

## Sexual and Reproductive Health Glossary

### A

**Abortion:** Termination of pregnancy. An abortion can occur either spontaneously (called a spontaneous abortion or miscarriage), or it can be brought about by intervention (called an induced abortion). It is with this last meaning that the word is generally used.<sup>1</sup>

**Abortion rate:** The number of abortions taking place among women of reproductive age (usually 15-49), over a given period, usually a year, expressed per 1,000 women.<sup>1</sup>

**Abstinence:** Abstinence is a conscious decision to avoid certain activities or behaviours. Different people have different definitions of sexual abstinence. For some, it may mean no sexual contact. For others, it may mean no penetration (oral, anal, vaginal) or only 'lower-risk' behaviours (outer-course as opposed to intercourse).<sup>1</sup>

**Abstinence-only Education:** Education which promotes abstinence from all forms of sexual activity, and abstinence as the only way in which HIV infections and unwanted pregnancies can be prevented. This type of education does not discuss issues relating to contraception, sexuality or sexual and reproductive health issues which are included in comprehensive sexuality education programs. It should be noted that abstinence is often taught as one option for safer sex in comprehensive sexuality education programs.<sup>1</sup>

**Acquaintance Rape:** Sexual assault perpetrated by someone the victim knows. Acquaintance rape is against the law.<sup>11</sup>

**Adolescence:** The period between sexual maturity at puberty and the attainment of adult social status; psychosocial development during the teenage years.<sup>11</sup>

**Adoption:** a legal agreement in which a child is placed with non-biological parent(s) to be raised permanently.

**AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome):** The late stage of infection caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). HIV steadily weakens the body's defence (immune) system until it can no longer fight off life-threatening illnesses. These include infections such as pneumonia and certain cancers.<sup>1</sup>

**Afterbirth:** The placenta and amniotic sac, which come out after the baby during childbirth.<sup>7</sup>

**Amenorrhea:** The absence of menstruation.<sup>7</sup>

**Amniocentesis:** The extraction of the fluid surrounding the fetus inside the membrane for pre-natal diagnosis.<sup>1</sup>

**Amniotic Fluid:** The watery fluid surrounding a developing fetus in the uterus.<sup>7</sup>

**Amniotic Sac:** A thin membrane forming a closed sac around the fetus that contains the amniotic fluid.<sup>11</sup>

**Anal Intercourse:** Intercourse that occurs when the penis is put into the anus of a man or woman.<sup>11</sup>

**Anilingus:** oral stimulation of the anus or anal region.<sup>12</sup>

**Anus:** The excretory opening at the end of the digestive system.<sup>11</sup>

**ART (Anti-retroviral therapy):** Anti-retroviral therapy is the course of medications or drugs taken to fight HIV. Other terms that mean the same thing are HAART (Highly Active Anti-retroviral Therapy), 'anti-retroviral drugs', 'HIV treatment', 'medications', 'drug regimen' and 'HIV drugs'.<sup>1</sup>

**Artificial Insemination:** Artificially placing semen into the vagina or uterus for the purpose of inducing pregnancy.<sup>7</sup>

**Asymptomatic:** Having no symptoms.<sup>7</sup>

**Atypia:** Not normal or 'not typical'.<sup>13</sup>

## B

**Bacterial Vaginitis/Vaginosis:** A bacterial infection and inflammation of the vagina.<sup>11</sup>

**Balls:** Slang word for testicles

**Barrier methods:** Barrier methods of contraception prevent pregnancy by physically or chemically blocking the entrance of sperm into the uterine cavity. Some, particularly condoms, help to protect against sexually transmitted infections, including HIV infection. Barrier methods include cervical caps, condoms, diaphragms, female condoms, spermicides and sponges.<sup>1</sup>

**BBT (Basal body temperature) Method:** A method of family planning or body awareness based on the increase in body temperature that occurs shortly after ovulation, associated with secretion of progesterone. After ovulation the body temperature rises and remains high until the next menstruation. The couple are advised to refrain from sexual intercourse between the first day of menstruation and the third consecutive day of elevated temperature if being used as a contraceptive.<sup>1</sup>

**BDSM:** is a complex acronym. The B and D together mean Bondage and Discipline, while the D and S refer to Dominance and Submission. The S and M next to each other mean Sadism and Masochism. An important distinction is that BDSM is not a form of sexual abuse. Although some activities may appear to be violent, they are conducted with the consent of all partners involved. BDSM practitioners exercise the philosophies of SSC (safe, sane and consensual) or RACK (risk-aware consensual kink). They also use safety procedures such as pre-play negotiations and 'safety words' (code words) which when said, call for an immediate stop to any activity.

**Benign:** Not malignant. A condition that is called benign may mean that the cells are different, but they are not cancerous.<sup>13</sup>

**Bi-Curious:** The term used for people who do not identify as homosexual or bisexual. They may have previously identified themselves as heterosexual or homosexual but are showing an interest, sexual attraction, or curiosity in having a relationship with the gender that they haven't been having relationships with. The term implies that the person has little or no sexual experience with the gender they are now interested in; or need to explore their feelings further.

**Billings method:** (sometimes called the cervical mucus or ovulation method) A method of contraception or body awareness which relies on recognizing and interpreting cyclic changes in cervical mucus that occur in response to changing estrogen levels. During a menstrual cycle a woman may experience different sensations at the opening of the vagina and changes in the characteristics of the cervical mucus. Couples practising this technique can have sexual intercourse during both pre- and post-ovulatory phases, as it is possible to identify the infertile phase in both parts of the cycle by monitoring the mucus pattern.<sup>1</sup>

**Biological sex:** Also called chromosomal sex. This can be considered as our "packaging" and is determined by our chromosomes (XX for females, XY for males); our hormones (estrogen and progesterone for females, testosterone for males); and our internal and external genitalia (vulva, clitoris, vagina for females, penis and testicles for males). About 4% of the population can be defined as "intersexuals", born with biological aspects of both sexes to varying degrees.<sup>10</sup>

**Biopsy:** A short operation to remove a small piece of tissue, which is then sent to a lab to see if it contains cancer cells.<sup>13</sup>

**Birth control:** All methods of preventing births, including hormonal, barrier, natural family planning, abstinence and abortion.<sup>1</sup>

**Bisexual:** a person who is emotionally and sexually attracted to both men and women. Bisexuals are not always equally attracted to each gender.<sup>15</sup>

**Bladder:** the organ that holds urine before it leaves the body. Both males and females have one.<sup>15</sup>

**Blastocyst:** A small mass of cells that results after several days of cell division by the fertilized egg.<sup>7</sup>

**Blow Job:** Slang for oral sex or fellatio

**Blue Balls:** ache in the testicles after prolonged sexual arousal.<sup>11</sup>

**Body Awareness:** The self-knowledge gained by monitoring, charting and understanding signs of fertility and infertility based on body changes (level and openness of the cervix, type of cervical mucus produced, temperature fluctuation patterns etc).

