



CHOICES

THE NEWSLETTER OF HAWAII ISLAND HIV/AIDS

APRIL 2005

Online Love 101

A crash course in the rules, attitudes and lingo of cyber dating—and finding what works best for you

EASY DOES IT

When HIVers discover online dating, they can move *way too fast*. “Guys will jump on a plane to meet this girlfriend of mine just based on her photo,” says HIVer Sheri Kaplan, executive director of hetero-friendly Positive Connections (www.positiveconnections.org). Fly-by-night romances often fail, so go slow. HIVer Maria Mejía of Miami found her man of three years online—but they didn’t meet for a year. “I’m very picky,” she says.

LESS IS MORE

Online, it’s tempting to pour your heart out, but hold off on lengthy professions of undying love. Andy Wysocki, cofounder of www.bigmuscle.com, a popular gay site, gives guys only a small space to send messages—a healthy technological limitation. “You have less room to make a fool of yourself,” he says.

YUK IT UP

It takes a sense of humor to survive HIV, right? So go ahead and let yours out, whether you’re updating your profile or writing an e-mail to a new crush. Bryan, a Massachusetts HIVer, safe-sex educator and online veteran once ran an ad that began “HIV Positive, 100% USDA infected and inspected.” And now he’s taken!

CAN THE JUDGMENTS

Some HIVers avoid people who look “AIDS-y” and steer clear of profiles with no pic, just in case. But “people have a soul, not just a face,” Kaplan reminds us. Judge your dating prospects on both.

Keep It Safe

Don’t give out important personal information, such as your full name, until you’re sure your new online pal is legit.

When you’re ready to talk on the phone, use your cell. Let your new paramour earn your trust before giving out your home number.

On first dates, meet in a *public setting*.

Give a friend your date’s name and number before you meet.

If you travel to another city to meet someone for the first time, stay in a hotel.

GO OLD-SCHOOL

Internet romancing triggers instant gratification—and frustration.

“People expect to hear back right away when they send a message,” Wysocki says, “but courting is still old-school.” Give people 48 hours, at least, to get back to you—and keep the high-school melodrama to a minimum.

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Contributions of articles and other materials for publication are encouraged and welcomed.

NEW RYAN WHITE YEAR BEGINS APRIL 1

I realize that many of you did not attend the Ryan White Meeting this last month so I want to take this opportunity to make you aware of what services will be available starting April 1. Our budget was decreased by \$50,000 in order to increase funding to the Hawaii Drug Assistance Program (HDAP). We therefore had to allocate funds to those categories of service that follow HRSA guidelines, i.e., primary focus on medical care, medications, etc. After determining how many Ryan White qualified clients (150) we have and the total amount of funds available (\$103,695.00) it has been determined that we can spend \$692.00 per client during this next Ryan White year. The categories of service are: doctor's visits, dental work, mental health visits, transportation to Oahu for medical care, nutrition services (ensure), medication co-payments, substance abuse treatment and health insurance premium payments. We will no longer be able to provide housing, food coupons, gas coupons, utilities or home health care. Please contact the care team as soon as possible to complete your updated care plan and the paperwork necessary to qualify you for Ryan White services beginning on April 1. I realize that we have challenges ahead of us, but by working together we can find solutions which will provide the best quality of life for you.

Thanks, *Georgie*

People will accept
your ideas much
more readily if you
tell them Benjamin
Franklin said it
first.

David H. Comins

Tips for talking to your partner about STDs

While it may sound daunting to think about telling your recent sex partners -- perhaps even your primary partner -- that you've been diagnosed with an

STD, it's important to let them know as soon as possible so they can get treatment, too. If these are people you have regular sexual relationships with, it can be even more important to discuss this, because if one partner is untreated, many STDs can be passed back and forth indefinitely.

It's also important to remember that a lot of this advice works both ways: If you think that your partner may have an STD -- if you've noticed symptoms or have questions about a particular incident in the past -- it's important to approach them honestly and openly. But keep in mind that your own health may also be at stake, as well as theirs and possibly that of others. For more information on the symptoms of STDs, [click here](#).

