

# Safe sex practices among African American women

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Researchers have found that African American women exhibit a higher risk for sexually transmitted infections including HIV/Aids. But what motivates this group of women to have sex? And when are they more likely to use protection?

A new study published today in [Health Education & Behavior](#) found that regardless of motivations for having sex, condom use expectations were less than 50% for all types of sexual encounters, including the riskiest types of sex.

Researchers Julianna Deardorff et. al used a combination of interviews and focus groups to conduct the study. Participants were [African American women](#) with low incomes who had had an average of 1.2 sexual partners in the past month. Their average age was 20.4 years old.

While the participants in the study labeled love, feelings, and fun as their top reasons for sexual encounters, expectations for condom use were the lowest when women were pressured to have sex, for example when they were inexperienced or controlled by peers or sexual partners.

"Findings highlight the need for tailored interventions to increase condom use in casual relationships, where perceived risk is already high, and in primary relationships, where motivations for condom use may be low." the authors wrote. "Interventions that address mediators of sexual risk, including self-esteem and coping, may be more effective than those focusing solely on risk perceptions."

**More information:** "Motivations for Sex Among Low-Income African American Young Women" by Julianna Deardorff, Ahna B. Suleiman, Teresa S. Dal Santo, Michelle Flythe, J. Barry Gurdin, and Stephen L. Eyre, *Health Education and Behavior*: [heb.sagepub.com/content/early/.../473112.full.pdf+html](http://heb.sagepub.com/content/early/.../473112.full.pdf+html)

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