Protecting Your Sexual Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Capital City AIDS Fund helps distribute condoms and offers some sexy prevention advice.

April 1, 2020 By Joyce Mitchell

No question, these are challenging times for everyone as we trudge through this COVID-19 pandemic together. We have very real fears, fears of ongoing self-isolation and how long it will last, fears of getting the virus, experiencing economic insecurity, and always wondering what's next as the landscape of the pandemic changes by the hour.

During these uncertain times, Capital City AIDS Fund (CCAF) wants you to know that we are there for the community and to shore you up. We know the only way we will get through this pandemic is — together.

CCAF board member Ted Ross and president Joyce Mitchell

Though social establishments are closed, CCAF wants to ensure people stay safe while having sex. Once we get to a place where this COVID-19 virus is managed, you don’t want to be haunted by a diagnosis of HIV or a sexually transmitted infection, STI.

Ordinarily, CCAF distributes more than 30,000 free condoms monthly in the bars in downtown Sacramento, California. We also readily donate condoms to any agency in need of them. As sheltering-in-place continues and bars and agencies are forced to close their doors, CCAF is being

innovative and has teamed up with Abatin Wellness Center at 2100 29th Street in Sacramento to provide free condoms.

The brainchild of CCAF Board Member Ted Ross, Abatin is a wellness-based marijuana dispensary that focuses on health, and we were welcomed with open arms. Abatin is open from 11AM until 6PM.

A CCAF condom dipenser at Abatin Wellness Center in Sacramento, California

“Talking this through, CCAF had to find another way to make condoms available,” Ross said. “It’s our mission, to help people stay safe through HIV education and prevention. The lights went on,

and I approached Abatin. Given they are very health-focused, it’s turned into a great partnership.”

Another way to stay safe during this time is by going to the LGBTQ Center at 1015 20th Street. A donated CCAF dispenser is out front of the center providing free condoms and lube. The center also home delivers free condom and lube packs from its free P3 mail order program.

Remember, we must work together, continuing to isolate as recommended, using hand sanitizer, not touching your face and washing hands frequently. When it comes to sexual health, using condoms during sex will help protect against STIs and using condoms along with PrEP, or pre-exposure prophylaxis, will offer heightened prevention against HIV.

COVID-19 can spread to people who are within about 6 feet of a person with the virus if that person coughs, sneezes or shares saliva. The virus has been found in feces of people who are infected but has not yet been found in semen or vaginal fluid.

Kissing can easily pass COVID-19. Rimming might spread the virus. Condoms and dental dams can reduce contact with saliva or feces during oral or anal sex.

Remember, YOU are your safest sex partner. Masturbation will not spread COVID-19. The next safest partner is someone you live with. You should avoid close contact, including sex, with anyone outside your household. Have as few sex partners as possible.

If you usually meet your sex partners online, this is a good time to take a break from in-person hook-ups. Consider meeting up virtually instead, with photos, video chat and group chats. Virtual sex is real sex, just a lot safer at this time.

And wash up before and after sex. If you or your partner is not feeling well, avoid sex and especially kissing. If you develop symptoms of COVID-19 including sore throat, fever and shortness of breath, call your doctor immediately.

A little prevention and education will take us a long way as we fight together to stay safe and healthy.

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/blog/protecting-sexual-health-covid19-pandemic