

Sexual health is about safety, enjoyment, and respect. It's about caring for yourself in sexual relationships. Factors important to your sexual health include:

- Healthy, respectful relationships
- Consensual sexual activity
- Sexual activity that is comfortable and enjoyable for all parties
- Minimising un-planned pregnancy and exposure to sexually transmitted infections

Healthy relationships

Healthy relationships are relationships where there is respect, trust, and support for each other. This includes respectful sexual activity, where each person has given informed consent and can expect and receive enjoyment and satisfaction.

What is consent?

Sexual consent is where a person with the cognitive capacity to make the decision voluntarily and freely agrees to sexual activity (this is considered informed consent). It's important that you are 100% sure that the person you're with has the capacity to make the decision and is happy and willing to partake in the sexual activity. Non-consensual sexual activity (even kissing and touching) is against the law.

One of the best ways to determine consent is to simply ask. People always have the right to say no, and always have the right to change their mind at any time regardless of how far things have gone.

Drugs and alcohol can affect people's ability to make decisions, including if they want to be sexual with someone else. This means that if someone is drunk or under the influence of drugs, they may not be able to give consent.

Going to someone's house is **not** consent, accepting gifts or favours from someone is **not** consent, being drunk with someone is **not** consent, starting something and then changing your mind is **not** consent.

The YouTube video Respect.Now.Always by USQ provides clear information about what is, and what

is not consent: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GE4G0CUNIOs>

If you experience non-consensual sexual assault or sexual harassment, visit the JCU Safety Wellbeing page (<https://www.jcu.edu.au/safety-and-wellbeing>) for advice and support.

Unplanned pregnancy

Pregnancy can be unpredictable. You may try to fall pregnant but experience difficulties in doing so. You may avoid becoming pregnant but your contraceptive method fails for one or more reasons. It is important to think about your options for an unplanned pregnancy early.

As soon as you know that you are pregnant, start seeking information and support. Aim to make an informed choice, and consider things early enough so that the widest range of choices is available to you.

Contact your doctor at the first signs of pregnancy. For further information and support you can call:

- Children by Choice on 1800 177 725
- Townsville: The Women's Centre on 4775 7555
- Cairns: True on 4051 3788.

Protect yourself from sexually transmitted infections

There are a variety of common sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Because they are common it means almost every person you have sex with could have an STI; they are so widespread that anyone can have them.

Although many STIs are manageable, some can cause serious health risks. STIs are not always comfortable and sometimes there is unfounded stigma attached to them. Prevention is always better than cure.

You can be exposed to an STI during any sort of sexual activity – not just penetration. Oral sex, and any skin to skin contact can pass on certain types of STIs. The best protection from sexually transmitted infections are condoms – male or

female – and dental dams if a woman is receiving oral sex. These create a barrier to any infections being spread.

Always see a doctor if you think you may have an STI. If you have any concerns or uncertainty about sexual health, assault, or harassment, seek help.

If you are concerned about a friend or family member, look for the signs that something is not OK, talk with them about what's going on, listen to their experience, and seek help together.

For support and advice, you can contact JCU Student Equity and Wellbeing. Alternatively, you can see your GP or doctor, or other health professional.

Further information and support

- *healthdirect* Sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/sexually-transmitted-infections-sti>
- Queensland Health Sexual Health Service (Cairns)
https://www.health.qld.gov.au/cairns_hinterland/html/shealth
- Queensland Health Sexual Health Service (Townsville)
<https://www.health.qld.gov.au/townsville/services/sexual-health>
- How to get a sexual health check
<https://au.reachout.com/articles/how-to-get-a-sexual-health-check>
- Queensland Government Sexual health portal
<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/staying-healthy/sexual-health>
- *healthdirect* Sexual health
<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/sexual-health>
- Children by Choice Association
<https://www.childrenbychoice.org.au/financial-assistance>

Student Equity and Wellbeing

James Cook University

Web <https://www.jcu.edu.au/student-equity-and-wellbeing>

Email studentwellbeing@jcu.edu.au

Phone Townsville (07) 478 14711 or Cairns (07) 423 21150

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