



# Playing It Safe And Sexy

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While the big National HIV Prevention Conference in July sounded the alarm over last year's 7.1 percent rise in new gay HIV cases, a recent University of California, San Diego study accentuated the positive—387 positive gay men, that is. UCSD researchers found that one-on-one behavioral counseling reduced HIVers' risky rides with neg or unknown-status partners by 71 percent. "Safer sex is a social skill," says Jim Zians of the university's Edge Research Project. "We want to help people bring health into their social world." Busting out of the generic use-a-condom-every-time box, the shrink sessions role-played HIV disclosure and condom negotiation (two distinct processes, Zians says) while helping guys eroticize safe sex. "We use a list of foreplay things that don't involve penetration—strip poker, licking testicles, toe sucking—if you don't have a condom," Zians says. Helping HIVers keep their partners negative benefits everyone, says Columbia University psychologist Robert Remien. "We must involve HIVers in prevention efforts for their own well-being and that of the whole community, treating them as a whole person, with a need for sex and intimacy."

## Zians' 5 tips for saying "I'm positive":

1. **KEEP IT PERSONAL:** Try "I like to be up-front about things...."
2. **DON'T APOLOGIZE:** Be honest—but not sorry—for having HIV.
3. **DO DESIRE:** Stress how attractive you find your partner. It's about sex!
4. **KEEP IT UP:** Stay, er, positive. Save your seroconversion story for later.
5. **YOU COME FIRST:** Safer sex protects your health, not just your partner's.