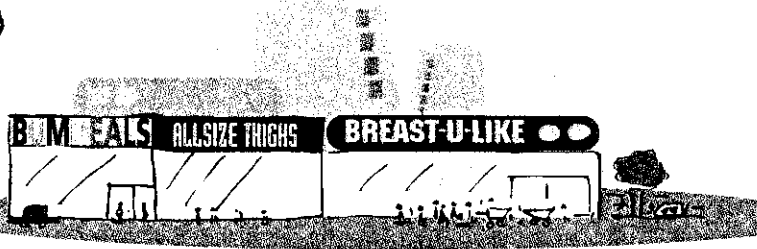
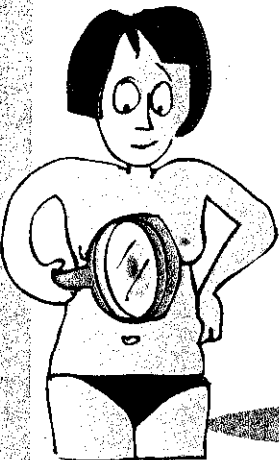
Some women choose to SHAVE or USE CREAMS to remove hair on their legs or under their arms and others don't. Some people find underarm hair very sexy – it's a matter of choice.



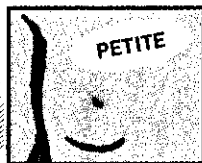
get a lot of attention in our society and many girls worry that theirs don't measure up to the images around them.



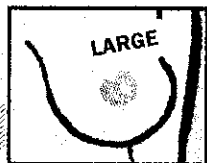
Breasts and nipples tingle or itch while they're developing, but this will stop once they've grown. Growth can be uneven so one breast may be bigger than the other. This will even out but many women have slightly differently sized breasts all their lives.



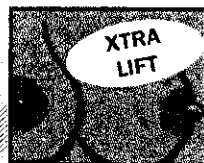
Breasts come in different shapes and sizes and can be soft or firm –



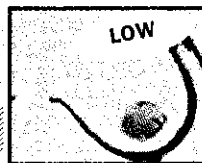
– small



– or large.



Nipples may point up –



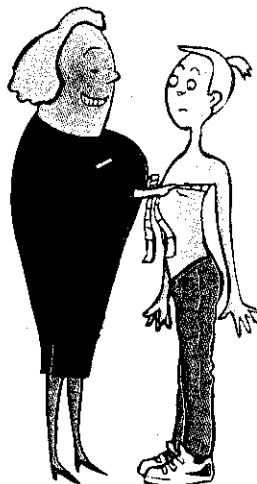
– or droop downwards



– be dark



– or



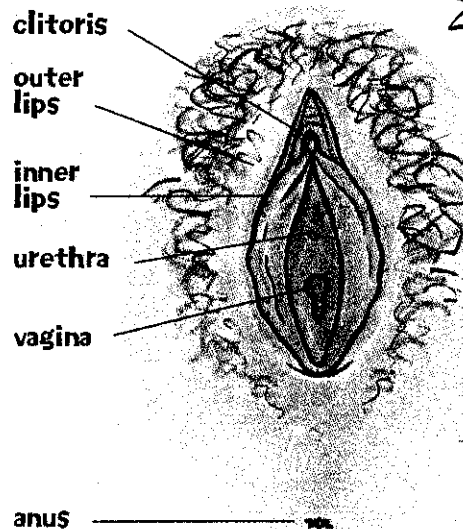
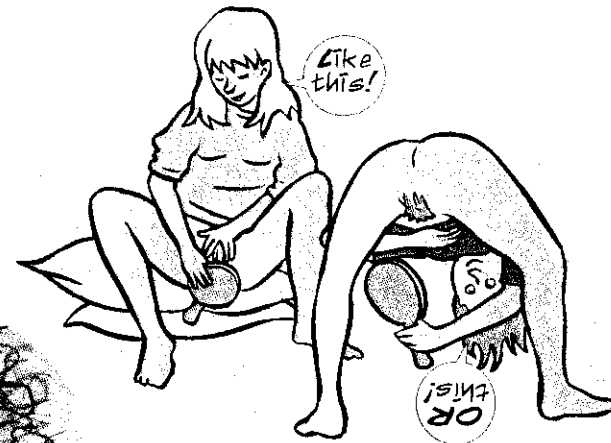
These differences are all normal.

