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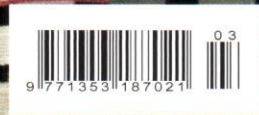
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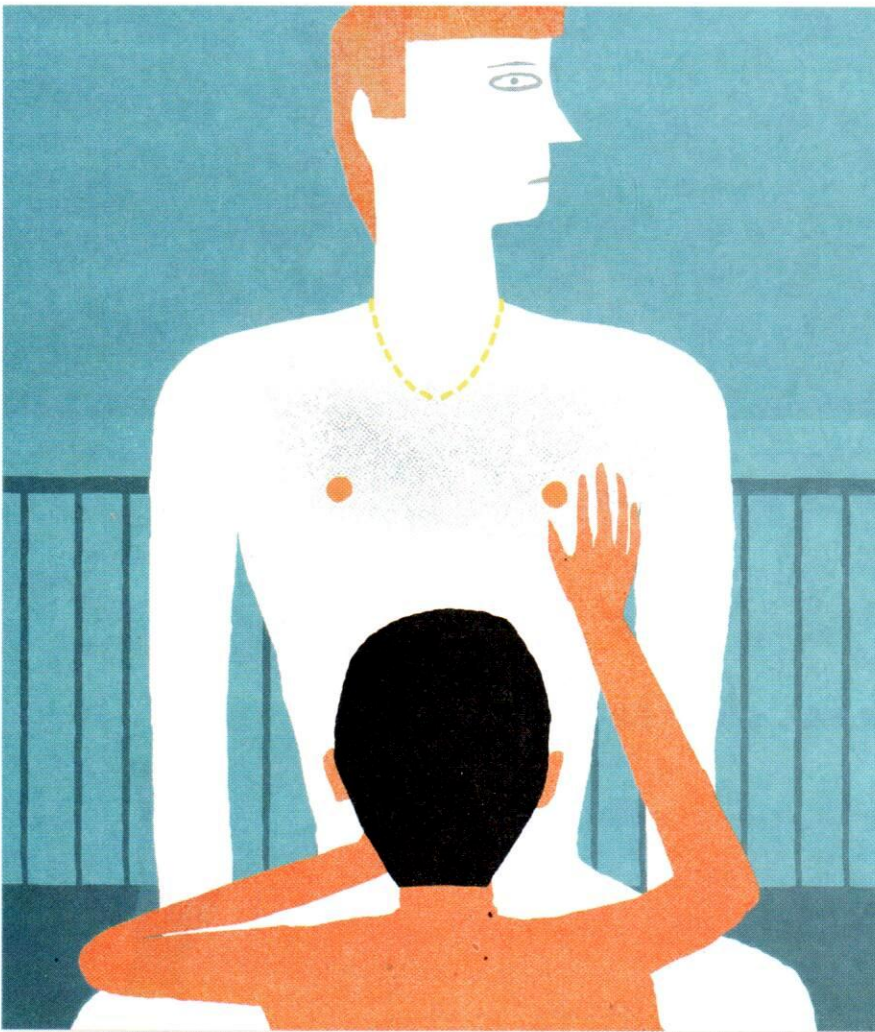
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THIS MONTH: DR. JOE KORT ON ORAL SEX

'I don't like getting blowjobs'



Dear Attitude,

I'd really like to find a boyfriend but I'm not into having guys go down on me. I know it's kind of weird but I just don't like it. Every man I've ever had sex with seems to want that more than anything else and I have started to feel insecure about it. I find it cold and unpleasant and slightly uncomfortable, and I don't feel like I should do something I'm not into. But on the other hand, aren't all gay guys obsessed with blowjobs? Am I right or just in the minority?

PAUL, BRIGHTON

Dear Paul,

If you're not interested in having men go down on you, thank you so much for being courageous enough to admit it! You are correct, in that most gay men enjoy both giving and receiving oral sex – but not all of them. What you are describing is much more common among gay men, and even straight men, than people imagine. Yet it's not talked about – and for the exact same reason you state. Given that men are always talking about enjoying giving and getting oral sex, to admit you're gay and not interested – even averse to it – seems 'kind of weird' even when it is not.

Actually, many gay men don't enjoy giving oral sex. In fact, many who identify as 'tops' say they enjoy the usual 'top stuff' – giving anal sex and receiving oral – but not giving oral. Now, does that make them weird? Of course not. Everyone has their own preferences and templates for sexual arousal.

Many straight men don't like to receive oral sex, either. Moreover, both gay and straight men have their own preferences around this practice. It's a myth that all straight men want women to give them head. Many say they don't like the feeling as much as intercourse. So both gay and straight men have their own preferences around this.

Here are some considerations to keep in mind. If you find receiving oral to be 'unpleasant, emotionally cold and slightly uncomfortable', that might be simply a physiological matter and not 'weird' in any way. Some men can't even tolerate lube because the wetness desensitises their penis and they no longer experience pleasure. Many of these men prefer being masturbated, rubbing up against a partner or any other form of stimulation that does not involve moisture.

