

# 10 Sex Myths

The naked truth in all the hype, hope and hyperbole **MARCIA KAYE**

**D**espite our sex-obsessed culture, sexual illiteracy continues to prevail. Here we bust 10 of the most persistent myths and give you the sometimes surprising, sometimes comforting, realities.

## 1 THREE TIMES A WEEK IS NORMAL

In every age group, only a minority have sex that often, according to a 2006 *Globe and Mail* survey of more than 1,500 Canadians. Even among the most sexually active group, the 18- to 29-year-olds, the majority report having sex twice a week or less. For one out of five, it's never.

## 2 THE AVERAGE PENIS IS SIX INCHES WHEN ERECT

International studies over the past decade put the average penis at around 5½ inches (14 cm) when erect and 3½ inches (9 cm) when flaccid. A study of 80 men from the University of California at San Francisco reported an average of 5.1 inches (13 cm) when erect. A 2002 University of Florence study in Italy found that of 67 patients wanting surgical correction for a "short" penis, almost all had penises within the normal range.

## 3 FEW SENIORS ARE STILL HAVING SEX

Almost three-quarters of people ages 57 to 64 are still doing it at least monthly, as are more than half of those 64 to 75 and more than one-quarter of those in the 75 to 85 age bracket, according to a major 2007 University of Chicago survey of 3,000 subjects conducted by Canadian and American investigators. More than half of respondents ages 57 to 75 said they give or receive oral sex, as do about one-third of those ages 76 to 85.

## 4 SEXUAL MORALS JUST KEEP GETTING LOOSER

Quite the contrary. Among young people 18 to 34, fewer approved of premarital sex in 2006 (77%) than in 1975 (94%), according to *Maclean's* magazine's annual Canada Day Poll.

## 5 MENOPAUSE DECREASES WOMEN'S LIBIDO

Researchers at the University of Texas at Austin found that post-menopausal women were at least as responsive to stimuli associated with sexual desire as premenopausal women. While using a lubricant can help with vaginal dryness, general health and marital status have a greater effect on sexual functioning than menopause's hormonal changes, according to

scientists at the University of Massachusetts Medical School in Worcester.

## 6 KIDS ARE LOSING THEIR VIRGINITY AT YOUNGER AGES

There's no such universal trend. A 2006 British survey of sexual behaviour in 59 countries found that nearly everywhere, people have their first sexual experience in their late teens, a finding consistent with past studies.

## 7 SINGLE PEOPLE HAVE MORE SEX

The same British study found the opposite: married couples have more sex. Sex among young singles tends to be sporadic.

## 8 MEN LIKE FAST-FORWARDING TO INTERCOURSE

Both men and women would actually prefer more foreplay than they're having, according to a 2004 study of 152 heterosexual couples conducted by researchers at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton.

## 9 WOMEN NORMALLY HAVE ORGASM DURING INTERCOURSE

After analyzing 32 studies of female orgasm conducted over 74 years, Indiana University biology professor Dr. Elisabeth Lloyd found that only one-quarter of women report experiencing orgasm during intercourse. Most women need more direct clitoral stimulation.

## 10 THE NO. 1 SEXUAL PROBLEM IN OLDER MEN IS ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION

Nope, that's No. 2. A bigger problem — according to studies of more than 13,500 men ages 40 to 80 in 29 countries conducted by the National Research Council in Milan, Italy — is premature ejaculation. 

