

Let's talk about sex: what's possible in times of COVID-19?

Doctors from ITM's HIV/STD clinic advise to be cautious.

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Dit is de omschrijving

The Belgian government took strict measures to prevent the further spread of the novel SARS-CoV-2, the virus behind COVID-19. One of the most effective measures is social distancing. This also applies to singles, people who are not in a steady relationship or people who do not live with their partner. Nevertheless, doctors from the HIV/STD clinic of the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp (ITM) and experts at Sensoa have seen people coming into the clinic with recently contracted sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

COVID-19 is not an STD in the strict sense of the word, but like the ordinary flu, the virus can be transmitted during sexual activity. "It makes perfect sense that COVID-19 can be transmitted during sexual activity," says Dr Ludwig Apers of ITM's HIV/STD clinic. "We know that the virus can be transmitted by kissing, so it can certainly also be transmitted during French kissing and more. COVID-19 can already be contagious if you're a metre apart."

Dr Apers continues: "Having sex is the closest possible contact between people. Therefore, limit your sexual activity to your partner, and avoid having loose sexual contacts. Anonymous sexual contacts or group sex are certainly not recommended. Not only to protect yourself, but also to prevent the virus from spreading to possible risk groups. It is our civic duty to prevent this from happening as much as possible."