**Breast Self-Examination (BSE):** Technique a woman uses to check her own breasts for unusual lumps or changes.<sup>11</sup>

## C

**Caesarean Section:** A surgical incision through the abdominal wall and uterus, performed to deliver a fetus. [From the traditional belief that Julius Caesar (or his eponymous ancestor) was born by this operation.]<sup>12</sup>

**Calendar method:** (sometimes called the rhythm method) A method of contraception or body awareness which uses records of previous menstrual cycles to predict the fertile period. The first fertile day is calculated by subtracting 18 days from the first day of menstruation of the shortest menstrual cycle; the last fertile day is calculated by subtracting 11 days from the longest cycle.<sup>1</sup>

**Carcinoma in Situ:** Cancer cells which are restricted to a very local area. The abnormal cells are evident throughout each of the layers of epithelium but they have not extended into other tissue or surrounding areas.<sup>13</sup>

**Castration:** The removal of the gonads (the testes in men and ovaries in women).<sup>7</sup>

**Cervical Cap:** A soft, deep rubber cup which fits snugly around the base of the cervix to prevent pregnancy during intercourse.<sup>2</sup>

**Cervical Mucous:** Fluid produced by the cervix; it changes in amount and consistency at different times of the menstrual cycle. Around the time of ovulation it is clear and slippery.<sup>11</sup>

**Cervix:** The lower part of the uterus, which is like a door way between the uterus and vagina.<sup>7</sup>

**Chlamydia Trachomatis:** An STI cause by bacteria.

**CVS (Chorionic Villus Sampling):** A technique for early detection of birth defects in the fetus.<sup>7</sup>

**Circumcision:** Surgical removal of the foreskin of the penis.<sup>7</sup>

**Clitoridectomy:** (Sometimes called female genital cutting, circumcision or mutilation.) A traditional practice that involves cutting away parts of the female external genitalia, or other injury to the female genitals, for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. It renders intercourse and childbirth painful and potentially hazardous. It is usually carried out by traditional practitioners under unhygienic conditions. The World Health Organization has classified female genital cutting into four main groupings: **Type I** clitoridectomy involves the removal of the prepuce (clitoral hood), sometimes together with part of or the entire clitoris. This is what is commonly referred to as 'Sunna circumcision'. **Type II** involves excision, where both the clitoris and part or all of the labia minora (inner vaginal lips) are removed. **Type III** (infibulation) is where the clitoris is removed, some or all of the labia minora are amputated and incisions are made on the labia majora (outer lips) to create a raw surface. These raw surfaces are either stitched together and/or kept in contact until they seal as a 'hood of skin' covering the urethra and most of the vaginal opening. A small opening is created to allow the flow of urine and menstrual blood. **Type IV** is an unclassified category that includes other operations on the external genitalia including introcision, piercing or incising the clitoris and/or labia, cauterization, scraping and/or cutting of the vagina, introduction of corrosive substances and herbs into the vagina and similar practices.<sup>1</sup> Practiced in African, Asian, Middle-Eastern cultures, it is illegal in Canada.<sup>11</sup>

**Clitoris:** A small, highly sensitive sexual organ in the female, found in the front of the vaginal entrance.<sup>7</sup> A sensitive, pea-sized organ that is right above the urethra. The clitoris gets a bit bigger and more sensitive when it is touched or when a girl has sexual thoughts or feelings. The clitoris plays an important part in sexual arousal and orgasm.<sup>15</sup>

**Cock Ring:** a ring that is placed around a man's penis, or penis and scrotum, usually at the base, primarily to slow the flow of blood from the erect penile tissue, thus maintaining erection for longer.

**Coitus Interruptus:** The male withdraws his penis just before ejaculating. Also called 'withdrawal' or 'pulling out'.

**Colostrum:** A watery substance that is secreted from the breast at the end of pregnancy and during the first few days after delivery.<sup>7</sup>

**Colposcopy:** Examination of (usually) the cervix through a colposcope, an instrument that is placed at the front of the vagina without touching the body and which can magnify the image of the cervix.<sup>13</sup> A dilute solution of acetic acid is applied to the region which causes abnormal areas to normally turn white, making them easier to identify.<sup>14</sup>

**Columnar Cells:** Column shaped cells that line the cervical canal. They have only one layer and are involved in the glandular activity of the cervix. Where they meet the squamous type cells is called the squamo-columnar junction.<sup>13</sup>

**Coming Out:** This is a term used to describe the process by which an individual reveals that s/he is lesbian, gay, or bisexual. The beginning of this process is acceptance of oneself. Following this, openness may occur with family, friends, co-workers, etc. This is a life-long process for lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

**Condom:** A sheath of thin material (usually latex, but also made of polyurethane, a non-latex product for those who are allergic to latex) that covers either the male's penis (male condom) or the female's vagina and cervix (female condom) to help prevent conception and/or transmission of infection during intercourse.

**Cone Biopsy:** The removal, under general anaesthetic, of a cone shaped section of the cervix so that the tissue can be examined in a laboratory. The same procedure is used as a treatment in some cases.<sup>13</sup>

**Contraceptive effectiveness:** percentage of women avoiding an unintended pregnancy with a specific method of contraception. Of 100 couples using the male condom consistently and correctly over one year, the percentage which experience an accidental pregnancy is 3. So the contraceptive effectiveness is 97% and the failure rate is 3%.

**Corona:** The rim of tissue between the glans and the shaft of the penis.<sup>7</sup>

**Corpora Cavernosa:** Spongy bodies running the length of the top of the penis.<sup>7</sup>

**Corpus Luteum:** the mass of cells of the follicle remaining after ovulation; it secretes progesterone.<sup>7</sup>

**Corpus Spongiosum:** A spongy body running the length of the underside of the penis.<sup>7</sup>

**Counselling:** A process of communication by which a person is helped to identify her or his sexual and reproductive health needs to make the most appropriate decisions about how to meet them. Counselling is characterized by an exchange of information and ideas, discussion and deliberation free of bias, coercion, violence, inaccurate information, and judgment, in a safe, confidential space, which is respectful, accessible and private.<sup>1</sup>

**Cowper's gland:** Glands that secrete substances into the male's urethra.<sup>7</sup>

**Cross-dresser:** Someone who on occasion wears what is currently considered the clothes of the other sex to relieve gender discomfort. Cross-dressers want to appear as convincing as possible as their other selves. A large subset of this group are men who enjoy dressing as women, and have otherwise ordinary marriages with wives who are not transgendered. Many say this term is preferable to transvestite, which means the same thing.<sup>10</sup>

