

## HOW HIGH IS THE RISK FOR STDs? ANSWER KEY

HIGH RISK FOR STDs	LOW RISK FOR STDs	NO RISK FOR STDs
Unprotected vaginal sex	Deep (“tongue”) kissing	Bathing together
Unprotected anal sex	Vaginal sex using an external or internal condom correctly	Kissing on the lips
Unprotected oral sex	Anal sex using a condom correctly	Mutual masturbation
	Oral sex using a latex barrier or cut-open condom correctly	Solo masturbation
		Holding hands
		Abstaining from sexual activity

### HIGH RISK FOR STDs

Unprotected oral, vaginal and anal intercourse are high risk behaviors for transmitting STDs. “Unprotected” means not using a latex barrier, such as a condom.

### LOW RISK FOR STDs

Just as the key to the high risk behaviors was “unprotected,” the key word for low risk behaviors is “correctly.” These behaviors are only low-risk if condoms or other barriers are used consistently and correctly – which means every time two people are sexual together, from the beginning of the sex act to the end. As soon as body parts come into contact with each other, and/or mouths come into contact with body parts, STD transmission is possible.

The level of risk also depends on the STD. For example, deep or “tongue” kissing is high risk for herpes, but not for HIV.

In addition, although using external and internal condoms and latex barriers significantly reduce the risk of STD transmission, they don’t protect partners completely. While semen and vaginal fluids are blocked by the condom, they do not cover bodies completely. When bodies rub against each other, they can also cause microscopic openings in the skin, which are small enough for some viruses to pass through in order to transmit an STD.

### NO RISK FOR STDs

Aside from continuous abstinence – meaning, not having oral, anal or vaginal sex with another person for a period of time – very few shared sexual behaviors carry no risk for STDs. The activities here are more related to intimacy – with the exception of masturbation and mutual masturbation. These behaviors are important because they can help people learn about their bodies and build connection between people without any risk of STDs (or pregnancy).

\*\*\* Bathing together and mutual masturbation are not “important” behaviors for 12-year olds to engage in. Most parents encourage their children not to bath together at this age, because they are entering puberty. Their hormones are raging and their rational decision making skills are not fully developed. Bathing together maybe less risk for STDs (not “no risk”) but is high risk for pregnancy. Additionally, this creates an unsafe dialog for the teacher whose telling children it is “important” to bath together. The average age of sexual abuse (according to this curriculum) is between ages 7-13 years old (see Grade 4 lesson 3. page 135). That means they are encouraging the highest risk group for sexual assault that bathing with someone of the opposite gender or a mutual masturbation group is a good idea?