

WHAT? S-E-X! SEXUALITY?

- What is sex?
- What is sexuality?
- What is sexual health?
- What is sexual gender?
- What is sexual intercourse?
- What's normal?
What's not?



Female sexuality

Definition and concept

Human female sexuality

encompasses a broad range of behaviors and processes, including female sexual identity and sexual behavior, the physiological, psychological, social, cultural, political, and spiritual or religious aspects of sexual activity. Various aspects and dimensions of female sexuality, as a part of human sexuality, have also been addressed by principles of ethics, morality, and theology. In almost any historical era and culture, the arts, including literary and visual arts, as well as popular culture, present a substantial portion of a given society's views on human sexuality, which also include implicitly or explicitly female sexuality.

Sexual health

- The world health organization definition provides a starting point : “sexual health is the integration of somatic, emotional, intellectual, and social, aspects of sexual beings in ways that are positively enriching and that enhance personality, communication and love.
- According to the current working definition, sexual health is:
- “...a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. For sexual health to be attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected and fulfilled.” (*WHO, 2006a*)

Sexuality

- Sexual health cannot be defined, understood or made operational without a broad consideration of sexuality, which underlies important behaviours and outcomes related to sexual health. The working definition of sexuality is:
- “...a central aspect of being human throughout life encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships. While sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors.” (*WHO, 2006a*)

Female sexuality

Sexuality is inextricably woven into the fabric of a women's life and is an important aspect of her health. It is an integrated, unique expression of self that encompasses physiological and psychosocial processes inherent in sexual development, sexual response, sexual desire, view of self as a female including sexual orientation, and presentation of self to society as a woman.

Sexuality underlies much of who and what a person is, and it is an inherent, ever changing aspect of life from birth to death. It is expressed in different ways at different times- alone, with one partner, or with different partners.

- It is around sexuality that issues about power are raised in some of their most difficult forms. For it is frequently in their sexuality that women find their feelings and actions seem to belie their aspirations for independence.(1)
- The human face and the human body are eloquent in themselves Every feeling waits upon its gesture. Then when it does come, how unpredictable it turns out to be, after all.(2)

Sexual rights

There is a growing consensus that sexual health cannot be achieved and maintained without respect for, and protection of, certain human rights. The working definition of sexual rights given below is a contribution to the continuing dialogue on human rights related to sexual health (1).

- “The fulfilment of sexual health is tied to the extent to which human rights are respected, protected and fulfilled. Sexual rights embrace certain human rights that are already recognized in international and regional human rights documents and other consensus documents and in national laws.
- Rights critical to the realization of sexual health include:
 - the rights to equality and non-discrimination
 - the right to be free from torture or to cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment
 - the right to privacy

- the rights to the highest attainable standard of health (including sexual health) and social security
- the right to marry and to found a family and enter into marriage with the free and full consent of the intending spouses, and to equality in and at the dissolution of marriage
- the right to decide the number and spacing of one's children
- the rights to information, as well as education
- the rights to freedom of opinion and expression, and
- the right to an effective remedy for violations of fundamental rights.
- The responsible exercise of human rights requires that all persons respect the rights of others.

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The Female Anatomy and Physiology

1. External Organs 2. Internal Organs

- **The vulva refers to those parts that are outwardly visible**
- **The vulva includes:**
 1. **Mons pubis**
 2. **Clitoris**
 3. **Urethral opening**
 4. **Vaginal opening**
 5. **Perineum**
 6. **Labia majora**
 7. **Labia minora**

- Vulva/Pudendum – entire female region of external sex organs
- Mons Veneris
 - protective, fatty cushion over the pubic bone;
 - covered with pubic hair
- Labia Majora
 - outer lips;
 - tissue folds from mons to perineum surrounding the rest of the female genitals;

engorge with blood if excited

- Labia Minora
 - inner lips;
 - pink tissue folds between vestibule and labia majora;
 - no hair;
 - many oil glands;
 - darken if sexually aroused
- Clitoris
 - small cylindrical erectile tissue beneath the prepuce;
 - rich in blood supply and nerve endings;
 - solely to provide sexual pleasure, primarily via indirect stimulation

Sexual myths

Sexual myths are common in every culture and society. These myths often interfere with women maximizing their full Sexual potential and establishing fulfilling Sexual relationships. The list of these myths is long.

- Women should satisfy men; women's needs are secondary. Related to this are the stereotypes that men are oversexed and women are undersexed and that women are recipients and men are initiators.
- Sexual pleasure is the responsibility of the partner. Related to this expectation that a partner should somehow sense what a woman's needs are.
- A great deal of stimulation is necessary to sexually arouse a woman; she becomes aroused more slowly than a man.
- Women who are raped asked for it; every woman wants to be raped; when a woman says no, she doesn't mean it.
Little girls should not be told about sex, as that will put ideas in their heads.
- Women are not interested in sex; they are not capable of multiple orgasms
- Women want sex only for procreative purposes.
- Women are so sexually aggressive they can never be satisfied. Sex is intercourse.
- A woman who initiates sex is immoral.
- A woman cannot enjoy sex unless she has an orgasm.
There are absolute norms for sexual expression.
- Masturbation is dirty.
- Women can have orgasm only with intercourse.

Old women do not have sexual desires

- Old women are not able to make love, even if they want to.
- Old women are so frail that they might hurt themselves if they try to have sexual relations.
- Old women are physically unattractive and their sex is sexually undesirable.
- Old women's engagement in sexual activity is shameful.