

**When passion goes into overdrive,
caution may take a back seat: Spring
break kiss in Ft. Lauderdale**

So it goes this skittish spring at colleges around the country, where many students report similar ambivalence. Yes, they are talking more openly about sex and sexually transmitted diseases—but many are still loving dangerously. Warnings about the spread of AIDS to heterosexuals are everywhere—on television, in newspapers and magazines. Many student health services now routinely distribute condoms and literature with clinical descriptions of such once forbidden topics as oral sex and anal intercourse (page 20). Some of the warnings seem to be taking hold; there's a renewed emphasis on abstinence, for both medical and moral reasons, and even such old-fashioned virtues as monogamy and virginity

are winning new adherents.

But despite all the fearful talk, the action is pretty much the same. From Ft. Lauderdale to Fraternity Row, casual sex is still a fact of life. In many students' eyes, AIDS is Someone Else's problem. "I don't think that people are aware that victims could possibly be white, Protestant or Catholic, middle or upper class," says Ellen O'Connell, a Georgetown University senior. "It's always the others." Students seem to believe that their collegiate status is protection enough. "If somebody's cute and has a nice Izod and chinos, you think it's not very likely that that person would be carrying some kind of disease," says Andrea, a 17-year-old Columbia freshman.

Future shock: To many, AIDS is just another scary headline, a remote threat—like nuclear war. Among college students, "there's this very pervasive sense of invulnerability or invincibility," says Richard Keeling, who is director of the University of Virginia's student health service and chairman of the American College Health Association's task force on AIDS. Most students don't know anyone who has AIDS; nationally there are only about 75 reported cases of AIDS among college students, Keeling says. In part, that's because the incubation period for the disease is quite long—from three months to five years or more. "A lot of college students have trouble seeing far into the future," Keeling says. He also notes, however, that the future is starting to move closer; there are perhaps "several hundred" campus cases of AIDS-Related Complex, or ARC, a condition that is caused by the same virus. In an estimated 25 to 100 percent of the cases, ARC turns into AIDS; in all cases, it is infectious. (One victim's story, page 14.)

Because the danger doesn't appear to be immediate, many students tend to ignore the threat or, worse, make a joke of it. At Dartmouth, for example, fraternity members laughed at a presentation about the disease and turned the condoms into balloons. Columbia officials distributed 20,000 AIDS education pamphlets in October, but students say the information had little, if any, effect. "I saw so many people look at the bulletin, laugh and just drop it on the floor," says Ian, an 18-year-old freshman. At Duke, senior Jyoti Somani urged a

student-run counseling service and a fraternity to sponsor a panel discussion with doctors from Duke Medical Center. Only 50 students showed up—and half were fraternity pledges whose attendance was required. "No one wants to think about these things if they meet a guy they really like or a girl they really like," says Somani.

Turned off: Recent studies of sexual behavior confirm that students simply aren't responding to the threat of AIDS in any overwhelming way. A survey of 500 vacationing college students taken last month in Daytona Beach, Fla., by the manufacturers of Trojan condoms found, for instance, that only 50 percent were using condoms to reduce the risk of contracting a sexually transmitted disease (STD). Only 3 percent reported they were engaging in sex less often, and 23 percent said they were doing nothing at all to protect themselves against STD's. According to a 1986 study at Stanford, 74 percent of sexually active students do not ask their partners about sexually transmitted diseases before having intercourse. Generally, gay males and heterosexual women pay more attention to the warning than do straight men—but few students are careful all the time. A Penn State survey taken last spring showed that 52 percent of gay men polled were turned off by condoms and did not use them consistently. Among the women, only 24 percent of those surveyed said they planned to use condoms, although 83 percent said they understood that condom use could help prevent the spread of STD's.

The lack of concern may be, quite literally, deadly. AIDS has spread beyond the original high-risk groups of male homosexuals, bisexuals and intravenous-drug users of either sex. They still make up 91 percent of the some 33,000 reported cases of AIDS in the United States. But people who contracted the disease through heterosexual contact now



LEFT: SHOCKED JOES—WOODLEY CAMP & ASSOC.

Just a scary headline? Safer-sex campaign at Penn