

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.glma.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-glbq-youth](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/424-glbq-youth)

American Society for Reproductive Medicine

205-978-5000

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



Health Care for Women Who Have Sex with Women *(continued)*

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/>

March 2017

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>.

This information provides a general overview and may not apply to everyone. Talk to your family doctor to find out if this information applies to you and to get more information on this subject. Copyright © 2017 American Academy of Family Physicians. Individuals may photocopy this material for their own personal reference, and physicians may photocopy for use with their own patients. Written permission is required for all other uses, including electronic uses.