

Health Care for Women Who Have Sex with Women

How can I find a doctor or hospital that will support me and not judge me?

Look at clinic brochures and websites for symbols such as a rainbow flag, photos of same-sex couples, or the Human Rights Campaign logo (a yellow “equals” symbol on a blue background). Ask your friends to recommend a supportive doctor or hospital. Check social media sites such as Facebook. You can also search online at <http://www.ghma.org/>.

What should I discuss with my doctor?

Ask about tests and vaccines that all females your age should get. This may include an HPV (human papillomavirus) shot, a pelvic exam and Pap test, and a mammogram. Tell your doctor if you have any feelings of depression or anxiety, or other concerns about your mood. Let your doctor know if you are concerned about your weight or if you use drugs, drink alcohol, or use tobacco. Also tell your doctor about your sex partners and activities.

Why should I discuss my sexual practices and sex partners with my doctor?

Any sexual activity—whether your partner is female or male—can put you at risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). STIs can happen to girls and women of all ages. If you have sex with men and do not want to get pregnant, you should discuss birth control options with your doctor.

How can I prevent STIs?

The only sure way to prevent STIs is to not have sex. You can use barrier protection (such as a condom, latex sheet, dental dam, or glove) to avoid contact with menstrual blood and genital sores. Do this every time you have sex. If you use sex toys, cover them with a new condom each time the toy is used on a different person, or have different toys for each person. Use gloves and lubricant for sex that might cause bleeding.

I'm afraid that my family and friends will reject me if I "come out of the closet." What can I do?

Talk with your doctor. He or she will keep your discussion confidential and will help you find resources for support. Several groups have helplines and websites with useful information.

Where can I get more information?

For health information and support:

Your doctor

Advocates for Youth

202-419-3420

<http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/424-glbtq-youth>

American Society for Reproductive Medicine

205-978-5000

<http://www.reproductivefacts.org/>



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FAMILY PHYSICIANS

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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

800-232-4636

<http://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/women.htm>

GLBT National Help Center

888-843-4564 (National Hotline)

800-246-7743 (National Youth Talkline)

<http://www.glbthotline.org/>

GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBT

Equality

202-600-8037

<http://glma.org/>

Human Rights Campaign

800-777-4723

<http://www.hrc.org/resources/coming-out-to-your-doctor>

<http://www.hrc.org/resources/topic/health-and-aging>

National Resource Center on LGBT Aging

212-741-2247

<http://www.lgbtagingcenter.org/>

PFLAG (Parents, Families, Friends, and Allies

United with LGBTQ People)

202-467-8180

<http://www.pflag.org/>

U.S. Department of Health and Human

Services, Office on Women's Health

800-994-9662

<http://womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/lesbian-bisexual-health.html>

For legal information:

American Civil Liberties Union

212-549-2500

<https://www.aclu.org/issues/lgbt-rights>

Lambda Legal Help Desk

866-542-8336

<http://www.lambdalegal.org/help>

National Center for Lesbian Rights

800-528-6257

<http://www.nclrights.org/>

The LGBT Bar

202-637-7661

<http://lgbtbar.org/>

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This handout is provided to you by your family doctor and the American Academy of Family Physicians. Other health-related information is available from the AAFP online at <http://familydoctor.org>.

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