What bra size do I need? Use a tape measure to measure around your chest underneath your breasts where the bra strap goes, and add 5" to that number. Then measure the fullest part of your breasts. If the two numbers are the same then you need an AA-cup, if there's a 1" difference an A-cup, 2" a B-cup, 3" a D-cup.

GENITALS are as individual as people's faces – they all look very different.



Take a look with a mirror ...

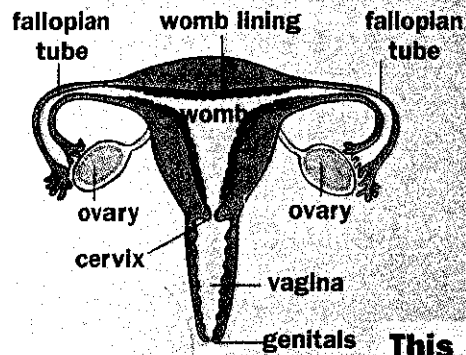


The **outer lips** (labia majora) cover the **clitoris** and extend back to just in front of the **anus**. The outer lips are thicker and often hairy on the outside and are mottled and darker on the inside. When a woman is sexually aroused they open up to reveal the entrance to the **vagina**.

The **inner lips** (labia minora) join at the front in a small fleshy bump called the **clitoris** – its purpose is to give sexual pleasure. The inner lips are thinner. They vary in colour from light pink to dark brown. One outer lip may be bigger than the other or the inner lips may hang below the outer lips.

You may have heard about **cervical smears**. This is a test offered to all women aged **20** and above, every **3-5** years. A **cervical smear test** spots the warning signs **before cervical cancer** develops. It can be uncomfortable, but it doesn't hurt and it only takes a couple of seconds.

The **MENSTRUAL CYCLE** is from the first day of a period until the day before the next period starts. The length of the menstrual cycle varies – it can be as short as 21 days or as long as 40 days.



The menstrual cycle is controlled by hormones. The hormone oestrogen causes about 12 to 20 tiny eggs to grow in one of your ovaries each month.

Hormones make the eggs grow and also thicken the lining of your womb. Usually one egg becomes larger than the others and goes into the fallopian tube that connects the ovary to the womb.

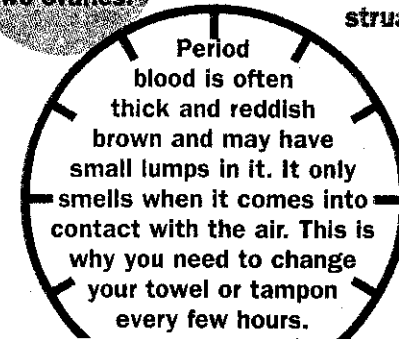
This release of the egg is called **OVULATION** and it happens around 14 days before a period is due. Oestrogen also makes you produce mucus to help sperm to live as long as possible inside you after sex.

If the egg is not fertilised it will die and hormone levels drop. Without these hormones the womb lining breaks up and with the egg is released through the vagina as a period.

Girls are born with about a quarter of a million eggs in each of their two ovaries.



When you first have periods the time between one period and the next may vary so it can be difficult to know when you will have your period. When your menstrual cycle becomes more regular you can use a diary to work out when you're due.



Sometimes girls can have problems with tampons. If you have two or more of the following: Being sick; a rash; sore throat; sudden fever; diarrhoea, stop using tampons and see your doctor right away.

Your vagina is naturally self-cleansing so you don't need to use perfumed pads or special sprays (and these can cause irritation).



LIVING WITH PERIODS

Changes in hormone levels can affect your moods. You may feel:



energetic and sexy around the time you ovulate



or moody, tearful or angry the week before your period is due.

Breasts may become sore or a bit larger and you may get **spots** on your face just before your period. Eating lots of fresh fruit and vegetables, having a diet low in sugar and salt and taking regular exercise can help.



"At first my periods were fine but now the day I come on is just awful. I have really bad pains, feel sick and sometimes have diarrhoea. My GP said I should go on the pill but my mum's not keen and says I'm neurotic."

