Ask the Sexpert

Sexologist Rachael L. Ross, MD, PhD, a.k.a. Dr. Rachael answers your questions.

March 4, 2010 By Rachael L. Ross, MD, PhD

Q: I've heard that "outercourse" is a satisfying safe-sex alternative. What exactly is it?

A: Most people know that for the safest sex, you should use a lubricated latex condom. But when you don't have a condom, or decide not to use one, outercourse is a safer alternative to unprotected sex.

Outercourse includes oral sex and sexual touching using the hands or fingers. (Make sure the mouth is abrasion-free and the hands and fingers have no nicks or cuts.)

But even though outercourse is safer than unprotected anal or vaginal sex, it's not 100 percent effective against HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

HIV transmission is 10 to 100 times more likely if people engage in unprotected vaginal and anal sex rather than unprotected oral sex.

Also, HIV is transmitted through blood, breast milk, semen and vaginal fluids. The virus can enter the body via small tears or breaks in the skin, vagina and anus.

Finally, HIV/AIDS is the leading cause of death among black women ages 25 to 34 in the U.S.

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http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/sexpert-rachael-spring-2010-18107-9272