Remember, syphilis, gonorrhea and chlamydia are all STDs that are treatable with antibiotics. However, if left untreated, syphilis can do extensive damage to your internal organs and neurological system, and gonorrheal and chlamydial infections can spread to other parts of your body. Talking to your partners about your diagnosis will not only reduce the stigma associated with getting an STD, but will help take care of the health of you, your sex partners and the entire community.

You have to come to terms with your own diagnosis before you start talking to your partners. It's unrealistic to expect other people to understand if you're uncomfortable with the diagnosis yourself. How well-informed are you? Do you know the facts about STDs? You want to feel confident and knowledgeable before you explain the infection to someone else. You can also always call the Centers for Disease Control's National STD Hotline with questions, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at (800) 227-8922 or (800) 342-2437. In addition to talking to you personally, they can mail you brochures and information, which you can share with your partners.

If you're nervous about talking to your partners, here are a few tips to help you gain confidence:

- Try role-playing with a trusted friend or in front of a mirror.
- Practice saying the words out loud.
- Choose a neutral setting during a time when you won't be distracted or interrupted. Be natural.
- Speak with confidence. You are not lecturing or confessing. You're sharing personal information.
- Remain calm. If you're upset, a partner might think it's worse than it is. Remember, your delivery and body language become part of your message, too.
- Expect your partner to be accepting and supportive. People usually act as you expect them to.

While some guys may overreact, some won't bat an eye. Since there is currently a growing syphilis epidemic among gay and bisexual men, and gonorrhea and chlamydia rates are on the rise as well, many sexually active guys won't be shocked or surprised. Whatever happens, try to be flexible. This is about sexual health -- yours, his or hers and the community's.

Keep your perspective: Syphilis, chlamydia and gonorrhea symptoms are annoying but harmless as long as you get proper treatment. If left untreated, not only can these infections wreak havoc on your body, but they can make it much easier to transmit HIV from sex partner to sex partner. It's time to take care of yourself and take care of your community. Talk to your partners today.

Information provided by San Francisco Department of Public Health, as adapted from the American Social Health Association.

Georgia confirms case of rare STD

The confirmation of a case of a rare and potentially serious sexually transmitted disease in an Atlanta man has prompted health officials to urge men who have sex with men to take precautions against this and other STDs. In a statement, the Georgia Division of Public Health said a case of *Lymphogranuloma Venereum*--or LGV, a rare form of chlamydia--was confirmed in a gay man who also is HIV-positive and has another STD. Six LGV cases have been identified in the United States: two in New York, three in San Francisco, and the Atlanta case. Since 1992, Georgia has recorded 16 cases of the disease. LGV is difficult to diagnose. Symptoms of the current cases have included rectal bleeding, pus from the rectum, or painful defecation. LGV's traditional symptoms are swelling of the lymph nodes in the groin. Adding to health officials' concerns: The ulcers and bleeding associated with LGV increase the risk of HIV transmission. (AP)

Study: Risky sex not more prevalent online

Tom Musbach, PlanetOut Network

published Tuesday, March 1, 2005

Men who have unprotected anal sex with other men may not be more likely to arrange the sexual encounters through the Internet than through other venues, a new federal study suggests.

The research, sponsored by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), also showed that disclosure of HIV status among men who have sex with men (MSM) is more common in online-initiated encounters.

The findings were reported Friday at the 12th Annual Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in Boston.

A team led by Dr. Mary Chiasson, of the Medical and Health Research Association of New York City, studied 1,707 MSM from the United States and Canada who had sex in the previous three months with a new or casual partner. Participants in the study answered questions online about their most recent sexual encounter, during which 28 percent reported unprotected anal intercourse (UAI).

Of the men whose last encounter involved UAI with a single partner, 30 percent met the partner online, versus 25 percent meeting elsewhere. The men in this group were also more likely to disclose their HIV status to partners they met online than to those they met offline (53 percent versus 35 percent).

