

# Essential Sexual Health Questions to Ask Adults

Ask all of your adult and adolescent patients the sexual health questions on this card. They will help you to assess your patient's level of sexual risk and determine which additional questions to ask and which preventive services are needed.

## Ask at Least Annually

Have you been sexually active in the last year?

YES

Do you have sex with men, women, or both?

In the past 12 months, how many sexual partners have you had?\*

NO

Have you ever been sexually active?

YES

Do you have sex with men, women, or both?

How many sexual partners have you had?\*

NO

Continue with medical history

\*If patient answered "both" to previous question, ask this question for each gender.

## Ask Older Adults

Has sex changed for you?  
If so, how?

Ask at least once, and update as needed.  
Gender identity and sexual orientation can be fluid.

1. What do you consider yourself to be?
  - A. Lesbian, gay, or homosexual
  - B. Straight or heterosexual
  - C. Bisexual
  - D. Other (please specify)
  - E. Don't know
2. What is your current gender identity?
  - A. Male
  - B. Female
  - C. Transgender man
  - D. Transgender woman
  - E. Neither exclusively male nor female (e.g. non-binary or nonconforming)
  - F. Other (please specify)
  - G. Decline to answer
3. What sex were you assigned at birth?
  - A. Male
  - B. Female
  - C. Decline to answer

# Essential Sexual Health Questions to Ask Adolescents

## Ask at Least Annually

1. What questions do you have about your body and/or sex?
2. Your body changes a lot during adolescence, and although this is normal, it can also be confusing. Some of my patients feel as though they're more of a boy or a girl, or even something else, while their body changes in another way. How has this been for you?
3. Some patients your age are exploring new relationships. Who do you find yourself attracted to? (Or, you could ask, "How would you describe your sexual orientation?")
4. Have you ever had sex with someone? By "sex," I mean vaginal, oral, or anal sex. (If sexual activity has already been established, ask about sex in the past year.)

## If the Adolescent Has Had Sex, Ask About

- Number of lifetime partners
- Number of partners in the past year
- The gender of those partners
- The types of sex (vaginal, oral, anal)
- Use of protection (condoms and contraception)
- Coercion, rape, statutory rape, and incest

## If the Adolescent Identifies as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning (LGBTQ)

- Ask whether they have a trusted adult to talk to.
- Assess the adolescent's safety at home and school and whether they are being bullied or harassed.
- Link your patient to community or national organizations such as [pflag.org](http://pflag.org) or [thetrevorproject.org](http://thetrevorproject.org) for education and support.
- Counsel all sexually active adolescents about using condoms and contraception. Adolescents who identify as lesbian or gay may also have sex with members of the opposite sex, which increases the risk for unintended pregnancy.

For more information, visit: [nationalcoalitionforsexualhealth.org](http://nationalcoalitionforsexualhealth.org)