**Cunnilingus:** the act or practice of orally stimulating the female genitals.<sup>12</sup>

**Cyst:** A sac or cavity of abnormal character containing fluid, which may occur in the ovaries.<sup>11</sup>

**Cystitis:** An inflammation of the urinary bladder, often caused by infection and usually accompanied by frequent and painful urination.<sup>11</sup>

## D

**Dental Dam:** see oral dam

**Depo Provera:** A long-acting, synthetic progesterone injection used as a birth control method.

**Diaphragm:** A dome-shaped rubber cup with a flexible rim which covers the cervix during intercourse to reduce the chance of pregnancy.<sup>2</sup>

**Digital Sex:** The insertion of a digit (finger or toe) into an orifice (usually vagina or anus) of another.

**Dildo:** An object having the shape and often the appearance of an erect penis, used in sexual stimulation.<sup>12</sup>

**Discharge:** the term for any substance that is released from anywhere on the body.<sup>15</sup>

**Docking:** a slang term for when an uncircumcised male places his foreskin over the end of a circumcised male's penis.

**Douching:** Rinsing the vagina with water, water and vinegar, or a medicated solution. Health care providers do not recommend this practice as it often causes irritation.<sup>11</sup>

**Dual protection:** Dual protection is protection against both unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. For sexually active individuals, a latex or polyurethane condom is the only device that is effective for dual protection. Dual protection can also be achieved by using condoms with another method of contraception, referred to as dual method or double protection.<sup>1</sup>

**Dysmenorrhea:** painful menstruation.<sup>7</sup>

**Dyspareunia:** Painful intercourse.<sup>7</sup>

**Dysplasia:** Abnormal development or growth patterns of cells.<sup>13</sup>

## E

**Ectopic Pregnancy:** a pregnancy in which the fertilized egg implants somewhere other than the uterus.<sup>7</sup>

**Ejaculation:** The expulsion of semen from the penis.<sup>7</sup>

**Embryo:** The fertilized egg up to eight weeks old.<sup>7</sup>

**Emergency contraception (EC or ECP):** A method of contraception used to avoid pregnancy after an act of sexual intercourse that was unprotected due to lack of use or failure of a contraceptive. Two types are available: Hormonal treatment with high-dose estrogen, a low-dose estrogen-progestagen combination or progestagen alone. Emergency Contraception Pills (ECPs) should be taken as soon as possible after unprotected sex. The insertion of an intra-uterine device, which has to be carried out within five days of unprotected sex, may also be used as emergency contraception. ECPs are thought to prevent ovulation, fertilization, and/or implantation. ECPs are not effective once the process of implantation has begun, and will not cause abortion.<sup>1</sup>

**Endometriosis:** A condition in which the endometrium grows abnormally outside the uterus; the symptom is usually painful periods with excessive bleeding.<sup>7</sup>

**Endometrium:** The inner lining of the uterus, which is partially shed during menstruation.<sup>11</sup>

**Enema:** the injection of fluid into the rectum to cause a bowel movement. Also used for removing fecal material from the rectum. Also called 'anal douching'.

**Epididymis:** Coiled tubes on the edge of the testes, where sperm mature.<sup>7</sup>

**Epithelium:** Tissue lining the outer layer of a body (skin) or lining a cavity (e.g. vagina or mouth).<sup>13</sup>

**Erection:** An enlargement and hardening of the penis [due to the tissue being filled with blood] which occurs during sexual arousal.<sup>7</sup>

**Estrogen:** Hormones produced by the ovaries, responsible for female sexual maturation, regulation of the menstrual cycle, and maintenance of the uterine lining.<sup>11</sup> Estrogen is one of two female sex hormones. The other is progesterone.

## F

**Fallopian Tube:** The tube extending from the uterus to the ovary; also called the oviduct<sup>7</sup>. They are the tubes the ova travel down to get from a female's ovaries to her uterus.<sup>15</sup>

**Family planning:** The conscious effort of couples or individuals to plan for and attain their desired number of children and to regulate the spacing and timing of their births. Family planning is achieved through contraception and through the treatment of involuntary infertility.<sup>1</sup>

**Fecundity:** The physiological capacity of a woman or man to produce or beget a live child. See also fertility, which is actual reproductive performance.<sup>1</sup>

**Fellatio:** oral stimulation of the penis, esp. to orgasm.<sup>12</sup>

**Female Condom:** A soft, loose-fitting polyurethane sheath which is placed inside the vagina to reduce the risk of STI transmission and unplanned pregnancy.

**Female Genital Cutting/Mutilation (FGM)** (see clitoridectomy)

**Fertility:** The actual reproductive performance of an individual, group or society.<sup>1</sup>

**Fertility awareness:** A method of contraception in which couples avoid sexual intercourse during the fertile phase of the menstrual cycle. This method depends on the ability of the couple to identify the fertile phase and the couple's motivation and discipline to practise abstinence when required.<sup>1</sup>

**Fertilization:** Union of the female egg and male sperm; usually occurs in one of the fallopian tubes.<sup>11</sup>

**Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD):** *formerly called Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS).* A condition characterized by a range of various mental and/or physical birth defects and, in severe cases, alcohol withdrawal symptoms in the infant. Milder symptoms such as learning disabilities are caused by alcohol consumption by a pregnant woman. More severe cases are caused by chronic and excessive alcohol consumption by a pregnant woman.

**Fetus:** A fertilized egg in the womb that has grown beyond eight weeks.<sup>1</sup>

**Fibroid:** Benign tumour of muscular and fibrous tissues, which may develop in the wall of the uterus.<sup>11</sup>

**Fisting:** Slang term - To insert the fist into the rectum or vagina of another as a means of sexual stimulation.<sup>12</sup>

**Fistula:** A rupture that results in an abnormal passage linking two areas such as the vagina, rectum, bladder, and abdominal cavity. Obstetric fistulae are caused by difficult labour, unsafe abortion, and traditional practices such as female genital cutting.<sup>1</sup>

**Flaccid:** limp. Often used when referring to a penis.

**Foreskin:** A layer of skin covering the glans or tip of the penis in an uncircumcised male; also called the prepuce.<sup>7</sup>

**Frenulum:** A highly sensitive area of skin on the underside of the penis next to the glans.<sup>7</sup>

## G

**Gamete:** Sperm or egg cell.

**Gay:** A male who is emotionally and sexually attracted to people of the same sex. "Gay" can also refer to or include lesbians.<sup>15</sup>

**Gender:** Gender refers to the economic, social and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female in a particular point in time.

**Gender Identity:** The psychological sense of one's own maleness or femaleness.<sup>7</sup> Your inner feeling that you are male, female, both, neither or somewhere in between.<sup>15</sup> This is the individual's innermost concept of self as "male or "female"; what we perceive and call ourselves. Though the formation of gender identity is a complex process, it is thought that individuals develop this generally between the ages of 18 months and 3 years, though many current theories posit that this begins to be formed before birth. Most people develop a (core) gender identity aligning with their biological sex. For some, however, their gender identity is different from their biological sex.

