

Maintaining a Safer Sex Life (from preceding page)

Those changes haven't always been necessary from the point of view of AIDS prevention, and at times our own attitudes can be judgmental and puritanical on questions of sexual activity. Some of this may be a natural overreaction to fears of transmission, while some of it is an equally natural expression of changing sexual and emotional needs; what seemed fun and appropriate in 1979 isn't necessarily what we're seeking from sex a decade later.

So be honest with yourself. Have you given up those things because they aren't a part of your needs anymore, or is there some new morality or fear keeping you from them? If you aren't really wanting them now, that's fine; put some time and energy into figuring out what would suit your needs right now.

But if you feel you're really longing for these things, they aren't as unobtainable

as you might think. As long as the sexual activity itself is safe, there is no reason on earth that you can't have as many partners as you can get, in whatever setting you want.

Do you miss the baths? The bathhouse scene in Montreal is lively, and you can do lots safely there. Do you want anonymous sex? There are still plenty of places in Vermont where men can go to meet. Be creative in your search – take out a personal ad, get your horniest friends together for an evening of porn tapes and safe sex, start a j.o. club – and you might be surprised to find out how many men are looking for the same thing.

It should be obvious, but it bears repeating: safe sex isn't a function of where you do it or how many people you do it with. It's a simple question of the activities in which you participate.

Once you've completed this exercise, there may be relatively few items left on your list that are totally off limits, and they'll probably be related to two specific activities: fucking without a condom and (possibly) oral sex with ejaculation in the mouth.

Still, while they may be only two activities, they are two of the most common and enjoyable things that gay men do together. Cock-sucking and fucking are, for many men, an integral part of their sexual identity, and not something easily or painlessly forgone. Managing new approaches to them and maintaining safer sexual practices are inevitably going to be challenging.

In the next issue, we'll talk about how we can deal with the constant risk of "slipping" and how to negotiate our way through staying safe and taking responsibility for ourselves.

Health Resource Organizations

AIDS HOTLINES:

Vermont	1-800-882-2437
New Hampshire	1-800-752-2437
New York State	1-800-541-2437
Massachusetts	1-617-522-4090
Maine	1-800-851-2437
National	1-800-342-2437
Canadian	1-613-563-2437

ACT-UP Vermont

PO Box 1607
Burlington VT 05402

AIDS Community Action Project (ACAP)

c/o Caledonia Home Health Agency
PO Box 383
St. Johnsbury VT 05819
(802) 758-8116

AIDS Community Resource Network (ACoRN)

PO Box 2057
Lebanon NH 03766
(603) 448-4400

Bennington Area AIDS Project

PO Box 1066
Bennington VT 05201
(802) 442-4481 or
1-800-845-2437

Brattleboro AIDS Project

PO Box 2403
4 High Street, Suite 2-3
Brattleboro VT 05301
(802) 254-4444 (Helpline)
(802) 254-8263 (Office)

Franklin-Grand Isle AIDS Task Force

8 Ferris Street
St. Albans VT 05478
(802) 524-6554

H.E.A.L. Vermont

(Holistic Education and AIDS Alternatives Liaison)
PO Box 795
Montpelier VT 05602
(802) 229-4325

Lesbian Cancer Support Group

(802) 660-8386

Northeast Kingdom AIDS Coalition

PO Box 40
Newport VT 05855
(802) 334-2437

North Star (Holistic Health Care)

RR2 Box 3255
Morrisville VT 05661
(802) 888-2858

Vermont AIDS Council

PO Box 275
Montpelier VT 05601
(802) 229-2557

Vermont C.A.R.E.S.

(Committee for AIDS Resources, Education, and Services)
PO Box 5248
30 Elmwood Avenue
Burlington VT 05401
(802) 863-2437 (Burlington)
1-800-649-2437 (Rutland and Washington County support groups)

Vermont Department of Health

1-800-882-2437 (AIDS Hotline) or
(802) 863-7245 (AIDS Program office)

Vermont Friends of the Quilt

PO Box 1422
Burlington VT 05402

Vermont Women's Health Center

336 North Avenue
Burlington VT 05401
(802) 863-1386