Pass the Lube

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The makers of Astroglide, Vagisil and ViAmor may not want to market their lubricants as the barebacker's brands, but they could. When recent University of Texas test-tube studies added HIV to 22 brands of lubricant, these three killed HIV fastest -- and well before the 30 minutes it takes for the virus to penetrate mucosal surface cells. Meantime, Johns Hopkins researchers recently cut HIV transmission in mice by 95 percent with a chemical called beta-CD, a water-soluble carbohydrate used as a food additive. They also plan to study the anti-HIV power of BufferGel, a nondetergent spermicide that increases vaginal acidity without killing "good" bacteria. All this could mean better HIV protection for condom-cussin' lovers, but until human trials, such compounds merely *promise* risk reduction. For now, Slick Willie wannabes best keep baggin' it.

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