**Gender Roles:** The behaviours that a society or culture assigns to people on the basis of being male or female.

**Genital:** of or relating to the external reproductive organs.

**Genitals:** The outer sex organs of males and females.<sup>15</sup>

**Genital Warts:** Small benign (non-cancerous) growths located in the genital and/or anal regions, caused by the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV).

**Gland:** Any organ that makes a substance used in the body. Many glands make hormones.<sup>15</sup>

**Glans:** The head of the penis; source of sexual pleasure.<sup>11</sup>

**GLBT:** An abbreviation for Gay/Lesbian /Bisexual/ Transgendered. The letters sometimes appear in varied order, such as LGBT.

**Going Down:** A slang term for oral sex.

**Gonads:** A pair of glands (ovaries or testes) which manufacture sex hormones (estrogen, progesterone and testosterone) and produce germ cells (eggs or sperm).<sup>7</sup>

**G-Spot:** Is thought to be a sensitive area felt through the upper or front wall of the vagina. The G Spot does not lie on the vaginal wall itself, but can be felt through it. It is usually felt about half way between the back of the pubic bone and the cervix and feels like a small lump that swells as it is stimulated.<sup>11</sup> Some

women report not feeling anything around this area and some researchers are unsure if the spot exists.

**Gynaecological Exam:** Examination by a health care provider of a woman's external genitals, as well as the vagina and cervix.<sup>11</sup>

## H

**Haemorrhoids:** A mass of dilated veins in swollen tissue at the margin of the anus.<sup>11</sup>

**Hand Job:** A slang term for masturbation performed by a second person.

**Healthy Sexuality:** Healthy sexuality is a positive and life affirming part of being human. It includes knowledge of self, opportunities for healthy sexual development and sexual experience, the capacity for intimacy, an ability to share relationships, and comfort with different expressions of sexuality including love, joy, caring, sensuality, or celibacy. Our attitudes about sexuality, our ability to understand and accept our own sexuality, to make healthy choices and respect the choices of others, are essential aspects of who we are and how we interact with our world.<sup>1</sup>

**Hernia:** Displacement and protrusion of part of an organ through the wall of the cavity containing it (e.g. abdomen).<sup>11</sup>

**Herpes:** A virus with outbreaks of blisters on the skin, mucous membranes, etc. Most commonly found on the mouth (cold sores) or genitals (Genital Herpes).

**Heterosexism:** The attitude that heterosexuality is the only valid sexual orientation.<sup>6</sup>

**Heterosexual:** A person whose sexual orientation is toward members of the opposite sex.

**Hickey:** slang term for a mild hematoma or bruise cause by sucking or biting the skin.

**Homophobia:** A strong, irrational fear of gay men and lesbians; negative attitudes and reactions to gay men and lesbian women.<sup>7</sup>

**Homosexual:** A person whose sexual orientation is toward members of the same gender.<sup>7</sup>

**Hormones:** Proteins produced by your body and move around in your blood. Hormones control how you grow, how you burn up the food you eat, and how you reproduce.<sup>13</sup>

**Hormonal contraception:** Systemic methods of contraception based on a progestagen combined with an oestrogen, or a progestagen alone. The methods of delivery include pills (oral contraceptives), injectables and implants. All are reversible. Pills (two types): Combined oral contraceptives (COCs) contain synthetic estrogen and progestagen. They can be monophasic, i.e. a fixed concentration of hormones throughout 21 days of the 28-day menstrual cycle, or multiphasic, with two (biphasic) or three (triphasic) variations of concentration throughout the cycle. Progestagen-only pills (POPs) contain only a progestagen, in a smaller dose than in COCs. Injectables are longer lasting than oral contraceptives. The first were composed of progestagen only, the most common being Depo Provera ®, which lasts three months.<sup>1</sup>

**HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus):** A retrovirus that causes AIDS. Two types of HIV are currently known: HIV-1 and HIV-2. Worldwide, the predominant virus is HIV-1. Both types of the virus may be transmitted by sexual contact, through blood, and from mother to child (either before or during birth, or through breast feeding), and they appear to cause clinically indistinguishable AIDS. However, HIV-2 is less easily transmitted, and the period between initial infection and illness is longer in the case of HIV-2. While some individuals experience mild HIV-related disease soon after initial infection, many remain well for years. As the virus gradually damages their immune system, they begin to develop opportunistic infections of increasing severity, including diarrhea, fever, tuberculosis, pneumonia, lymphoma and Kaposi's sarcoma.<sup>1</sup>

**Hormones:** Chemical substances secreted by the endocrine glands into the blood stream.<sup>7</sup>

**HCG (Human Chorionic Gonadotrophin):** A hormone secreted by the placenta; it is the substance detected in pregnancy tests.<sup>7</sup>

**Human Papilloma Virus (HPV):** The virus that causes genital warts and cervical cancers.

**Hymen:** A thin membrane that partially covers the entrance of the vagina. Its rupture or absence is not necessarily evidence of sexual activity, as it can rupture from physical activity (e.g. gymnastics).<sup>11</sup>

**Hysterectomy:** Surgical removal of the uterus.<sup>7</sup>



**Immune deficiency:** A breakdown or inability of certain parts of the immune system to function, thus making a person susceptible to certain diseases that they would not ordinarily develop.<sup>1</sup>

**Immune system:** The body's complicated natural defence against disruption caused by invading foreign agents (e.g. microbes, viruses).<sup>1</sup>

**Implants:** regarding contraception, they are a set of silicon capsules containing synthetic progesterone that are inserted in the upper arm as a means of birth control. They can be worn for a few years.

**Impotence:** Inability of a man to have or sustain an erection.<sup>1</sup>

**In The Closet:** Phrase used to describe the hypothetical place we say someone is before they come out (see 'coming out'). Reasons for this could be fear, safety, denial, etc.<sup>11</sup>

**Infertility:** The inability of couples of reproductive age, who are having sexual intercourse without contraception, to establish pregnancy within one year. This can be due to disorders of either the male or the female reproductive systems. The major causes in men are abnormal spermatogenesis, disorders of the secretory function of accessory organs, obstruction of the genital tract and abnormal sperm function; and in women, ovulatory disorders, tubal occlusion, peritoneal factors such as pelvic inflammatory disease or endometriosis, cervical factors and failure of implantation. Reproductive tract infections are an important cause of infertility in women but can be prevented.<sup>1</sup>

**Information, education and communication:** A program to ensure that clients or potential clients of sexual and reproductive health services are given the means to make informed decisions about childbearing and about their sexual and reproductive health. Information involves generating and disseminating general and technical information, facts and issues, in order to create awareness and knowledge. Education whether formal or non-formal, is a process of facilitated learning to enable those learning to make rational and informed decisions.