Of those reporting recent UAI with multiple partners during their most recent sexual encounter, 25 percent arranged it online, while 32 percent arranged it offline. These men were also more likely to disclose their HIV status with partners they met online (57 percent) versus offline (45 percent).

The study also found that, in both groups, use of crystal methamphetamine was a factor in many of the unprotected sexual encounters. According to the researchers, crystal meth users were 6.7 times more likely to report UAI in the group with a single partner, and 3.8 times more likely to report UAI than non-crystal users in the group of men with multiple partners during their last sexual encounter.

Jason Riggs, communications director for the San Francisco-based Stop AIDS Project, noted that the study appears to contradict earlier research about online vs. offline sexual habits, and the agency is still reviewing the findings. He welcomed, however, the statistics about HIV disclosure.

People who feel comfortable enough to disclose their HIV status, positive or negative, to potential partners is a gold standard in HIV prevention," Riggs said. "That kind of environment needs to be encouraged in the community, both online and off."

"It is not surprising that the anonymity of the Internet allows many HIV-positive men an opportunity to disclose their status without the same fear of rejection that they might face in person," said Noel Alicea, spokesman for the Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) in New York. "The Internet allows for frank and open dialogue that is not always afforded in other spaces."

not always afforded in other spaces."

PlanetOut Inc., owner of Gay.com and PlanetOut.com, makes safer-sex resources available on its sites and in chat rooms.

Alicea added that GMHC plans to increase its presence in online chat rooms and sex sites: "It has become clear that the Internet provides us with new opportunities to have honest conversations with men who are interested in sexual health."

Fit to Print

by Marissa Pareles

Canadian inmates get legal, virally safer tattoos

Canadian prison officials have fleshed out an unprecedented HIV and hep C reduction plan. Starting in March 2005, six inmate-operated tattoo parlors will open across the country—hoping to erase underground inkage, which can spread blood-borne bugs via shared unhygienic equipment. Tattooing on the inside is currently against prison rules in Canada and the U.S., but 45 percent of incarcerated Canadians sport 'em. "In Canada, inmate HIV rates range from one to 10 percent, and HCV rates exceed 50 percent in some prisons," says Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network's executive director, Ralf Jürgens. "Safer tattooing projects are a needed, pragmatic public-health measure." The movement began in March 2004, at the urging of Canadian ASOs. But even the positive buzz has a sting. "I'm not impressed," says Canadian Conservative Party rep Randy White, who told the *Winnipeg Sun* that needle access will spur prison violence and costly lawsuits. Canadian prison employees disagree. "The new program is going to save Canada money in terms of health-care costs," says Mike Luff of the National Union of Public and General Employees, which represents most Canadian corrections officers. "We use our prison institutions to hold people responsible, not to torture them physically or with HIV." A prison sentence worth repeating.

CHAT LIVE

The anonymity of e-mail allows some people to blossom while others “can’t type their feelings into words,” Bryan says. So when you’re ready, see how the verbal communication goes—but don’t call from home! (see “Keep It Safe”).

SET TIME LIMITS

Online cruising can be addictive—and a huge time sucker. “People will ask us to delete their profiles because they get addicted—they start clicking and a couple hours will have gone by,” says Wysocki. An hour a day should do.

DON’T USE ONLY PERSONALS

Excited newbies can become depressed when Web wooing doesn’t work. Make online personals only one of several strategies to find love (See “All the Right Places”). “Not giving up is the key,” says happily partnered Bryan. “I am the king of not giving up!”

The Perfect Personal

Taking a Slick Pic

DO:

+Look ’em in the eye “Eye contact creates intimacy,” says Michael Halliday, *POZ* designer, photographer and online dater. “Look into the camera, and don’t stand too far away—pictures should be chest-up or closer,” he says. “And, please, lose the sunglasses and hats.”

+Smile “You’ll attract love!” Halliday says. Get a friend to make you laugh while you pose. If you’re using film, shoot a whole roll. Digital photogs snap away, but make sure to use the highest pixel setting.

