



**Ask Dr. C...HIV and healthcare advice**  
 Helping to keep you in the know with up-to-date information  
 by Frederick Cruickshank ~ Medical Director

Michelle, the answer is no, douching after sex does not provide protection against HIV transmission. Douching is not effective because semen enters the cervical canal almost immediately after ejaculation. Also, there is no evidence to suggest that douching after anal sex offers any HIV protection. The act of douching can irritate vaginal tissues and make it easier to become infected by sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV. It can also cause infection by disrupting the natural balance of bacteria and yeast in the vagina and it can complicate an existing infection. Because of this, I would suggest that you do not use douching products. If you are concerned with protecting yourself from HIV, it is important to use a condom each time you engage in any sexual activity and get tested regularly.

**My partner and I are both HIV positive. Do I still need to wear a condom if we are already both HIV positive?**

— Amanda from Charlotte  
 Yes, Amanda, it is still important for you to use condoms when engaging in sexual activity. Any couple with HIV still needs protection from STDs and you may want to prevent pregnancy. Condoms also protect against exposure to

different types, or strains, of HIV. Re-infection or super-infection with a new strain of HIV may make the disease progress more quickly and may require the use of medicines different from the ones used to treat the original strain. If you have any other concerns or want to discuss this topic further, I urge you to talk with your own HIV specialist or make an appointment here at Rosedale to talk with me. Our number is 704-948-8582.

**How do you know when someone who is HIV positive progresses to AIDS?**

— Robbie from Charlotte  
 Robbie, this is a great question because I think many times people think HIV and AIDS are the same thing. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a person with HIV infection has AIDS when "the person's CD4 count, a way to measure the strength of the immune system, falls below 200 (a normal CD4 count is 500 or higher); or the person develops any of the specific serious conditions — also called AIDS-defining illnesses — linked to HIV infection." So, basically AIDS occurs when HIV progresses and the person's body is less effective at fighting off the virus.

**Can an employer require that a job applicant be tested for HIV?**

— Samuel from Charlotte  
 Samuel, the answer to your question is no. Under federal government non-discrimination laws, an employer cannot require a job applicant to tell his or her HIV status or to have an HIV test to get or keep a job. If you feel that you have been discriminated against or your employer has done this, you need to let them know they have broken the law. If they still continue such actions you should contact your local courts for further action.

Always remember that this is an advice column based upon your questions and the best possible knowledge out there. We need your questions to help educate the community, so email them to [info@rosedaleid.com](mailto:info@rosedaleid.com) and be sure to include a first name and location. All respondents will remain anonymous. We will try to do our best to answer, educate and inform from your responses to this column.

**Don't forget to visit our website at [rosedaleid.com](http://rosedaleid.com) and friend us on Facebook for community and clinical updates.**

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After many installments of "Ask Dr.C," this is yet another opportunity to offer our readers information about HIV from basic questions to in-depth explanations. We are still receiving many of your questions and are working hard to provide responses to as many questions as possible to provide information for you and the community. The questions have provided us with a forum to debunk myths and remove stigma from those living with HIV and AIDS. It is important to educate yourself, get tested and protect yourself. We appreciate every question we receive! Dr. C looks forward to responding to as many emails as possible.

**Does douching after sex reduce the risk for HIV infection?**

— Michelle from Huntersville

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