Communication is a planned process aimed at motivating people to adopt new attitudes or behaviour.<sup>1</sup>

**Informed choice:** Voluntary decision by a client to use, or not to use, a contraceptive method (or accept a sexual and reproductive health service) after receiving adequate information regarding options, risks, advantages and disadvantages of all available methods. The exercise of both the right of access to family planning and the right to make informed and responsible decisions about childbearing requires full knowledge of the benefits, purposes and practice of family planning, access to services and the personal, familial and societal consequences of individual reproductive behaviour.<sup>1</sup>

**Intercourse:** usually refers to the insertion of the penis into the mouth (oral intercourse/sex), the anus (anal intercourse/sex) or the vagina (vaginal intercourse/sex)

**Internalized Homophobia:** The experience of shame, aversion, or self-hatred in reaction to one's own feelings of attraction for a person of the same sex (produced from living in a homophobic society).<sup>11</sup>

**Intersexed/Intersexual:** Individuals who may have external genitalia which do not closely resemble typical male or female genitalia; the appearance of both male and female genitalia; the genitalia of one sex and the secondary sex characteristics of the other sex; or a chromosomal make-up that is neither XX or XY, or a combination of both.<sup>5</sup>

**Inverted Nipple:** A nipple that points in and not out.<sup>15</sup>

**IUD (Intra-Uterine Device):** A long-term, reversible method of contraception, involving the insertion into the uterus of a small flexible device of metal/plastic/hormonal materials.<sup>1</sup>

**IVF (In Vitro Fertilization):** A procedure in which an egg is fertilized by sperm in a laboratory dish.<sup>7</sup>

## K

**Kegel Exercises:** An exercise in which a woman tightens the muscles surrounding the vagina; also called PC (pubococcygeal) muscle exercises.

# L

**Labia:** folds of skin that surround the vaginal and urethral openings.<sup>11</sup>

**Labia Majora:** Rounded outer of fatty tissue lying on either side of the vaginal entrance.<sup>7</sup>

**Labia Minora:** thin folds of skin lying on either side of the vaginal entrance.<sup>7</sup>

**LAM (Lactational Amenorrhoea Method):** A post-partum method of preventing pregnancy in the short term. It is based on evidence that for six months after birth a very high degree of protection naturally occurs against pregnancy, if the mother is fully or nearly fully breast-feeding.<sup>1</sup>

**Lea Contraceptive:** A barrier contraceptive method that resembles both a cervical cap and a diaphragm, but has a one-way valve.

**Lesbian:** A female who is emotionally and sexually attracted to other women.<sup>15</sup>

**LGBTQQI:** Acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Two-Spirited, Queer, Questioning, Intersex. May be used with all or some of the letters.

**Lips:** Slang term for labia.

**Lochia:** a discharge from the uterus and vagina that occurs during the first few weeks after childbirth.<sup>7</sup>

**Low dose pill:** A combined contraceptive pill that contains 35 micrograms of estrogen or less.<sup>1</sup>

**Lubricant:** referred to as 'lube' for short. A substance capable of reducing friction by making surfaces smooth or slippery.<sup>12</sup> Normally lubricants are made of oil or grease. It is safer and healthy to use a water based lubricant for sexual purposes.

# M

**Male Condom:** A thin latex, polyurethane or natural membrane sheath placed over the glans and shaft of the penis to prevent unintended pregnancies. Latex and polyurethane condoms also reduce the risk of STI transmission.<sup>2</sup>

**MVA (Manual Vacuum Aspiration):** A procedure of uterine evacuation using a small flexible plastic tube in association with a hand-held gynaecological syringe (manual vacuum evacuation).<sup>1</sup>

**Masturbation:** Stimulation of one's own genitals with the hand or with some object, such as a pillow or vibrator.<sup>7</sup> Touching or rubbing your genitals to make you feel good.<sup>15</sup>

**Menarche:** First menstruation.<sup>7</sup>

**Menopause:** The period in a woman's life when she stops menstruating.<sup>11</sup>

**Menstrual Cycle:** Repeated changes that prepare the female reproductive system for childbearing; cycle averages 28 days and begins with the development of the ovum, continues through menstruation, and ends when the uterine lining degenerates. It is measured from the beginning of menstruation.<sup>11</sup>

**Menstruation:** The process of discharging blood and other materials from the lining of the uterus in sexually mature, non-pregnant women, at intervals of about one lunar month, until the menopause.<sup>11</sup>

**Metastasis:** The spread of cancer from one part of the body to another through the bloodstream or lymph system.<sup>13</sup>

**Microbicide:** The word 'microbicides' refers to a range of different products that share one common characteristic: the ability to prevent the sexual transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) when applied topically. A microbicide could be produced in many forms, including gels, creams, suppositories, films, or as a sponge or ring that releases the active ingredient over time. Some of the microbicides being investigated prevent pregnancy and some do not.<sup>1</sup>

**MSM:** Men who have sex with men.

**Miscarriage:** The termination of a pregnancy before the fetus is viable, as a result of natural causes (not medical intervention).<sup>7</sup>

**Mons Pubis:** The soft, fatty tissue over the female pubic bone that becomes covered with hair after puberty; also called the *mons veneris*.<sup>11</sup>

**Multigravida:** A woman who has been pregnant several times.<sup>8</sup>

**Multiparous:** A term used to refer to a woman who has had more than one baby.<sup>7</sup>

## N

**Natural Family Planning:** The conscious effort of couples or individuals to plan for and attain their desired number of children and to regulate the spacing and timing of their births free of the use of hormonal or barrier methods of contraception.

**New Reproductive and Genetic Technologies (NRGTs):** The wide range of technologies available to assist in human reproduction (e.g. IVF or In Vitro Fertilization; artificial insemination, etc.)<sup>11</sup>

**Nocturnal Emission:** An involuntary discharge of semen during sleep. Also called a 'wet dream'.

**Nulligravida:** A woman who has never been pregnant.<sup>1</sup>

**Nulliparous:** A term to refer to a woman who has never given birth to a viable infant.<sup>1</sup>

## O

**Oophorectomy:** Surgical removal of the ovaries.<sup>7</sup>

**Opportunistic illnesses (OIs):** People with HIV infection have a high risk for a wide range of illnesses due to HIV risk factors and HIV itself. Among the most severe illnesses are the 26 AIDS-defining opportunistic illnesses that occur as a result of HIV disease progression, and generally occur only after substantial damage to the immune system.<sup>1</sup>

**Oral Contraceptives (OCs or OCP):** Pills containing synthetic estrogen and progesterone that are taken each day to prevent pregnancy. Also known as the birth control pill, or just 'the pill'.

