

Sex is fun, but not entirely risk-free. These pages show just some of the potential risks and hazards, with the aim of creating a safety-conscious attitude.

General hazards

Burning

- Beware of friction burns from the carpet when having sex on the floor. Knee and elbow pads may provide some protection.

Fire



- Don't smoke in bed. Better yet, don't smoke at all.
- Be careful if using candles or incense to create a romantic atmosphere.

Intoxication



- Avoid consuming excessive amounts of alcohol before sex; it has an adverse effect on performance. Having sex with someone who is too drunk to give informed consent can lead to a charge of rape.
- Be aware of 'date rape' drugs such as Rohypnol and GHB. Don't leave your drink where other people can get at it. But don't be under any

illusions – by far the commonest 'date rape' drug is alcohol.



- People who are drunk are more likely to get into fights, especially if there is an element of sexual rivalry involved.
- Similar considerations apply to other recreational drugs.

Poisonous or irritant substances

- Keep them off your naughty bits – see *Allergies* in Chapter 6.
- If you've been handling chilli peppers, wash your hands thoroughly before handling anything else!

Older readers may remember the useful Mini van, complete with mattress in the back. A colleague who had struck lucky one night retired to the local beauty spot with his new lady friend. He dropped his trousers in the front seats while she was making herself comfortable in the back. The passion of the moment getting the better of him, he tipped the seats forward to give them the maximum amount of room and scrambled into the back as fast as

he could, slipping on to the floor as he did. The resulting scraped knee didn't worry either of them and they got down to the matter at hand with the usual enthusiasm, until both became aware of an unfamiliar and increasingly unpleasant burning sensation 'down there'. The same older readers will remember that the battery on a Mini van is located behind the driver's seat and

that the clamping arrangements are typically weak and ineffective. After a few years most Mini vans have their battery terminals completely exposed, the flimsy cover having been discarded long ago. You know that white fluffy stuff that grows on the top of battery terminals? – especially those of older, knackered Mini vans? Well you really don't want to get any of that on your willy and so into your girlfriend...

Special hazards

Asphyxiation

- Some people derive pleasure from partial strangulation during sex. This is a most dangerous practice. Never put anything round your own or your partner's neck, or let anybody else do so to you.
- If you use a gag, it must not prevent mouth breathing.

Prosecution

- Rape is a criminal offence for which you can be imprisoned for a long time. It doesn't have to be violent – simply refusing to stop when the other party says 'no' can be rape.
- Having sex with someone below the legal age of consent, even if they agree to it, is also a criminal offence.

- Having sex in a public place is an offence, though you're unlikely to go to jail for it. Be discreet!

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

- Sexually transmitted infections are many and various – see Chapter 8. Condoms provide excellent protection against nearly all of them. **Always wear a condom when having penetrative sex.**

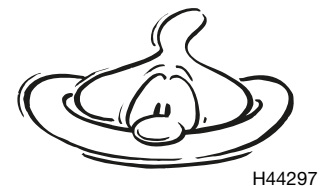
Unwanted pregnancy

- Another good reason for always using a condom. Do not rely on withdrawal (*coitus interruptus*), or so-called safe periods. And remember that the contraceptive pill does not protect against STIs.



SAFER SEX

When it comes to STIs, there's no such thing as totally safe sex – though you can eliminate about 99% of the risks by **always using a condom for any kind of penetrative sex**. The risk factors for the activities below are valid for most STIs.



<i>These activities are certainly high-risk</i>	<i>These activities are possibly risky</i>	<i>These activities are probably safe</i>	<i>These activities are certainly safe</i>
Anal sex without a condom	Oral sex without a condom (on the penis) or other barrier (over the vagina or anus)	Anal or vaginal sex with a suitable condom	Cuddling, hugging, non-sexual massage
Vaginal sex without a condom	Sharing sex toys without sterilising them between users. (Or you can use condoms on a dildo)	Oral sex with a condom or other barrier	Kissing (without exchange of saliva)
Sharing drug injecting equipment	Sharing a toothbrush or a razor	Non-penetrative sex, including mutual masturbation	
		Kissing (with exchange of saliva)	