

# Florida Sex and Sexual Health Laws

## **Age of consent**

The age of consent in Florida is 18 years old. This means that anybody 17 and younger cannot consent to any sexual activity. However, people 16 or 17 can legally consent to sexual activity with a partner no older than 23.

## **Birth control**

Condoms, internal condoms, spermicide, birth control sponges, and emergency contraception (also known as the morning-after pill) can be purchased by anyone of any age without a prescription. All other forms of birth control listed here require a prescription and a parent or legal guardian's permission.

All forms of birth control need to be used properly in order to be the most effective. Click on the links to learn more about the proper use of different forms of birth control.

The only forms of birth control currently available for people born with penises are condoms and vasectomy. All other forms of birth control listed here are for people born with vaginas.

## ***Condoms***

Condoms are thin latex or plastic stretchy pouches that you wear on your penis during sex.

You can purchase condoms at a drugstore, grocery store, or online.

ALSO Youth's drop-in center provides free condoms. You can always stop by and grab a few! You can also get free condoms at the Health Department and Planned Parenthood.

When you get condoms, make sure to check the expiration date on the box or the package to make sure the condoms have not expired.

[Click here](#) for more information about condoms.

## ***Internal Condoms***

An internal condom (sometimes called female condom) is a pouch inserted into the vagina to prevent pregnancy. The internal condom is an alternative to a regular condom, so only one or the other should be used during intercourse.

They are available online, and sometimes in stores and family planning centers like Planned Parenthood. We also have free internal condoms at the ALSO Youth drop-in center.

[Click here](#) for more information about internal condoms (warning: link uses cisnormative language).

## ***Spermicide***

Spermicide is a substance that prevents pregnancy by stopping sperm from moving. Spermicide is inserted into the vagina at least 10 minutes before vaginal intercourse. Spermicide is typically only effective for one hour after insertion.

Spermicide is available at Planned Parenthood and other family-planning clinics, drugstores, and some grocery stores. Make sure to read the directions thoroughly before use.

[Click here](#) for more information about spermicide.

### ***Birth Control Pill***

Minors (people under the age of 18) have to get a parent or guardian's permission to receive a prescription for birth control, unless the minor:

- is married
- is a parent
- has health reasons determined by a doctor
- is pregnant or has ever been pregnant

In order to be most effective, the pill must be taken at the same time every day.

[Click here](#) for more information about the birth control pill.

### ***Birth Control Implant***

The birth control implant is a tiny, thin rod about the size of a matchstick. The implant releases hormones into your body that prevent you from getting pregnant. A nurse or doctor inserts the implant into your arm, and you are protected from pregnancy for up to 4 years.

[Click here](#) for more information about the birth control implant.

### ***Birth Control Patch***

The birth control patch is a small patch that sticks to your skin to prevent pregnancy. You must put a new patch on once a week for three weeks in a row followed by a patch-free week.

[Click here](#) for more information about the birth control patch.

### ***Birth Control Shot***

The birth control shot is a shot in the arm or butt that prevents pregnancy. You have to get a shot every 12-13 weeks or about every 3 months.

[Click here](#) for more information about the birth control shot.

### ***Birth Control Sponge***

The birth control sponge is a foam sponge inserted into the vagina to prevent pregnancy. The sponge is made of plastic foam and contains spermicide. It is soft, round, and about two inches in diameter. It has a nylon loop attached to the bottom for removal. It is inserted deep into the vagina before intercourse. The sponge can be inserted up to 24 hours before intercourse. It must be left in place for at least six hours after the last time you have intercourse. It should not be worn for more than 30 hours in a row. The sponge may be available at your local Planned Parenthood, other family-planning clinics, drugstores, online, and in some grocery stores.

[Click here](#) for more information about the birth control sponge.

### ***Birth Control Vaginal Ring***

The birth control vaginal ring is a small ring put in your vagina once a month for three weeks to prevent pregnancy by releasing the hormones estrogen and progestin.

[Click here](#) for more information about the birth control vaginal ring.

### ***Cervical Cap***

The cervical cap is a silicone cup inserted into the vagina to prevent pregnancy by keeping sperm from joining with an egg. In order for it to be as effective as possible, it must be used with spermicide cream or jelly. The cervical cap can be inserted up to six hours before intercourse and must stay in place for six hours after intercourse. You should not leave the cervical cap in place for more than 48 hours.

[Click here](#) for more information about the cervical cap.

### ***Diaphragm***

The diaphragm is a shallow silicone cup inserted into the vagina to prevent pregnancy by keeping sperm from joining with an egg. In order to be as effective as possible, the diaphragm must be used with spermicide cream, gel, or jelly. You can put the diaphragm in up to 2 hours before you have sex, and it must stay in place for 6 hours after vaginal intercourse. Do not leave the diaphragm in place for more than 24 hours.

[Click here](#) for more information about the diaphragm.

### ***IUD***

An IUD is a small, "T-shaped" device inserted into the uterus to prevent pregnancy. An IUD has to be inserted by a doctor, nurse, or other health care provider. Some IUDs can last for up to 12 years.

[Click here](#) for more information about IUDs.

### ***Emergency Contraception (Morning-After Pill)***

People of any age can buy Plan B One-Step without a prescription over the counter at a local pharmacy. Next Choice, Next Choice One Dose, My Way, and Levonorgestrel are approved for sale without a prescription to those who are 17 and older from a pharmacist. If you are 16 or younger, you will need a prescription for Next Choice, Next Choice One Dose, My Way, and Levonorgestrel. The pill Ella is only available with a prescription regardless of age.