+Watch your back (ground) “If you’re wearing dark clothes, stand against a light background and vice-versa,” Halliday says. The contrast makes you pop—“you want to get noticed, right?”

DON’T:

-Use flash Flash can cause red-eye and blow out the details of your face, obscuring your personality. “Take your pictures in natural, preferably diffused, light, like you get on a cloudy day,” Halliday says. The worst time to shoot? High noon.

-Use a disposable camera “They take terrible pictures,” says Halliday. “But if you have no other choice—say, you’re on vacation—take the photo in natural light.” Vacations, by the way, make for great photo-ops, since you’re at your most relaxed. “Just make sure it’s not from Greece 10 years ago,” Halliday adds.

-Show your pets...or other people. “The focus should be on you,” Halliday says. “Pun intended.”

Writing the Right Profile

Handle it

A terrific screen name can be just as alluring as a hot pic. To create one, think of adjectives (tall, funny) and nouns (chef, dog lover) that capture what’s special about you, then put ’em together. Are you a fun-loving, Italian gourmet? Then you’re FunItalFoodie! Locations (“NYLover”) are catchy, too.

Be honest

About your age, weight and other vital stats. “Why does every guy online have a big uncut dick?” asks positive therapist Michael Shernoff. As one HIVer says, “Your BS will catch up with you.”

Be specific

You want people to know you—describe your life, your past, present and future, likes and dislikes, career and interests. Stumped? Ask a friend to take a stab at a first draft.



Meal Plan: Get Jacked This Morning

Eight breakfasts to crank your energy up to 10. Or 11.

By Elizabeth M. Ward, R.D.

If you want maximum bang from your morning meal, steer clear of the breakfast aisle at your local Shop-N-Bag. Sure, Pop Tarts and sugar puffs qualify as food—barely—but they're no way to start your day. (Unless, of course, your day is spent watching Judge Judy reruns in your parent's basement. In that case, feel free to indulge.) For everyone else, whether you're heading to an A.M. workout, a busy day at the office, or recovering from a night of partying, you need more. You need one of these eight meals, custom-designed for every morning ritual.

Before your morning workout

If you're running out the door, grab . . .

2 Kraft Polly-O String-Ums
light mozzarella cheese sticks,
1 medium whole-grain bagel,
and 1 medium pear

OR: If you have five minutes at home, blend together . . .

1/2 cup strawberries,
1/2 cup egg substitute,
1 cup low-fat yogurt,
1/4 cup cranberry juice

And finish the meal with . . .

1 slice whole-wheat toast topped with 1 tablespoon almond butter

Why? Most guys skip breakfast before hitting the gym because they don't think they have enough time to eat. Yet a quick, high-protein meal before a morning workout is one of the keys for maximum muscle gain after lifting weights, according to William Evans, Ph.D., a metabolism expert at the University of Arkansas. In addition to the protein in yogurt, eggs, and cheese, eating whole grains and fruit provides you with immediate fuel for lifting, plus fiber to help regulate blood-sugar levels and keep your energy high.

Before a big presentation

If you have five minutes . . .

Beat two eggs together in a bowl. Pour the eggs on a plate coated with nonstick spray and nuke for one minute or until the eggs are fully cooked. Dump them into a whole-wheat pita pocket and top with hot sauce.

And wash it down with . . .

1 (8-oz) glass of orange juice

OR: If you're eating at work . . .

Dump one packet of plain instant oatmeal into a bowl. Microwave according to the manufacturer's directions. Then stir in one Skippy Peanut Butter Squeeze Stix plus one small box of raisins.

And wash it all down with . . .

From page 6

Why? You could chow a couple of Krispy Kremes with a java chaser for a quick brain jolt, but you'd regret it mid-presentation, when your energy levels tanked faster than the Chicago Cubs in Game 6 of the 2003 NLCS.

Instead, for long-term mental performance, you need protein-rich foods like eggs and peanut butter. Plus, studies show that eating eggs can help to improve brain function, while orange juice and raisins are high in potassium—which helps keep blood pressure under control during times of stress.

