



ARC Counselling and Information Service

Factsheet

Relationships, sex and sexual health

Relationships can be exciting and fun, but there are lots of things you need to think about if you and your partner decide you both want to have a sexual relationship. You **both** need to think about contraception, pregnancy and protecting against sexually transmitted infections.

Being prepared doesn't have to take the fun out of the relationship and it doesn't mean either of you are planning to sleep around. It means you are thinking sensibly about your future and about your health.

Always remember to talk through things with your partner and listen to what they want too. If they don't feel ready or don't want to have sex, don't put pressure on them – it's important that you're both happy with whatever happens in your relationship. The age of consent in the UK is 16, which means it is legal to have sex once you are 16 years old. Remember though, whatever your age, you shouldn't have sex until you feel ready or unless you're sure that you want to.

It's always best to talk things through together or with someone else you can trust. If you don't know who to talk to, why not give us a call on 0118 977 6710? You can arrange to speak with one of our counsellors in confidence.

For more information on relationships and sex

You can visit the following sites:

- R u thinking? <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20080911064307/ruthinking.co.uk/>
- Brook <http://www.brook.org.uk/>
- FPA – The Sexual Health Charity <http://www.fpa.org.uk/>
- Like it is <http://www.likeitis.org/> and for the UK site <http://www.likeitis.org/indexuk.html>
- Sex worth talking about <http://www.nhs.uk/worhtalkingabout/Pages/sex-worth-talking-about.aspx>

Or you can call the Sexwise Helpline on 0800 282 930.

For local services, information and clinics

▷ Sexual health (walk-in clinics – no appointment needed)

- **Florey Unit, Royal Berkshire Hospital**
21a Craven Road, Reading, Berks RG1 5LE (telephone: 0118 322 7202)
 - Sexual health and genito-urinary medicine (GUM) clinic – includes HIV testing
 - Monday to Friday, 7am-7pm
 - NOTES: only urgent cases seen on Thursday from 8am-9am; if you visit 6pm-7pm and attendance is high you may be asked to return the next day

- **West Berkshire Community Hospital**

London Road, Benham Hill, Thatcham, Berks RG18 3AS

- Saturday 9.30am-11.30am
- NOTES: not open on the Saturday immediately before Bank Holidays

▷ **Contraceptive services (walk-in clinics for under 25s)**

- **Royal Berkshire Hospital**

21a Craven Road, Reading

- Monday to Thursday, 4pm-7pm
- NOTES: if you visit 6pm-7pm and attendance is high you may be asked to return the next day

- **Whitley Clinic**

Northumberland Avenue, Reading

- Wednesday 8.30am-11am

- **Connexions**

136-137 Friar Street, Reading, Berks RG1 1EX

- Wednesday 4pm-6.30pm, Friday 2pm-4.30pm

- **West Berkshire Community Hospital**

London Road, Benham hill, Thatcham, Berks RG18 3AS

- Monday 4pm-6.30pm, Thursday 4pm-6.30pm

▷ **Emergency contraception**

If you are any age and require emergency contraception, call in at **any** of the walk-in clinics, Monday to Friday, 7am-7pm. If you are over 25 and require contraception, it is best to make an appointment with your GP. However, if you have run out of pills and cannot get an appointment with your GP in time, the clinics will issue you with three month's supply.

▷ **Free condoms and advice**

All clinics will provide free condoms. Condoms, pregnancy testing and advice are also available from ARC (daytimes only).