**Oral Dam:** a rectangular piece of latex used sexually as a barrier when performing oral-vaginal or oral-anal sex. Sold in a variety of flavours.

**Oral Sex:** Sexual activity in which the genitals of one partner are stimulated by the mouth of the other.<sup>11</sup>

**Orgasm:** The third stage of sexual response; an intense sensation that occurs at the peak of sexual arousal and is followed by release of sexual tensions.<sup>7</sup> Males and females don't usually reach orgasm together during intercourse. Males usually ejaculate during orgasm. Some females also release a fluid during orgasm. This is known as 'female ejaculation' or 'squirting' (slang). Also called the climax or climactic phase.

**Orgasmic platform:** A tightening of the entrance to the vagina caused by contractions of the bulbospongiosus muscle (which covers the vestibular bulbs) that occur during the plateau stage of sexual response.<sup>7</sup>

**Out:** When someone who is gay, lesbian, or bisexual has publicly revealed their sexual orientation. There can be different 'degrees' of 'outness'. A person can be out to their friends but not family; out to their family but not out at work, etc. Because most people do not 'out' themselves to everyone all at once, it is wrong to out somebody to others even if they have outed themselves to you.

**Out Of The Closet:** Phrase used to describe the hypothetical place that someone who is gay, lesbian or bisexual is leaving (see 'coming out') when they begin to reveal their sexual orientation to others.

**Ova:** plural of ovum.

**Ovaries:** Two organs in the female that produce eggs and sex hormones (estrogen and progesterone).<sup>7</sup>

**Ovulation:** Release of an egg from the ovaries; the second phase of the menstrual cycle.<sup>7</sup>

**Ovum:** Egg cell produced by the female in the ovaries.

**Oxytocin:** A hormone secreted by the pituitary which stimulates the contractions of the uterus during childbirth; also involved in breastfeeding.<sup>7</sup>

## P

**Pap Smear/Test:** A routine test for cervical cancer in which cells are scraped from the cervix and examined.<sup>11</sup>

**Partner or ‘Significant Other’:** Primary domestic partner or spousal relationship(s). May be referred to as “girlfriend/boyfriend”, “lover”, “roommate”, “life partner”, “wife/husband”, “spouse”, or other terms.<sup>11</sup>

**Patch:** is a transdermal patch applied to the skin that releases synthetic estrogen and progestin hormones to prevent pregnancy. They are thought to have the same effectiveness as the combined oral contraceptive pill. Sold in Canada as the Evra contraceptive patch.

**Penis:** The male external sexual organ, which functions both in sexual activity and in urination.<sup>7</sup>

**Phimosis:** a condition in which the foreskin of the penis is so tight that it cannot be pulled back.<sup>7</sup>

**PID (Pelvic Inflammatory Disease):** Inflammation of the pelvic organs, especially the uterus and fallopian tubes. PID is a major complication of women with chlamydial and gonococcal infections, and is associated with long-term morbidity such as chronic abdominal pain, menstrual disturbances, tubal pregnancy and infertility.<sup>1</sup>

**Pituitary Gland:** A small ductless gland at the base of the brain secreting various hormones essential for growth and other bodily functions.<sup>11</sup>

**Placenta:** A temporary organ formed on the wall of the uterus through which the fetus receives oxygen and nutrients from its mother and expels waste products. It also produces hormones needed to maintain pregnancy.<sup>11</sup>

**Plateau:** The second stage of sexual response, just before orgasm.<sup>7</sup>

**Post-partum:** Occurring in the period immediately after childbirth. Often used to describe temporary conditions which start and occur as a result of childbirth.<sup>1</sup>

**Pre-cum:** see pre-ejaculate.

**Pre-ejaculate:** a clear, viscous fluid secreted by the Cowper’s glands into the urethra at the base of the penis; pre-ejaculate may start to flow from the penis as soon as erection is achieved, although the quantity produced can vary from virtually none to a great deal. A slang term is pre-cum.

**Premature ejaculation:** ejaculation during the early stages of sexual excitement or soon after the insertion of the penis. Orgasm is reached earlier than the male or his partner wishes.

**Priapism:** A rare condition in which erections are long-lasting and painful.<sup>7</sup>

**Pro-choice:** To be pro-choice is to believe that a woman has the right to decide for herself when and whether to have a child. Pro-choice does not mean pro-abortion (the assumption being that pro-abortion means preferring that option to others). The pro-choice position does not advocate abortion over parenting or adoption. Pro-choice is a philosophy that believes each individual has the right to make decisions about their sexual and reproductive life. Self-determination is key, and regardless of a person's decision (to use contraception, practice safer sex, abstain, become sexually active, utilize fertility interventions), each person has the right to make choices for their lives and circumstances.

In addition, the philosophy of choice means supporting comprehensive sexuality education and access to all reproductive options that are legal and safe. It means defending the right of individuals to make decisions for themselves based on their own beliefs, health, and situation, and without external interference, coercion, violence, inaccurate information, or judgment.

**Progesterone:** One of the two female sex hormones produced by the ovaries. The other is estrogen.<sup>15</sup>

**Prophylactic:** 1) something used for the prevention of something else, 2) a condom

**Prostate:** The gland in the male, located below the bladder of males, which secretes a fluid that forms most of the semen.<sup>7</sup> Stimulation during anal sex results in sexual pleasure.<sup>11</sup>

**Puberty:** Stage of life in which the reproductive system matures, and secondary sex characteristics appear.<sup>11</sup> The period of change and growth when boys and girls start to become adults. It can take several years.<sup>15</sup>

**Pubic Area:** The area of the male or female body where the outer sex organs are found.<sup>15</sup>

**Pubic Lice:** Parasitic insects, *Pediculus humanus*, which infest human hair and skin in the genital region.<sup>11</sup>

## Q

**Queer:** Traditionally a pejorative term, "queer" has been appropriated by some Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/ Transgendered (GLBT) people to describe themselves. Some people value the term for its defiance and because it can be inclusive of the entire GLBT community. Nevertheless, it is not universally accepted even within the GLBT community.<sup>6</sup>

**Questioning:** The term commonly used when someone is questioning their gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

## R

**Refractory period:** The period following orgasm during which the male cannot be sexually aroused.<sup>1</sup>

**Remission:** When the signs and symptoms of cancer disappear, and no more active cancer cells can be found.<sup>13</sup>

**Reproduction:** When sexual intercourse results in a pregnancy and a new baby.<sup>15</sup>

**Reproductive health:** Reproductive health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes. Reproductive health therefore implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safer sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so. Implicit in this last condition are the right of men and women to be informed and to have access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of family planning of their choice, as well as other methods of their choice for regulation of fertility which are not against the law, and the right of access to appropriate health care services that will enable women to go safely through pregnancy and childbirth and provide couples with the best chance of having a healthy infant. In line with the above definition of reproductive health, reproductive health care is defined as the constellation of methods, techniques and services that contribute to reproductive health and well-being by preventing and solving reproductive health problems. It also includes sexual health, the purpose of which is the enhancement of life and personal relations and not merely counselling and care related to reproduction and sexually transmitted diseases.<sup>1</sup>

