

INTRODUCTION

Sexual health involves a range of issues that can affect your physical and emotional health and wellbeing. It includes relationships, sexuality, sexual contact with another person, pregnancy and more. In Australia sexual health is viewed in a positive way and is openly discussed. Sexual relationships should be pleasurable, free from being fearful, feeling shame and forced into activities you do not want to engage in.

This website has been designed by International students for international students. It includes information about services that can assist if sexual health problems arise or if you would like to know more.

“Enjoy and Be Safe!”

RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships are a part of healthy living and can provide great benefits to our lives. Everyone deserves to be in a safe and healthy relationship.

There are factors that can make a sexual relationship healthy and enjoyable or unhealthy and possibly unsafe. Respect is the foundation for a healthy sexual relationship. It is a commitment to communicating and acting with integrity. In a healthy sexual relationship, both partners are able to express their feelings and respect each other's needs and boundaries about sex.

Sometimes relationships can become unhealthy. If you feel scared, uncomfortable, controlled or unhappy in your relationship it could be time to think if the relationship is right for you. If your partner is treating you badly, it's not your fault, you're not to blame and you're not alone. You can access support on campus to discuss your relationship issues.

Domestic violence is abusive behaviour by one person to control and dominate another person within a close relationship. It may include physical assault, psychological abuse (threatening to kill or hurt you or your children or family), social abuse, (threatening to call Immigration and have your visa revoked) economic abuse – (withholding money for food or school fees) or emotional abuse (insulting you or calling you names).

The Domestic Violence Line **1800 656 463** is available 24 hours (they can arrange for you to have an interpreter). This service is free and confidential.

SAFER SEX and SEXUALLY TRANSMISSABLE INFECTIONS

Sex is meant to be an enjoyable experience however there is the risk of getting infections that can affect your health.

Safer sex means protecting your health from infections passed on through sexual contact with another person. Using a condom (male or female) during sex (vaginal, anal and oral penetration) can help protect against sexually transmissible infections and unplanned pregnancies.

The good news is that if you think you may have a sexually transmissible infection you can access health services to be tested and treated. These services are confidential and are not linked to your studies.

For good sexual health it is recommended to have a test:

- every 12 months
- with change of sexual partner
- if you haven't used a condom during sexual intercourse
- if the condom breaks during sexual intercourse

Free condoms are available on campus.

HOW TO ACCESS SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICES IN AUSTRALIA

Sexual Health Services in NSW are confidential and some services are free. Most services offer the option to request a translator service.

The University Health Centres provide mostly free and always confidential testing and treatment for sexually transmissible infections and other sexual health issues including contraception, women's health checks, pregnancy tests and counselling and more. To access these services you need to make an appointment either by phoning or going to the health service and speaking with the reception staff. When visiting the health service you need to take your health card with you.

Family Planning NSW is located in Ashfield and Newcastle and provides confidential and non-judgemental reproductive and sexual health services such as sexually transmissible infection tests and treatment, contraception, pregnancy tests and counselling, women's health checks and more. To access this service you need to make an appointment by phone, visiting a centre and making an appointment with the reception staff, email or on their website.

The Sydney Sexual Health Service provides confidential and non-judgemental sexual health checks. You do not need to make an appointment to access this service.

CONTRACEPTION

Contraception means prevention of pregnancy as a result of sexual intercourse between a male and female.

There are a number of different options available in Australia.

Contraception allows sexual partners to enjoy sex without the risk of getting pregnant. It is important to choose an option that best meets your needs and circumstances. Speaking with a doctor at a University Health Service or a medical centre in the community can help you decide on a contraception option that is most suitable for you.

UNINTENDED PREGNANCY

Sometimes life does not go to plan. Making a decision about an unplanned pregnancy is personal. In Australia there are health services that provide confidential and non-judgmental support to help women decide on an option that best suits them.

Marie Stopes or Family Planning NSW have detailed information on pregnancy options. You can also make an appointment with the University Health Service at Callaghan or Ourimbah to discuss your options with a doctor.

SEX AND THE INTERNET

The internet provides ways to communicate and socialise with each other, including opportunities to engage in romantic and sexual relationships. Today, many people use dating websites, dating apps or 'hook-up apps', and there are specific services depending on what kind of relationship you are looking for. This includes long-term, short-term, heterosexual or same-sex relationships, and more. It's important to stay safe and smart when you are using dating/hook-up apps. Here are some tips to ensure you and your partner have a positive experience:

1. **Get regular sexual health check-ups.** It's important that you know about your own sexual health so that you can protect yourself and your partner.
2. **Protect your personal information.** Make sure that you never reveal details such as your phone number, address, location, banking details or workplace details to people you don't know.
3. **Get to know people before meeting them.** It's important that you don't rush into anything. Be aware that people aren't always who they say they are. If something doesn't feel right, follow your instinct.
4. **Always meet in a public place first.** It's a good idea to meet in public first, where there are other people around. This can make sure that you remain safe. Make sure that you have your own transportation to and from any meeting in case it doesn't work out.
5. **Tell a friend where you are going.** If you are meeting somebody, it can help keep you safe if somebody knows where you will be. If you don't want to reveal that

information to anybody, that's okay – but if you arrange to have a friend check up on you, you can also use that as an excuse to leave if you don't feel comfortable.

