

Smith doesn't recommend taking things home with a new partner. She says sexual contact isn't recommended with the ongoing pandemic.

“If you continue or start a sexual relationship with someone outside of your household during COVID-19, you and your partner face an increased risk of spreading the virus,” she says. “Remember that you are your safest sex partner during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

That said, Smith recognizes “consensual sex can be a way of dealing with anxiety... or a way to fulfil/express our needs for intimacy. It can also be pleasurable and help pass the time when isolated from others.”

She says if you decide to engage in consensual sex with someone new, it's important to remember that if your partner has COVID-19, there's a good chance you could get it due to close contact.

Along with usual safe sex precautions — such as wearing a condom to prevent HIV, sexually transmitted infections, and unplanned pregnancy — Smith recommends wearing a mask as heavy breathing during sex can create more droplets that may transmit COVID-19, and/or choosing positions that limit face-to-face contact.

She says it's important to avoid or limit kissing or exchanging saliva as well, and wash everything: your hands, your body and any sex toys (don't share) before and after sex.

Anyone with questions or concerns about their sexual health can call the health unit at [1-866-888-4577](tel:1-866-888-4577) ext. 1205 to speak to a sexual health nurse. The health unit's sexual health clinics are resuming soon.

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