

Sexual Feelings

It may be your first instinct to deny that your child will ever have sexual feelings. You may even do everything in your power to suppress those feelings if they do surface. You won't succeed – we all have sexual feelings, and they won't go away. Any attempt at suppression will simply result in increased secretive sexual behaviors or sexual frustration. That frustration can manifest itself in anger, self-abuse, withdrawal, or other emotional excesses.

You'll do far better if you just talk openly and honestly with your child about sexual feelings. When? When your child starts to have them – which usually occurs during puberty. Here's a script for one way to do it. Feel free to improvise along the way.

Sexual feelings are special feelings that one person has for another person. They feel different than the feelings you have for a friend. Most everyone has sexual feelings once they start to go through puberty and their bodies start to change from being a child to an adult. These are feelings that may make us feel warm inside, our sexual parts may feel tingly, and our hearts may beat really fast. You may feel like you want to kiss or touch another person. You may want to touch your own body and sexual parts or another person's body and sexual parts. This means we are aroused and attracted to someone. The person may be the same sex as you. A woman may have sexual feelings for another woman or a man may have sexual feelings for another man. Most of the time, though, a man has sexual feelings for a woman and a woman has sexual feelings for a man.

There is nothing wrong with sexual feelings. It is normal and can feel really fun and exciting when you have these feelings. Sometimes people wonder if certain sexual feelings are okay or not. All feelings are okay as long as they are not bothering you or getting in your way. If you have so many sexual feelings that you don't have time for your family or friends or you can't concentrate on your schoolwork or job, then it's important to talk with us about these feelings.

Having sexual feelings is not a choice, but what you do with your feelings is a choice. Let's take a look at this poster.

**There are four choices
you can make when
you have sexual
feelings inside of you.**



You can ignore them
or pretend they
aren't there.



Feel them but do
nothing about it.



You can masturbate
or touch yourself.



You can be sexual
with another person
(if they want to be
sexual with you).

**What you decide to do with
your feelings is your choice.**

There are four choices you can make when you have sexual feelings inside of you.

- You can ignore them or pretend they aren't there.
- Feel them but do nothing about it.
- You can masturbate or touch yourself.
- You can be sexual with another person (if they want to be sexual with you).

What you decide to do with your feelings is your choice. Here are some things to know about each of these choices:

1. You can ignore them or pretend they aren't there.

Ignoring sexual feelings can be difficult for some people. They try to pretend they don't have sexual feelings, but the feelings keep coming back. If you have sexual feelings for a teacher, a family member, or a child, you should try to ignore them. You can also talk with us about these feelings.

2. Feel them but do nothing about it.

Just because you have sexual feelings doesn't mean you have to do anything about them. You could see someone that you think is really sexy and just feel it and keep it inside of you. Most of us do this when we see our favorite stars on TV or in the movies – suddenly our hearts go pitter-patter and we get a nice warm feeling inside. We know we might never meet these stars (and we wouldn't touch their bodies even if we did meet them), but it is nice to have those feelings.

Do you feel that way about a certain TV or movie star? Would you like to tell me who it is? [Note: You can also tell your child about the TV or movie stars who really turn you on.]

It's not just movie stars. If someone is walking down the street and you think they're good-looking or sexy, can you just go up to them and touch their body? [Note: Listen to what your child has to say. If necessary, provide the correct answer. It can be something like, "No, you have to keep your feelings inside of you."]

There are no dangers with this choice unless your feelings are always there and they get in the way of living your life.

3. You can masturbate or touch yourself.

What does masturbation mean? What does touching yourself mean? [Note: Listen to what your child has to say. Then continue...]

Masturbation or touching yourself is when you touch your own private parts because it feels good. For males, that often means touching their penis and scrotum to feel good. For females, it often means touching their clitoris and breasts to feel good.

Some people think masturbation is okay, and some people don't. Choosing to masturbate is a decision you'll have to make for yourself. Whatever feels right for you **is** right for you. What is important to know is that it will not harm you to masturbate. It is also important to masturbate in a private place. What do I mean by a private place? [Note: Listen to what your child has to say. If necessary, provide the correct answer. It can be something like, "A place where other people can't see you."]

Is your home a private place? [Note: Listen to what your child has to say. If necessary, provide the correct answer. It can be something like, "No, but some rooms in your home are private places."]

What rooms in your home are private places? [Note: Listen to what your child has to say. If necessary, provide the correct answer. It can be something like, "Bathroom, bedroom."]

One of the things that can happen during masturbation is that you get more and more excited. These feelings keep building and building until they feel the very best. At that moment, we say that you are having an orgasm. Have you heard the word "orgasm" before?

An orgasm is when a male or female has a build up of good sexual feelings in their private parts and it gets released. It's a bit difficult to describe exactly what an orgasm feels like. For one thing, it feels different to different people. Also, the feeling of an orgasm may differ from one time to the next. A male can usually tell when he's having an orgasm because that's the moment when semen comes out of the tip of his penis. It feels really good. A female can usually tell when she's having an orgasm because the muscles in her private parts move a lot. It also feels really good. Some women have fluid that comes out of their vulvas when they have an orgasm.

Again, masturbation is something you do in private. It is not okay to do it where family members or strangers might see you. A few other things to remember about masturbation:

Don't just close the door when you masturbate in a private place. Make sure nobody can see you by looking through the windows – you might have to close the curtains too.

It can be messy. You may want to have tissues nearby, and remember to wash your hands with soap and water when you're done. [Note: If you've got a son, you may want to show him how to use a condom to cut down on the mess.]

If you masturbate a lot, your penis or clitoris might get sore. Try not to masturbate again until the soreness is gone. [Note: If appropriate, show your child a sexual lubricant such as KY Jelly and explain how it can help reduce soreness. Tell your child to buy lubricants at a pharmacy – don't use liquids they might find at home.]

It's okay if you imagine things while you masturbate. You might imagine yourself being with your favorite movie star or music star. This often makes the masturbation more enjoyable.

Any questions about masturbation?

4. You can be sexual with another person (if they want to be sexual with you).

Being sexual does not mean you have to have sex. For some people, it means holding hands. For others, it means kissing. Some people just like to go to the movies together.

Everyone has their own feelings about what sexual behaviors they want to do or don't want to do. Maybe you don't want to kiss your boyfriend or girlfriend but you do want to hold their hand. That's okay. Whatever feels right for you **is** right for you. Never let anyone else tell you what you should do sexually. Why? [Note: Listen to what your child has to say. If necessary, provide the correct answer. It can be something like, "It's your body, it's your choice."]

And, of course, you can never tell someone else what they should do. If you want to kiss your boyfriend or girlfriend but they don't want to kiss, you can't force them. Why? [Note: Listen to what your child has to say. If necessary, provide the correct answer. It can be something like, "It's their body, it's their choice."] Both people must always consent before they do anything sexual.

You can conclude the discussion by asking the following review questions:

- Is it okay to have sexual feelings? Why?
- What does it feel like to have sexual feelings?
- What if a person is having sexual feelings, but they don't want to have sex? What other sexual things can that person do?
- Who would it be okay to do these sexual things with?
- Who would it **not** be okay to do these sexual things with?
- Where would it be okay to do sexual things?
- Where would it **not** be okay to do sexual things?