

# Let's Talk About Sex!



**An information leaflet  
for young people with  
spina bifida and/or  
hydrocephalus**

## What's it all about?

Wanting to 'go out' with a special boyfriend or girlfriend is a normal part of being a teenager. You may be worried that having spina bifida or hydrocephalus will make this more difficult for you. Let's look at some of the feelings you might have and how to cope with them.

## The words

Before we talk about sex, we need to make sure we understand the different words used to describe parts of the body. These are some of the words you may have heard.

Penis	Testicles	Vagina	Breasts
Willy	balls	Fanny	boobs
Winkle	gonads	Mary	tits
Dick		Pussy	knockers
Prick			

The words we will use in this leaflet are penis, vagina and breasts (*see drawings in next column*).

## Is it okay to touch?

Have you ever had someone touch or lift you and not liked where they have put their hands, or felt they have been rough with you? How we touch other people is important – if it's a good touch, then we feel safe and comfortable with them.

## Boyfriends and girlfriends

When we meet someone we like, we may want to give them a hug but, if it's the first time you meet that person, that may not be the best thing to do – so try saying 'hello' first. When you have known them a bit longer, then a hug may be the right way to greet them. The safest thing is to ASK them if it's okay first.

You may get to know someone as a friend and after a while begin to feel differently towards them – and that you would like to 'go out' with them as your girlfriend/boyfriend.

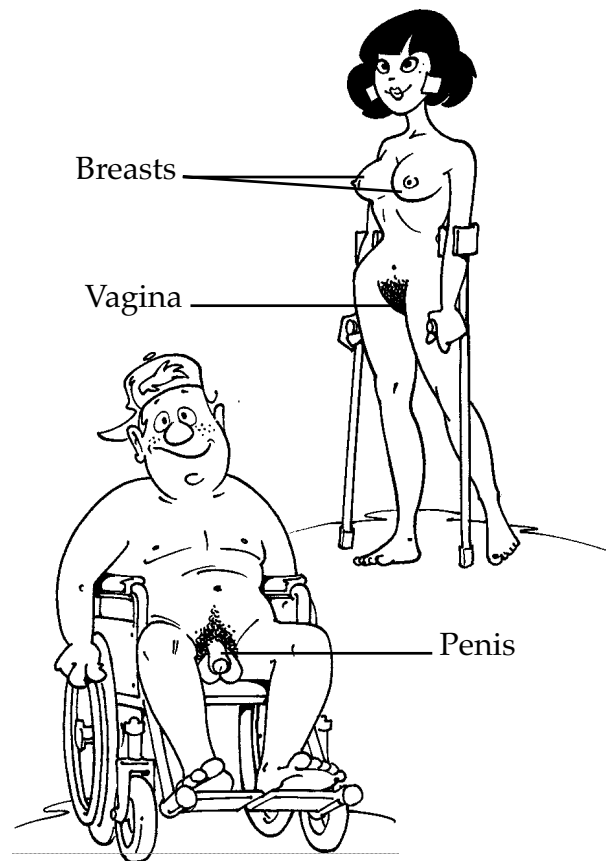
You may want to spend more time with them and get a bit 'closer' than you have been in the past. You may feel nervous and unsure but feel you would like to hold their hand or kiss them. It can be confusing – do they feel the same about you?

It is a good idea to ask the person if you can hold their hand or kiss them.

## Getting closer

If you fancy someone, your body may feel excited, warm or tingly. If you are a boy you may get a stiff penis, sometimes called a 'hard on' or erection. If you don't have any, or very little, feeling around your vagina, or in your penis, or can't get an erection, you can still enjoy a sexual relationship.

If two people feel strongly attracted to each other, they may feel they want to take the next step in their sexual relationship by petting (when you touch each other's breasts or private parts). But it's fine just to be good friends. You don't have to have a physical relationship. But, if you and your partner want to, you can enjoy petting, kissing and hugging even if you have lack of feeling in some parts of your body. You can use your hands, lips or tongue to touch and kiss other parts of your boyfriend's or girlfriend's body - their neck or nipples for instance.



If you use continence aids like pads or sheaths, then you may feel unhappy about the other person finding this out during petting. It might be easier to explain to them first that you use something to help control your bladder or bowels.

## It's your body

Sometimes when you are on your own, you may want to rub your penis or around your vagina in a way that you enjoy.

This is called masturbation, (some people say wanking or playing with yourself), and it's fine to do this. The important thing is that it is done in the privacy of your own room or the bathroom – never in public.

Masturbation is one way of exploring your body. But, if this doesn't work for you, you can stroke or touch any part of your body to give yourself pleasure.

## Sexual intercourse

(This is sometimes called 'making love').

This happens when two people feel very sexy and attracted to each other.

They may feel that they want to be as close as they can in a sexual way, so close that the boy's erect penis goes inside the girl's vagina.

Don't worry – the girl's vagina will stretch open in a way to fit around the penis.

## BUT REMEMBER

### Make it lawful. . .

To make love, you must be at least 16 years old.

### Make it special. . .

Making love is a special thing to do with a boyfriend / girlfriend who is very special to you. It is not something to do with just anybody. Don't do it, if you don't want to.

### Make it safe. . .

Use a condom to avoid pregnancy and help prevent the spread of sexual diseases.

If you are old enough and you are thinking about making love with your boyfriend / girlfriend, please read the next leaflet in this series from ASBAH.

It's called *More Talk About Sex*.

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