



## Oral Sex Quick Facts

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March 2005

### What is it?

Oral sex is contact of a person's mouth or tongue with another person's genitals.<sup>1</sup>

### Who's doing it?

#### *Adults*

In the early 1990s, 75 percent of adults said they had had oral sex.<sup>2</sup> One in four reported practicing oral sex the last time they had sex.<sup>3</sup>

#### *Older Teens*

More than 80 percent of sexually active high schoolers and 20 percent of virgin high schoolers have had oral sex.<sup>4</sup>

#### *Younger Teens*

Twenty percent of 12- to 15-year-olds have had oral sex, though a fourth of them have not had vaginal sex.<sup>5</sup>

### Can you get STDs through oral sex?

Yes. Syphilis, herpes and gonorrhea throat infections are transmitted easily through oral sex.<sup>6</sup> Chlamydia and Human Papillomavirus are transmittable via oral sex to a lesser degree,<sup>7</sup> and HIV is transmittable by oral sex, though to a still lesser degree.<sup>8</sup>

More than 80 percent of teens who know what oral sex is know that they can get an STD via oral sex, though 13- to 14-year-olds are less likely to know the risks than 15- to 16-year-olds.<sup>9</sup>

Only 30 percent of teens consistently use protection when practicing oral sex.<sup>10</sup>

**What do teens think about oral sex?**

Seventy percent of 13- to 16-year-olds know what oral sex is.<sup>11</sup>

More than 75 percent of teens classify oral sex as “sex.”<sup>12</sup>

Half of teen boys don't think oral sex is as big a deal as vaginal sex, but less than 40 percent of teen girls think it isn't as big a deal.<sup>13</sup>

More than half of teens think those who practice only oral sex are still virgins.<sup>14</sup>

Half of teens say the first time they had oral sex, they did so to remain a virgin.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "The Facts About Oral Sex & STDs," The Medical Institute, <http://www.medinstitute.org>, accessed 2/3/05.

<sup>2</sup> "The Facts About Oral Sex & STDs."

<sup>3</sup> "The Facts About Oral Sex & STDs."

<sup>4</sup> Newcomer SF, Udry JR. "Oral sex in an adolescent population." *Arch Sex Behav*. 1985;14:41-46, referenced in "The Facts About Oral Sex & STDs."

<sup>5</sup> "Oral Sex and STDs," *Sexual Health Update*, The Medical Institute, Fall 2003.

<sup>6</sup> "The Facts About Oral Sex & STDs."

<sup>7</sup> "The Facts About Oral Sex & STDs."

<sup>8</sup> "The Facts About Oral Sex & STDs."

<sup>9</sup> "Nearly 3 in 10 young teens 'sexually active,'" NBC News, PEOPLE Magazine commission national poll, 26 January 05.

<sup>10</sup> "Nearly 3 in 10 young teens 'sexually active,'" 26 January 05

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<sup>13</sup> "Nearly 3 in 10 young teens 'sexually active,'" 26 January 05

<sup>14</sup> "Nearly 3 in 10 young teens 'sexually active,'" 26 January 05

<sup>15</sup> "Nearly 3 in 10 young teens 'sexually active,'" 26 January 05