**Reproductive rights:** Reproductive rights embrace certain human rights that are already recognized in national laws, international human rights documents and other consensus documents. These rights rest on the recognition of the

basic right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so, and the right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health. It also includes their right to make decisions concerning reproduction free of discrimination, coercion and violence, as expressed in human rights documents. In the exercise of this right, they should take into account the needs of their living and future children and their responsibilities towards the community. The promotion of the responsible exercise of these rights for all people should be the fundamental basis for government- and community-supported policies and programs in the area of reproductive health, including family planning.<sup>1</sup>

**(RTI) Reproductive Tract Infection:** A general term for infections affecting the reproductive organs. RTIs include three types of infection: sexually transmitted infections (STIs), infections which are caused by overgrowth of organisms naturally present in the genital tract such as bacterial vaginosis and vulvovaginal candidiasis, and infections that are a consequence of medical treatment.<sup>1</sup>

**Resolution:** The fourth stage of sexual response, in which the body returns to an unaroused state.<sup>7</sup>

**Rimming:** to perform anilingus on.<sup>12</sup> Oral-anal contact; licking or inserting the tongue into the rectum.

**Rhythm Method:** Birth control in which sexual activity is avoided during times when fertilization is most likely (e.g. during ovulation).<sup>11</sup>

## S

**Safer sex:** Any sexual practice that aims to reduce the risk of unintended pregnancy and of passing HIV (and other sexually transmitted infections) from one person to another. Examples are non-penetrative sex or sex with a latex or polyurethane barrier. During unsafe sex, fluids that can transmit HIV and other STIs (semen, vaginal fluid or blood) may be introduced into the body of the sex partner.<sup>1</sup>

**Same-Sex Relationship:** an intimate relationship between two people of the same sex.

**Scabies:** A contagious disease with severe itching and red papules, caused by a mite.<sup>11</sup>

**Scrotum:** The pouch of skin that contains the testes in the male.<sup>7</sup>

**Semen:** The fluid that is ejaculated from the penis during orgasm; it contains sperm.<sup>7</sup>

**Seminal Vesicles:** Sac-like structures that lie above the prostate which produces about 70% of the seminal fluid.<sup>7</sup>

**Sex education:** Basic education about reproductive processes, puberty, sexual behaviour, etc. Sex education may include other information, for example about contraception, protection from sexually transmitted infections and parenthood.<sup>1</sup>

**Sexual Activity:** The wide range of sexual and intimate behaviours.<sup>11</sup>

**Sexual Assault:** if someone forces any form of sexual activity on someone else (kissing, fondling, touching, sexual intercourse, etc.) without that person's consent.

**Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services:** Defined as the constellation of methods, techniques and services that contribute to reproductive health and well-being through preventing and solving reproductive health problems. It also includes sexual health.<sup>1</sup>

**Sexual Health:** The integration of the somatic, emotional, intellectual and social aspects of sexual being, in ways that are positively enriching and that enhance personality, communication and love ... and thus the notion of sexual health implies a positive approach to human sexuality and the purpose of sexual health care should be the enhancement of life and personal relations and not merely counselling and care related to reproduction and sexually transmitted diseases.<sup>1</sup>

**Sexual Health Education:** Enables individuals, couples, families, and communities to develop the knowledge, motivation, skills and critical awareness needed to enhance sexual health and to avoid sexual problems.<sup>11</sup>

**Sexual Harassment:** unwelcome, uninvited remarks, gestures, or actions of a sexual nature that make a person feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

**Sexual Intercourse:** Penetrative sexual behaviours, including oral sex, anal sex, use of toys and penile-vaginal sex.<sup>1</sup>

**Sexual Orientation:** Sexual orientation refers to the primary sexual attraction to the same, opposite or both sexes<sup>1</sup>. Your feelings of sexual attraction toward others. Your sexual orientation could be gay or lesbian (attraction to the same

gender); straight (attraction to the opposite gender); or bisexual (attraction to both genders).<sup>15</sup>

**Sexual Rights:** The right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to one's sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. Equal relationships between women and men in matters of sexual relations and reproduction, including full respect for the integrity of the person, require mutual respect, consent and shared responsibility for sexual behaviour and its consequences.

**Sexuality:** The sexual knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviours of individuals. Its dimensions include the anatomy, physiology, and biochemistry of the sexual response system; identity, orientation, roles and personality; and thoughts, feelings, and relationships. The expression of sexuality is influenced by ethical, spiritual, cultural, and moral concerns.<sup>1</sup>

**Sexuality education:** Education about all matters relating to sexuality and its expression. Sexuality education covers the same topics as sex education but also includes issues such as relationships, attitudes towards sexuality, sexual roles, gender relations and the social pressures to be sexually active, and it provides information about sexual and reproductive health services. It may also include training in communication and decision-making skills.<sup>1</sup>

**STIs (Sexually Transmitted Infections):** (sometimes called sexually transmitted diseases or STDs) Disease resulting from bacteria or viruses and often acquired through sexual contact. Some STIs can also be acquired in other ways (i.e. blood transfusions, intravenous drug use, and mother-to-child transmission). The term 'STI' is slowly replacing 'STD' (sexually transmitted disease) in order to include HIV infection. Most STIs, like HIV, are not acquired from partners who are obviously ill, but rather through exposure to infections that are asymptomatic or unnoticeable at the time of transmission.<sup>1</sup>

**Smegma:** The white substance composed of glandular secretions, dead cells, dirt particles, and bacteria that accumulate under the foreskin of the penis.<sup>11</sup>

**Sodomy:** Sexual intercourse that is not the union of the genital organs of a man and a woman. The term is most frequently applied to anal intercourse between two men or to sexual relations between people and animals.<sup>12</sup>

**Sperm:** The mature reproductive cell, capable of fertilizing an egg.<sup>7</sup>

**Spermicides:** Chemical contraceptives that inactivate and kill sperm and to a certain extent form a barrier over the cervix. Spermicides are more effective when used in conjunction with other contraceptives such as condoms or

diaphragms. They offer protection against some sexually transmitted infections, but the possibility of a protective effect against HIV has not been proved clinically. Spermicides are available in various forms: creams and jellies, foams, suppositories, foaming tablets and plastic films.<sup>1</sup>

**Squamous Cells:** Thin and flat cells, shaped like soft fish scales. Layers of them make up skin-like epithelium. In the cervix they form the skin on the outer surface of the cervix (ectocervix). They meet up with columnar cells in the squamo-columnar junction. 80 to 85% of cancers of the cervix are associated with squamous cells. Abnormalities associated with squamous cells are the most likely abnormalities to be picked up by Pap smears.<sup>13</sup>

**SRH:** The acronym for Sexual and Reproductive Health.

**Sterilization:** The sterilization procedure blocks either the sperm ducts (the vas deferens) or the oviducts (fallopian or uterine tubes) to prevent the sperm and ovum from uniting.<sup>1</sup>

**Straight:** A person who is emotionally and sexually attracted to people of the opposite gender<sup>15</sup>. Also known as Heterosexual.