Before a busy day at work

If you have five minutes . . .

Fill a bowl with 3/4 of a cup of Cap'n Crunch, and the same amount of bran flakes, and blueberries. Top with 1% milk.

OR: If you're eating on your commute, grab . . .

1 Stonyfield Farm yogurt smoothie,
1 whole-wheat bagel,
1 cup fresh, whole strawberries

Why? When your Daytimer is crammed to capacity, you need a breakfast to help calm your nerves and counter stress. "Complex carbohydrates are the ultimate feel-good food," says Elizabeth Somer, R.D., author of Food and Mood.

Whole grains are ideal for fighting anxiety, she says, because they stimulate the production of serotonin—a natural brain relaxant. And the berries?

According to Tufts University neuroscientist James A. Joseph, Ph.D., eating strawberries and blueberries can help improve communication between cells in the brain, helping you think more clearly.

After a night of partying

If you have five minutes at home . . .

Sandwich two slices of whole-grain bread around a one-ounce slice of cheddar cheese and microwave for 15 seconds.

Wash it all down with . . .

1 (8-oz) glass of black-cherry juice

OR: If you're on the go . . .

Toast two Eggo Special K waffles and spread a tablespoon of peanut butter on each.

Round out your meal with . . .

A cup of fresh cherries

Why? You're suffering, dude. Between the throbbing head, sore muscles, and upset stomach, you've got only one option: to face your pain with food—specifically complex carbs, which provide your tired brain with energy while helping to soak up the stomach acid from last night's binge. Bread and waffles also help to increase serotonin levels in the blood, naturally boosting your body's ability to withstand pain. As for the cherries, they're packed with headache-fighting pain relievers plus vitamin C, which can help to counteract some of the damage to your lungs you get from hanging out in smoke-filled bars, pool halls, and prisons.

I checked out this site and it seems to be what it claims. Take a look and see if you are interested. They offer free start-up but will be charging later. There are men, women, straight and gay. Let me know what happens...Gene



PositivesDating.com

At www.PositivesDating.com, we are all sharing a common bond, living with HIV/AIDS.

We offer HIV + personals with a diverse, international community of quality adults who also share common goals - to find great dates, make new friends, form romantic relationships, meet life partners, or receive helpful guidance and coaching. New, fun and high-quality singles are joining everyday! They are living life to its fullest and looking for others to share their experiences with. They come from all walks of life, all ages, professions, and backgrounds. For HIV + dates, soul mates, friends, and even pen-pals, our HIV dating personals are connecting us all, making it easy to meet people from all across your state, the country, or even the globe, all from the privacy and comfort of your own home!

Join our HIV Dating Service Now for our Opening Celebration Special. Until May 1st, 2005, ALL premium functions of the site are completely free! That includes FREE e-mail capability for all members and FREE instant messaging to and from ALL members!



**"Clients
Please Note:**

Effective immediately, anyone submitting billings to Case Managers for payment must submit an original copy of the bill. Our policy will no longer allow for copies of bills to be accepted for payments due to audit restrictions. Thank you for your cooperation." Thanks, Wes

Aloha to David

Friday, April 8

Noon to 3:00

**Come have pupu and talk story with David Braaten
HIHAF office Kona**

Rummage Sale Time

Time to get rid of the "STUFF" you no longer need.

Saturday April 16 at

Kona United Methodist Church

On Palani Road

Starts at 7 am runs till midday.

We are accepting donations now.

And will need volunteers on that day to help.

More Info: 331-8177

Check this out



tweaker.org

We recognize that people use crystal meth.

We're not here to condemn it.

We're not here to promote it.

Instead, we offer:

Information. Support. Resources.

To help gay and bisexual men better understand crystal and how it affects physical, mental and sexual health.

April 2005

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9 Anuenu Potluck
10	11	12	13	14	15	16 Rummage Sale @ Kona United Method- ist Church
17	18	19 Support group HILO 6:00 pm	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

May 2005

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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