

# Survey says youth need more education on adequate protection and enhanced safety when engaging in oral sex

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Researchers have assessed more than 900 youths' knowledge of the risks of oral sex and barriers to using protection through the use of MyVoice,

a national text message–based poll.

Barriers to using protection when engaging in [oral sex](#) included a lack of knowledge of the risks, limited access to and dissatisfaction with protection methods, and cultural norms. Many respondents knew that some STIs can be transmitted through unprotected oral sex, but many youths also underestimated the severity of risk associated with the act: "You can't really get anything super harmful from it." Participants also reported a lack of information about adequate protection methods as barriers to their engaging in safe oral sex. Some [respondents](#) expressed a lesser concern for sexually transmitted infections as compared to pregnancy.

Youths suggested that greater sex education, frank discussions about oral sex versus saying "don't have oral sex," and normalized mentions in the media would increase their use of protection. Researchers concluded that programs tailored to decrease rates of sexually transmitted infections among youths should include education on the use of sexual protective devices in oral sex.

**More information:** Arianna Strome et al, Youths' Knowledge and Perceptions of Health Risks Associated With Unprotected Oral Sex, *The Annals of Family Medicine* (2022). [DOI: 10.1370/afm.2761](https://doi.org/10.1370/afm.2761)

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