Sometimes, excessive masturbation is

another reason for being unable to receive pleasure from oral sex. For example, too much masturbation can 'train' the penis to become aroused in that way and no other. Masturbation offers the neurological equivalent of instant feedback. Your autonomous nervous system gets accustomed to your hand and your style. Thereafter, when something or someone else tries to pleasure your penis in any other fashion – as when you try to have intercourse or receive – it's not nearly so enjoyable. I knew of a man who discovered masturbating against his pillow brought him to orgasm as a teenager and he continued this into his adulthood. Nothing other than this form of self-pleasuring allowed him to be able to achieve orgasm.

Stop masturbating

One remedy for this is masturbating very little, if at all, for a period of time. Allowing 'the pressure to build up' will lower your threshold of arousal, letting you enjoy more the feeling of a partner's hand or mouth. Discontinuing masturbation for a while will also sensitise your penis to other means of arousal other than your own hand. The man who masturbated with a pillow stopped and was ultimately able to be pleased in other ways by himself and others. Another way is to follow the lead of artists who widen their creative repertoire by drawing or painting with their non-dominant hand. Simply masturbating with the hand you don't normally use will give you a chance to explore and enjoy a different kind of stimulation. (And maybe give it, too!)

Some men do not enjoy receiving oral sex because they have never had it done correctly. Even though gay men tend to talk openly and graphically about their sexual likes and dislikes, a surprising amount of them are not so communicative in the bedroom when they are one on one with a sexual partner. Consequently, they are self-conscious about telling a guy what feels good – and what doesn't – while the guy is giving him head or pleasuring him in other ways.

It is crucial that you can tell a sex partner when you are experiencing pleasure and when you are not. This can be done verbally,

by telling him to use his hands or squeeze more or less. It can be done non-verbally by guiding the guy's hand and mouth and showing him what you like. I actually worked with a gay couple who stopped having sex for years before coming to see me about something they both described as the 'death-grip'. They told me that both felt the other gripped their penis too hard, to the point where it hurt, and neither felt they should have to say anything, that the other should have just known. The worst thing you can do is to not tell your partner what you enjoy and what you don't.

Another reason could be around issues of control. Psychologically, some men feel vulnerable allowing another man to pleasure him orally and/or anally and can struggle letting go of this part of themselves. I have clients who experience delayed ejaculation, where they cannot orgasm with a partner present. Often this is about surrender and control. I have treated men who have great difficulty with being dependent and vulnerable with another person and it manifests through sexuality.

Sexual abuse

Some men don't enjoy receiving oral sex because they were sexually abused at some impressionable time in their past. Whenever a child is pushed into experiencing adult sexuality, it can generate many psychological and physiological reasons – not always conscious – for why they'll later fail to enjoy, or even reject, certain sexual acts. If a boy was overstimulated in some way, his adult brain may now interpret any similar stimulus as 'cold' or unpleasant, as discomfort or even pain.

When an adult perpetrator introduces much smaller infants and young children to sex – whether it's oral, tactile or penetrative – they will typically find it threatening and overwhelming, if not painful as their minds and bodies are underdeveloped for this type of stimulation. As adults, that experience may cause them to feel discomfort and/or aversion, resulting in hyperesthesia – 'frigidity', numbness, or lack of any sensation at all – when their testicles and/or penis are touched or fondled in any way.

Hyperesthesia is not only the result of childhood sexual abuse and can have other causes. I have had many clients say they can barely tolerate a physical exam from their doctor because of the pain in having their genitals touched.

With this information, I recommend you explore your past for any unpleasant sexual encounters or over-reliance on masturbation – factors that may have left you unconsciously disinterested in any partner's hand or mouth.

If, after some honest self-examination, you can give yourself the proverbial clean bill of health, then rest easy. You are just part of a silent minority – one man among many who just doesn't enjoy receiving oral sex.

DON'T LIKE SOMEONE GOING DOWN?

1. Relax. Maybe it's just your personal taste. There are no rules about what you must like or not like.
2. If you do think it's a problem, try experimenting. Find a way to try oral sex gently. Say what you want.
3. Experiment with different ways of masturbation to 'retrain' your penis. After years of doing things the same way you get into a pattern of what to expect and what feels good.
4. Some people have a fear of sex (sexual anorexia). Try reading *Sexual Anorexia* by Patrick Carnes.
5. If it's still troubling you, then consider therapy. Most people are nervous talking about such intimate things but a good sexual therapist can really help.

Email us with your relationship or sexual problem to advice@attitude.co.uk

Dr Joe Kort is a licensed clinical social worker and board-certified sexologist. He is best known for being the author of *10 Smart Things Gay Men Can Do To Improve Their Lives*.
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