Andrea, 15

Periods may become painful about a year after periods first start. Some women are particularly badly affected. The pain is due to large contractions of the womb muscle. It's a very real pain, so Andrea isn't being neurotic.

What you can do



Hold a hot water bottle against your stomach and take a painkiller such

as aspirin or ibuprofen. The combined pill is very good for painful periods, but if you don't want to take this your doctor will be able to prescribe something else. **So if you get really bad PERIOD PAINS don't suffer in silence.**



Periods – what you need to know



It's for you to decide whether you prefer to use towels or tampons. One method isn't better than the other.

Will I still be a virgin if I use a tampon?
Yes. You are a virgin until you have sex.

Does putting in a tampon for the first time hurt? **No, not if you relax.** It can be difficult to put in a tampon if you're tense and not sure how to put it in. Try putting a tampon in when you have lots of time and privacy. Read the instructions that come with tampons to find out how to put them in. If the tampon feels uncomfortable it may not be in far enough.

There are lots of silly stories about periods and what you can do when you have one.



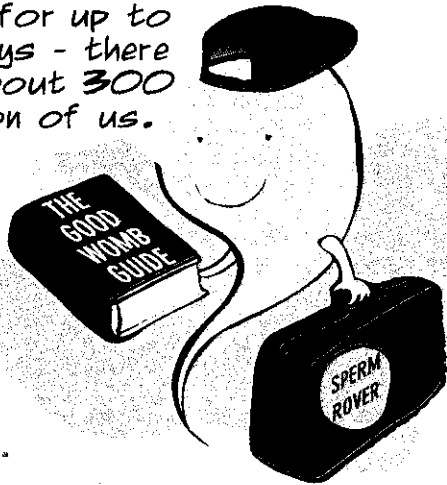
It's up to you what you do when you have a period, and you will have a lot of periods in your life. It can take some time to get used to having periods and feeling confident about dealing with them. But periods are a normal, healthy, special part of being female.

I've heard that if you have sex during a period then you won't get pregnant.

Not true. It's also not true that you won't get pregnant if you have sex standing up/don't have an orgasm/bath afterwards

You are *most* likely to get pregnant around ovulation, but when you ovulate can vary each month. Also sperm can live in your body for around five days so pregnancy is possible at virtually any time in your cycle. Boys produce around 300 million sperm when they ejaculate and it takes only *one* to make you pregnant.

We'd like to stay for up to 5 days - there are about 300 million of us.



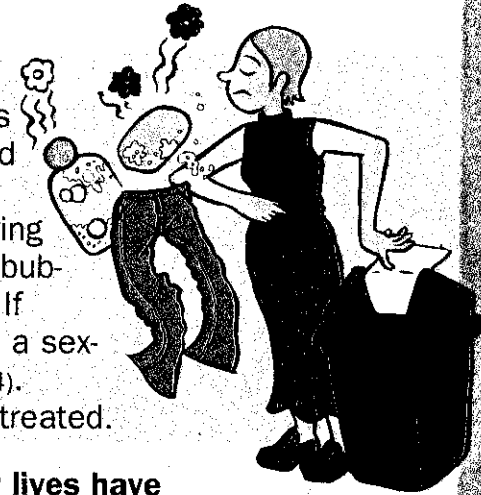
So don't have sex unless you've got contraception sorted.



It's normal to have a small **DISCHARGE** from your vagina as this natural lubricant keeps your vagina healthy.

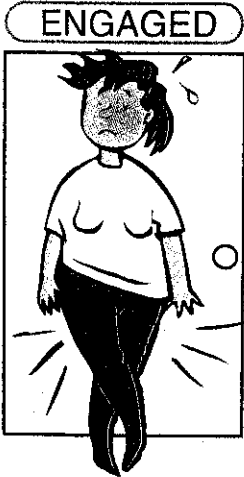
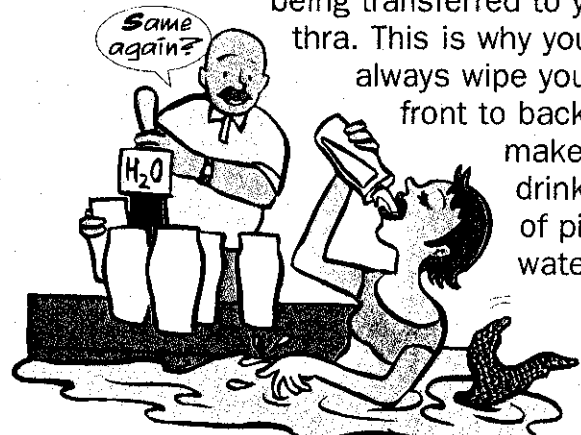
This discharge is usually clear or slightly milky and may be faintly yellow when it dries on your pants. When you're sexually excited your vagina produces a natural lubricant to make lovemaking easier. The amount of discharge increases around ovulation to help sperm swim up your vagina to meet an egg.

