Ask the Sexpert

Gail Wyatt, PhD, director of the sexual-health program and associate director of the AIDS Institute at UCLA, assists us between the sheets.

May 24, 2006 By Gail Wyatt, PhD

Q: I want my boyfriend to perform oral sex on me. He doesn't want to. How can I convince him to do it?

A: Whether you're a man or woman, pressuring your partner into having any type of sex will only undermine the intimacy you seek. First, you should ask your boyfriend why he does not want to perform oral sex on you. He may have a good reason that you will understand and appreciate. For example, many people have experienced sexually transmitted diseases in their mouths, like herpes simplex I. Having unprotected oral sex can put you at risk, and he may worry that if he were to use a dental dam or plastic wrap to protect his tongue and mouth, you might suspect that he has an oral STD and reject him. Instead, he simply may refuse to go down on you. Ask about STDs so you feel comfortable and safe with each other, and get tested—but still protect yourself from STDs, including HIV, by using condoms, dental dams or plastic wraps. (Note that tests show that latex does not protect you from asymptomatic herpes outbreaks.) Or he may simply not like oral sex. Some folks find it unpleasant; others prefer to wait until they've found the person they plan to marry before they engage in this highly intimate behavior. Also, many people believe that the genitals are dirty.

Regardless, don't pressure him—just talk. If he still isn't open, compromise by suggesting that you discuss it at a later date, perhaps in six months, when you feel closer to each other. If he still refuses, say "Let me know if you change your mind," then leave it alone; don't push him. Then find other ways to experience pleasure that are acceptable to both of you.

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