6. **Stay sober.** If you meet up with someone you don't know very well, never accept drinks unless you are sure they haven't been tampered with. Never accept drugs from somebody you don't know very well. It's important that you are alert at all times.
7. **Be respectful.** It's important that you treat other people the way you would like to be treated. Be respectful of other people's boundaries, and do not harass, pester or pressure somebody into doing anything they don't want to do. Sexual assault is a serious crime and consent matters.
8. **Reach out in an emergency.** If you are in immediate danger, call triple zero (000). There is nothing to be ashamed of if you are using a dating or hook-up app, and police will provide assistance to you regardless of your sexuality or gender identity.

SEX AND THE LAW

There are laws in Australia about sex. These laws are there to ensure people are safe and free from harm. It is important to know about these laws because it could be different to the laws in your home country.

SEXUAL CONSENT

In Australia you have the right to choose whether to be sexual with another person. No one has the right to force you into anything you do not want to do. It is illegal to have sex with another person without their CONSENT. Consent means you freely choose to have sex with another person. Sex without consent is SEXUAL ASSAULT and is against the law.

SEXUAL ASSAULT

If you or someone you know has been sexually assaulted you do not have to cope with this alone. The University can provide support and information to assist you. Reporting a sexual assault or accessing services to provide sexual assault support is not linked to your studies.

At the University, Campus Care can assist you and help you access interpreter services. Campus Care is available Monday to Friday. It is a confidential service and your report is not linked to your studies.

There are also Sexual Assault Services (SAS) in NSW at most major hospitals to assist anyone who has experienced sexual assault 24 hours a day. They provide medical assistance and counselling, and they can refer you to legal services and police advice. This is a confidential service. Sexual Assault Services can provide an interpreter for you.

You do not have to report the sexual assault to the police if you don't want to. Reporting sexual assault or going to the police will not affect your Visa, Immigration or enrolment at university.

The NSW Rape Crisis Centre has more information about support and services available throughout NSW.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is uninvited and/or unwanted sexual behaviour like being touched when you don't want to be, being called sexual names or being told sexual jokes or sexual attention such as repeatedly asking you for a date when you have said no. Sexual harassment is also about harassing someone about their gender or sexual identity.

SEX WORK

Sex premises (brothels) and sex work for money (prostitution) is legal in Australia for people over the age of 18. It is important to understand these laws if you use these services or if work in this industry.

LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, INTERSEX AND QUEER (LGBTIQ)

At the University of Newcastle you have the right to express who you are and feel comfortable and safe within your sexuality. There are many support services and community groups in Australia that support the health and wellbeing needs of LGBTIQ students.

The University of Newcastle is a member of the ALLY Network which promotes greater visibility, awareness and support for (LGBTIQ) staff and students and their related issues.

Newcastle University Student's Association and Newcastle University Postgraduate Student's Association also have support for students on LGBTIQ issues.

LGBTIQ Organisations in the Community

Q Life is a counselling and resource service for LGBTIQ people. It provides a confidential telephone service 1800 184 527

ACON is a community organisation that provides programs to reduce HIV transmission among gay and homosexually active men, to support people with HIV, and improve the health and wellbeing of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people. They have programs for Asian and Arabic Speaking Men and information in other languages.

The Gender Centre provides case management and counselling for people who are transgender or gender questioning.

OVERSEAS STUDENT HEALTH COVER (OSHC)

It is a student visa requirement that International students have OSHC to help you meet the cost of medical or hospital care that you might need while you are in Australia.

During your stay, OSHC will cover you for visits to the doctor, some hospital treatment, some ambulance cover and limited pharmaceutical medicines. This includes sexual health checks.

Allianz Global Assist is the University's preferred provider of Health Insurance at UON and Allianz representatives are available on campus to assist students with enquiries, applications for cards or help with making a claim.

For OSHC offered by other companies it is best to check the company's website for information.

Check your policy for what's covered

Check the details of your policy to understand what expenses are covered.

Sometimes you may be asked to pay a 'gap' amount. This happens when the expense of the medical treatment is only partly covered by the health insurance. The part that is not covered by insurance is called the gap and this is the amount you need to pay.

You will need to obtain an OSHC card and each time you go to a doctor or have an emergency treatment you will need to show your OSHC card. At the University Health Service International students may have their consultation billed directly to the OSHC depending on the type of OSHC that they have. University Health Service

Other medical services might ask for a gap fee up front and the rest of the fee they bill the OSHC directly. Some medical centres might request a payment in full at the time of seeing the doctor and you will be expected to claim a reimbursement from the OSCH. Find a doctor in English and other languages

Making a claim can be done in person or online. If you do not take your OSHC card with you, when you seek medical treatment you can still receive treatment but you will need to pay the full amount charged and obtain a reimbursement from the OSHC yourself. Allianz OSHC has produced an App My OSHC Assistant - Health Cover on the Go