If you have a **thick discharge** that itches and/or smells see a doctor as you may have an infection. This could be a very common infection called **thrush** which can be caused by wearing tight jeans, using perfumed soap or bubble bath or just by feeling run down. If you've had sex you may have caught a sexually transmitted infection (see page 14). Whatever the cause it can be easily treated.



Many women at some point in their lives have cystitis which is an inflammation of the bladder or urethra.

You feel you want to go the toilet all the time even when your bladder is empty. It can be caused by bruising during sex or heavy petting, or from germs from your anus being transferred to your urethra. This is why you should always wipe yourself from front to back. And make sure you drink a couple of pints of water a day.



If you think you have cystitis see a doctor.

GOING FURTHER

My boyfriend says I'm frigid because I don't want to have sex.

Frigid is an insulting word used when girls say 'no'. If he's interested in you he'd be prepared to listen to how you feel and wait if necessary. If he isn't, he's just putting pressure on you. Sex should be enjoyable, so:

- Don't have sex until you're absolutely sure it's what you want.
- Ditch boys who try to pressure you or insult you.
- Realise that all women can enjoy sex with the right partner at the right time.



I think I'm gay

Having a 'crush' on someone of the same sex is very common and doesn't mean you're gay. You may be sexually interested in other women – or in women and men. Your body is yours to share with whoever you choose. You may choose to share it with no-one. If you want advice, contact the organisations on the back page.



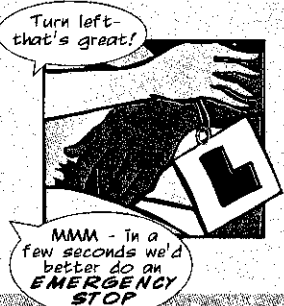
What is masturbation?

Masturbation is something women may not talk about, but most people do it. Most women rub around or on their clitoris and maybe move fingers in and out of the vagina. If you masturbate to orgasm the muscles in your vagina will move in spasms and feelings of pleasure will flow through your whole body. Many women fantasise while they masturbate.

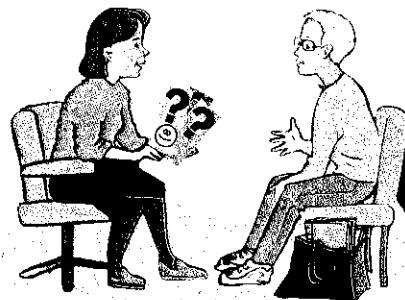
Is it bad for you? No.

Women who have learnt what they like can pass this knowledge on to a partner. You don't need to feel guilty about exploring your own body, and you won't get pregnant, catch a sexually transmitted

infection or get a broken heart. But it's your choice to do it or not. You can masturbate alone or with a partner.



You can get **FREE** information and help about **CONTRACEPTION** from a doctor or family planning clinic.



You can be any age to get advice. All services are **CONFIDENTIAL** – this means they won't tell anyone you've been.

Let the staff know if you would prefer to be seen by a woman doctor.

Where to go for ADVICE

There should be a clinic near you that runs sessions for young people – look in the phone book or ask at a health centre. fpa (see back cover) has details of all clinics in the UK.

Phone the Brook Advisory Centre on 0800 0185 023 for your nearest Brook clinic.



For more information about all the methods of contraception and their advantages and disadvantages get the booklet **Is Everybody Doing It?** from fpa (see back cover).

If you don't like your contraceptive method go back and talk about changing it – don't just stop using it!