**Sympto-thermal method (STM):** This combines various natural family planning techniques, especially cervical mucus changes, the calendar method and BBT. The use of multiple techniques is more accurate than a single technique for identifying the fertile phase of the menstrual cycle, while the days of required abstinence can be kept to a minimum. All these methods of detecting the fertile phase are also helpful for couples who wish to use barrier methods on those days estimated to be fertile, and for couples who are trying to improve their chances of conception.<sup>1</sup>

## T

**Tampon:** A small roll of absorbent material worn inside the vagina to catch and absorb menstrual flow.<sup>15</sup>

**Testicles (Testes):** The pair of glands in the scrotum that manufacture sperm and sex hormone.<sup>7</sup>

**Testicular Self-Examination (TSE):** Technique a man uses to examine his own testicles for lumps or other abnormalities.<sup>11</sup>

**Testosterone:** Male sex hormone that is made by the testicles. It causes the changes in boys during puberty.<sup>15</sup>

**Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS):** A bacterial infection associated with the use of tampons. It is rare but sometimes fatal.<sup>11</sup>

**Transgender (TG):** is an umbrella term that includes people who do not fit traditional male or female roles and expectations, and/or who identify with a gender other than the one assigned at birth.<sup>5</sup> People who feel that their gender identity conflicts with their sexual anatomy – that is a girl who feels like she ought to have been a boy, or a boy who feels like he ought to have been a girl. People who are transgender often choose to live the role of the opposite gender.<sup>15</sup>

**Transphobia:** The fear and dislike of transgender people.<sup>5</sup>

**Transsexual (TS):** Anyone who wants to have, or who has had, a sex-change operation.<sup>10</sup> Someone who has had one may be referred to as a former transsexual. Transsexuals want to appear convincing as their new selves. Transsexuals are further categorized as MTF (male to female) or FTM (female to male). It is respectful to refer to their new gender as the main gender, and to their gender as the main descriptive, not “transsexual” (ie. A MTF transsexual is a transsexual female, not a male transsexual.) Transsexuals may be heterosexual, bisexual, or homosexual in their sexual orientations.

**Transvestite:** a synonym for ‘cross-dresser’, which is the preferred term. See “Cross-dresser”.<sup>10</sup>

**Tubal Ligation:** A permanent operation a woman may have to prevent pregnancy. The fallopian tubes, which carry the eggs from the ovary to the womb (uterus) are burned, clipped, cut or tied (the tubes are sealed). The tubes are therefore closed so the sperm and egg do not meet.<sup>4</sup>

**Two-Spirited:** An aboriginal person within whom there is a balance between the male and female. They were seen as extraordinary individuals and were given respect and honour, traditionally.<sup>9</sup>

## U

**Umbilical Chord:** The tube that connects the fetus to the placenta.<sup>7</sup>

**Unsafe abortion:** An induced abortion conducted either by persons lacking the necessary skills or in an environment lacking the minimal medical and hygienic standards, or both.<sup>1</sup>

**Urethra:** The tube through which urine leaves the bladder and passes out of the body; in males, also the tube through which semen is discharged.<sup>7</sup>

**Uterus:** The pear shaped organ in the female. It has muscular walls, where the fertilized egg is embedded and in which the fetus develops and is nourished.

## V

**Vacuum aspiration:** A method of pregnancy termination in which the contents of the uterus are removed by suction, using either a hand-held syringe or electric pump.<sup>1</sup>

**Vagina:** The tube-shaped organ in the female into which a penis, tampon, menstrual cup, finger or toy may be placed. It is also the passage way for a baby during birth.<sup>7</sup>

**Vaginal Contraceptive Film (VCF):** A contraceptive that requires the insertion of nonoxynol 9 in a thin, soluble sheet into the vagina.<sup>11</sup>

**Vaginal Intercourse:** Intercourse that occurs when the penis is put into the vagina.<sup>11</sup>

**Vaginal Ring:** An intravaginal contraceptive ring that releases low doses of progestins for 3 wks, followed by a ring-free wk.

**Vaginal Secretions:** Fluid secreted by the vagina either ongoing during the day, or during sexual arousal.

**Vas Deferens:** The tube through which sperm pass on their way from the testes and epididymis, out of the scrotum and to the urethra.<sup>7</sup>

**Vasectomy:** Is a permanent operation a man may have to prevent fathering a child. The tubes (vas deferens) which carry sperm from the testicles to the penis are severed and the ends are sealed.<sup>3</sup>

**Venereal Disease (VD):** an out-of-date term for Sexually Transmitted Infection.

**Vestibular bulbs:** Erectile tissue running under the labia majora.<sup>7</sup>

**Vulva:** The collective term for the external genitals of the female<sup>7</sup>. It includes the mons pubis, the labia major and minora, the clitoris, and the vaginal and urethral openings.<sup>11</sup>

## W

**Wet Dream:** An involuntary discharge of semen, or an orgasm with ejaculation, during sleep. Also call a 'nocturnal emission'.

**Withdrawal:** In an effort to avoid pregnancy, the man withdraws his penis from the vagina before ejaculation. This method of contraception is highly ineffective.<sup>1</sup>

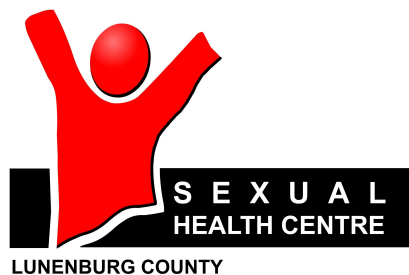
**Womb:** another term for uterus. (See uterus).

## Z

**Zygote:** a fertilized egg.<sup>7</sup>

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For more information on Sexual and Reproductive Health; for free condoms; free pregnancy testing services; pregnancy options counselling; or for sale of specialty/flavoured condoms, oral dams, female condoms, contact the Sexual Health Centre.

**Address:** 4 Hillcrest Street, Unit 8, Bridgewater, NS, B4V 1S9  
(Corner of Dufferin St. & Hillcrest Streets)

**Phone:** 527-2868

**Email:** [LunCo@NSSexualHealth.ca](mailto:LunCo@NSSexualHealth.ca)

**Website:** [www.LunCo.cfsh.info](http://www.LunCo.cfsh.info)