

May's Happy Ending: Give Yourself A Hand This National Masturbation Month

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New York, NY– May is National Masturbation Month, a great opportunity to make time for yourself, get to know your body, and prioritize your sexual pleasure. Masturbation (<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/sexual-orientation-gender-expression/sexual-orientation-gender-expression-101/masturbation>) is a great way to learn what you like and don't like without putting yourself at risk for pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases, and is one of the best ways to learn about your sexuality. It can also help to relieve stress and ease menstrual cramps.

"Masturbation is a normal and healthy part of sexuality," said Dr. Raegan McDonald-Mosley, Chief Medical Officer at Planned Parenthood Federation of America. "It can enhance our physical, mental, and sexual health and the health of our sexual relationships. Learning about what feels good to you can help increase sexual pleasure with sex partners. And when you know what you like and are comfortable with your body, your satisfaction with sex increases."

Studies show that about 7 out of 10 adult men and more than 5 out of 10 adult women masturbate. Some people masturbate more than once a day, some people masturbate once in a while, and some people never masturbate – and all are completely healthy and normal.

Using a vibrator for masturbation or sex with someone else can be a fun addition to your sex life. If you do use a sex toy, it's important to clean them with soap and water and cover them with condoms when using them with a partner. Unsanitized sex toys can be a source of infection or STDs.

"Masturbation is a normal and common activity for both men and women, yet many people feel shame or guilt about masturbating," said Dr. McDonald-Mosley. "Negative feelings about masturbation can threaten your health and well-being. Remember, only

you can decide what is healthy and right for you.”

People who receive negative messages about masturbation when they are young often carry feelings of shame into adulthood. Some people think that others masturbate only when they do not have a sex partner. But that is not true. In fact, people who have regular sex partners are more likely to masturbate than people without sex partners.

“You can rely on Planned Parenthood to provide honest, accurate information about sex and sexuality, no matter what,” Dr. McDonald-Mosley added. “We believe that all people have the right to only engage in sex they truly want and to access sexual health services without shame or judgment. Planned Parenthood wants all people to have the education, power, and resources to make healthy decisions about their bodies.”

You can visit Planned Parenthood health centers and online to get more information about any aspect of your sexual health. Planned Parenthood websites receive 60 million visits each year, and we use social media sites like Tumblr, Facebook, and Twitter, as well as innovative chat/text programs, to get accurate, sensitive information to youth, parents, and men and women every day. For more information, check out plannedparenthood.org (/).

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Planned Parenthood is the nation's leading provider and advocate of high-quality, affordable health care for women, men, and young people, as well as the nation's largest provider of sex education. With approximately 700 health centers across the country, Planned Parenthood organizations serve all patients with care and compassion, with respect and without judgment. Through health centers, programs in schools and communities, and online resources, Planned Parenthood is a trusted source of reliable health information that allows people to make informed health decisions. We do all this because we care passionately about helping people lead healthier lives.

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