It's against the law for a man to have sexual intercourse with a girl aged under 16 (under 17 in Northern Ireland). The average age when people first have sex is 17, so many young people don't have sex until they are 18 or 19 or older.

Male condom

Female condom

Combined pill

Progestogen-only pill

Diaphragm or cap with spermicide

Contraceptive injection

Implants

IUS

IUD

There are several different types of **SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTION** which are very

common.

ANYONE who has sex can have a sexually transmitted infection – it isn't true that only people who are dirty or sleep around get infections.



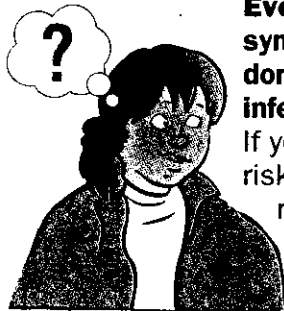
Discomfort or soreness when you urinate, or an unusual or unpleasant discharge from your vagina can be signs of a sexually transmitted infection.

10% of sexually-active teenagers in the UK have **Chlamydia** (cla-mi-dee-ah). Often there are no symptoms so you don't know you have the infection.

But many infections, including HIV, often have no signs so the infection can stay hidden for many years. This is true for men and women.

Chlamydia

Can make you infertile, which you may not find out until you try to have children later in life. Yet, like many infections, it can be completely cured.



Even if you don't have any symptoms a test can be done to see if you have an infection.

If you think you might be at risk then go to a genitourinary medicine (GUM) or sexual health clinic or see your GP.



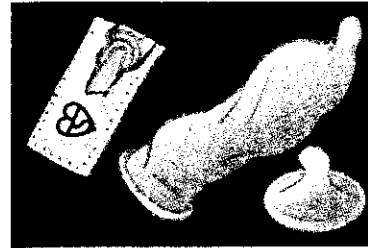
All treatment and advice at GUM clinics is free and confidential. They won't tell anyone you've been, not even your GP.

Most large hospitals have a GUM clinic. fpa's Contraceptive Education Service Helpline (see back page) can tell you where your nearest clinic is.

How can I make sure I don't get a sexually transmitted infection?

Condoms give good protection against both pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.

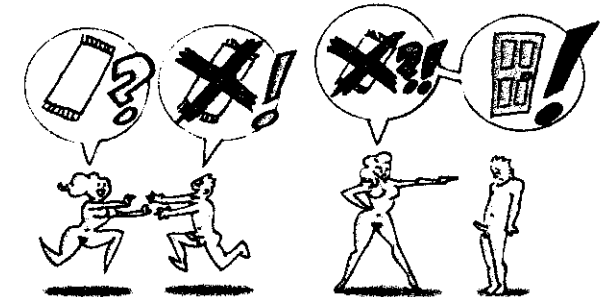
There are lots of different types of condoms to choose from. They're free from family planning clinics and most GUM/ sexual health clinics. And they're easily bought without having to see a doctor.



Many people don't use condoms because they're worried they won't know how to put one on properly and will look stupid. So practise. Get to know condoms so you feel confident using them.

A **condom** is a thin rubber bag made to fit tightly over a man's hard penis. It catches the sperm when they come out.

Only use condoms with a Kitemark and CE mark on.

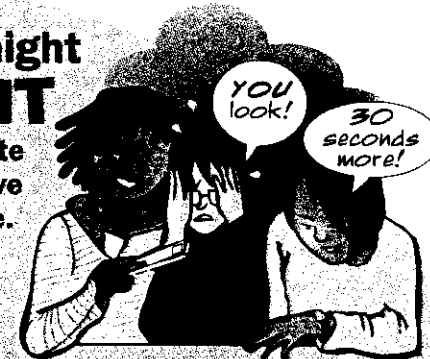


If you think you might be **PREGNANT**

If you have had sex and your period is late then it's important to get advice and have a pregnancy test as soon as possible. You can have a free test done at:

- a young person's clinic or Brook Advisory Centre
- most family planning clinics
- some doctors
- some genitourinary medicine (GUM) sexual health clinics.

Many pharmacies offer pregnancy testing and sell home pregnancy tests, although you will have to pay for these.



If you are pregnant then it's very important that you get medical advice as quickly as possible so that you can decide what to do and get the help you need.