

# WELL NOW

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UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

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# Plays Well With Others: *A brief guide to happy sex*

By Anna Hall

This is not a guide to just-like-in-the-movies sex with suave, passionate scenes and mood-music surging in the background. No, this is a suggestion manual for those aspiring to the real thing: sex that can be sultry, funny, exciting, romantic, daring, or crazy—just as long as everybody present is having a good time.

### HAPPY SEX.

For the vast majority of us, happy sex in one form or another is our goal when heading into a sexual encounter. Yet despite this surge of good will, 1 out of every 6 college age women, and 1 in 10 college age men are the victims of rape or sexual assault. According to the American College Health Association, 4 in 5 victims of sexual assault know their attackers. The implication is that even among proponents of happy sex (i.e. individuals opposed to sexual assault), the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable sexual behavior are sometimes blurred and crossed unwittingly. Knowing when to let the good times roll, how to understand what your partner wants, and when to call it all off, are the keys to keeping the sex good and the mojo flowing.

Oftentimes open communication is left in the dust for fear that starting a dialogue about sex will "break the mood". However, there is NOTHING that destroys the mood more than overstepping your partner's boundaries. In addition to irreparably destroying the lovin' feeling, it can result in lifelong emotional damage for both parties—as well as criminal charges. Communicating with your partner and verifying that both of you are equally gung-ho about the imminent events (more commonly called obtaining consent) is a crucial element of any sexual encounter.

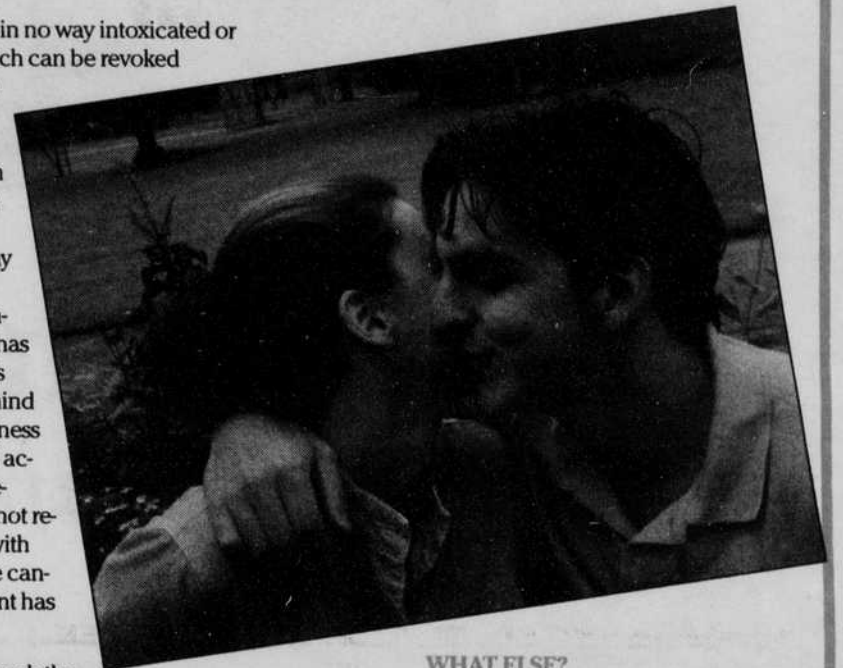
### WHAT EXACTLY IS CONSENT?

Consent is voluntary, actively offered positive approval or encouragement of sexual activity, giv-

en by someone who is in no way intoxicated or incapacitated, and which can be revoked at any time. This is true

whether in a long term relationship or not. While consent can be given in a variety of ways, enthusiasm for one level of activity (say kissing or touching) does not in any way imply that the individual has agreed to go further. It's important to keep in mind that expressing willingness and sexual desire is an active process. Simply because an individual is not resisting or responding with negative feedback, one cannot assume that consent has been given.

How can you approach the situation without sounding like a broken record ("Is this okay? How about now? Still okay? Now?")? How about asking your partner what they would like to do and how they like it done? This allows them to establish boundaries that they are comfortable with, while also letting you in on their favorite turn-ons. Be sure, however, that you go no further than they have asked you to go, and be ready to stop at their request. On the flip side, clearly communicating your own desires to a willing partner enables them to better respect and satisfy you. While stopping to talk about sex during a moment of passion may seem like an awkward proposition, it demonstrates confidence and respect for yourself and your partner. Ultimately, it is the only way to insure that sex will be as happy as you were hoping for.



### WHAT ELSE?

Other ways to support happy sex include being aware of friends or acquaintances who engage in non-consensual sexual behaviors, and joining with others to monitor their social interactions. This can mean intervening, warning potential victims, and alerting authorities if need be. Supporting survivors of sexual violence and continuing to educate yourself and others regarding healthy sexual attitudes and practices are also important elements to ending acquaintance rape. There are a variety of resources both on and off campus for survivors and those interested in wiping out sexual violence in our community. To find out more about programs, resources and classes on this topic, stop by the Peer Health Education Office, Counseling Center, or the ASUO Women's or Men's Centers in the EMU.

# "Did You Just Say Oops?"

By Danielle Chiocco

The fear and uncertainty involved with an unprotected sexual encounter can be extremely overwhelming. As if the raft of diseases that we can contract weren't enough, there is the risk of pregnancy for heterosexual women. Whether you are away on vacation or at home, it is important to know your options when dealing with sexual health and safety.

### EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION

Let's start with possible pregnancy. Unprotected sex, whether your contraception method failed or was never used, can result in pregnancy. Emergency contraception (EC) or Plan B is now available as two hormone pills taken within 120 hours of unprotected sex. It is most effective if taken within the first 24 hours. According to Woman's Capitol Corporation, emergency contraception reduces the risk of pregnancy by 95% when used correctly. However, EC is not recommended as a regular substitute for a primary

form of birth control. It is not as effective as any ongoing contraceptive method. Most importantly, it does not protect against HIV or any other sexually transmitted infections (STI).

### HOW EC WORKS

The increased amount of hormone in Plan B prevents fertilization from occurring by delaying ovulation and altering the lining of the uterus. In this way EC actually prevents pregnancy. It should not be confused with RU-486, which works after pregnancy is established. Some women complain of nausea and vomiting after taking EC. However, the newer regimen has produced fewer side effects and your health practitioner can prescribe medication to help alleviate these symptoms.

### WHERE IS EC AVAILABLE?

EC requires a prescription in Oregon and students can get such here at the UO Health Center. We are open seven days a week, but some practi-

tioners still suggest that sexually active women keep a prescription at home in case an emergency arises and it's difficult to get to the clinic. Plan B is available for \$12.50 or free to students who qualify for FPEP a federally funded health program. Call 346-2770 to see if you qualify.

### WHAT EC CAN'T DO

Like any hormone method of contraception, EC doesn't reduce the risk of infection with STIs. Medical practitioners at the Health Center can test for STIs, most of which can be treated or cured. EC also can't undo a sexual encounter that was not consensual. For individuals who have experienced sexual assault, Health Center practitioners can help connect students to resources including Sexual Assault Support Services and the Office of Student Life. To locate a provider while away from home, contact the nationwide EC Hotline at 1-800-584-9911. This hotline is available 24 hours a day in Spanish and English.