The morning-after pill usually costs about \$40-50. Some insurance plans cover emergency contraception, but you will need a prescription to get it for free. Some colleges and universities provide free emergency contraception at their health clinics. You may also be able to get free or low cost emergency contraception from your local Planned Parenthood.

Emergency contraception can be taken up to 120 hours (5 days) after unprotected sex.

[Click here](#) for more information about emergency contraception.

## ***Sterilization for People Born with Vaginas***

Sterilization is a permanent form of birth control. During a sterilization procedure, a health care provider closes or blocks your fallopian tubes. In the state of Florida, you must be 18 or older to be sterilized.

[Click here](#) for more information about sterilization for people born with vaginas (warning: link uses cisnormative language).

## ***Sterilization for People Born with Penises (Vasectomy)***

A vasectomy is a permanent form of birth control for people born with penises. During a vasectomy, a health care provider closes or blocks the tubes that carry sperm. In the state of Florida, you must be 18 or older to receive a vasectomy.

[Click here](#) for more information about sterilization for people born with penises (warning: link uses cisnormative language).

## **Pregnancy**

Pregnancy occurs when a person with a penis ejaculates (or cums) inside a person's vagina. It is also possible – but less likely – to become pregnant through any kind of sex play in which semen, or cum, comes in contact with the vulva. The sperm can travel through the moisture on the vulva into the vagina.

The chances of pregnancy during vaginal intercourse can be lowered if birth control such as condoms or the pill are used. If used correctly, most forms of birth control are around 95-99% effective. The best way to avoid pregnancy is to use a form of hormonal birth control, such as the pill or an IUD, and protection such as a condom, internal condom, or diaphragm.

Anyone of any age can purchase a pregnancy test from a drugstore, grocery store, or online. You can also take a pregnancy test at a doctor's office or clinic, like Planned Parenthood. Minors may request that their doctor keep the pregnancy test and results confidential. Therefore, the doctor does not have to tell your parents about the test. However, if the minor is using their parents' insurance to pay for the test, their parents will likely receive a bill for it.

## **Abortion**

Minors in Florida do not need a parent or guardian's permission to get an abortion, but the doctor is required to notify a parent or guardian before the procedure. Your parent or guardian must sign a form saying they know you are having an abortion.

You do not need parental notification if:

- You are or have ever been married or divorced
- You have a minor child dependent on you
- The abortion is a medical emergency
- You get a court order to bypass the parental notification requirement
- A court has emancipated you

A judge can provide a Judicial Bypass Waiver to exempt you from notifying your parent or guardian if for some reason you cannot do so. In order to receive a waiver, you must contact your local county courthouse. For more information about the Judicial Bypass, you can ask your abortion provider or call the National Abortion Federation Hotline at: 1-800-772-9100, Monday-Friday 7 AM – 11 PM; Saturday-Sunday 9 AM – 9 PM.

### **Sarasota County Courthouse**

2000 Main St.  
Sarasota FL, 34237  
Phone: (941) 861-7400

### **Venice Branch**

4000 S. Tamiami Trail  
Venice, FL 34293  
Phone: (941) 861-7400

Abortions can cost anywhere from hundreds to thousands of dollars, depending on the type of procedure and how far along the pregnancy is. Some insurance plans may cover abortion. Contact your provider for more information.

If your insurance provider does not cover abortion and you cannot afford an abortion, assistance may be available for you. When making an appointment at Planned Parenthood, ask about financial assistance. You can also call the National Abortion Federation Hotline (phone number provided above).

*To schedule an appointment for an abortion, discuss your options, or for any other sexual health-related questions or concerns contact:*

### **Planned Parenthood – Sarasota Health Center**

736 Central Avenue  
Sarasota, FL 34236  
Phone: (941) 953-4060

### **Planned Parenthood – Tampa Health Center**

8068 North 56<sup>th</sup> Street  
Tampa, FL 33617  
Phone: (813) 980-3555

The above Planned Parenthood locations offer the following abortion services:

- abortion pill (medication abortion)
- in-clinic abortion
- sedation options (medication to make the abortion more comfortable)
- pre- and post-abortion patient education
- post-abortion follow-up exams
- referrals for other abortion services, as needed

For more information about these services, please visit:

**Sarasota Planned Parenthood website:**

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/health-center/florida/sarasota/34236/sarasota-health-center-2189-90300/abortion>

**Tampa Planned Parenthood website:**

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/health-center/florida/tampa/33617/tampa-health-center-2247-90300/abortion>

**STDs**

In Florida, you don't need permission from your parent or guardian to get tested for or receive treatment for sexually transmitted diseases and HIV if you are 12-17.

If you are a minor, it is very important for you to ask questions about confidentiality when you call to make an appointment. Specifically ask, "If I make an appointment and receive any kind of services at your clinic, will you tell my parents or anyone else?" This applies to all services, including testing for pregnancy and STDs, including HIV. To make sure your visit is confidential, tell the clinic staff how to contact you about test results and future appointments without your parents knowing.

Florida offers both anonymous and confidential HIV testing. This means that if you get tested for HIV, you can choose to either have your results confidentially reported to the health department using your name, or have your results anonymously reported to the health department using a number code, not your name.

You can receive free STD and HIV testing at your local Department of Health center. Walk-in testing for HIV, syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia is available at the STD HIV/AIDS Intervention Program (SHIP):

**William L. Little Health & Human Services Center**

1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Room 1127  
2200 Ringling Blvd  
Sarasota, FL 34237  
Phone: (941) 861-2873

Walk-in hours are:

Mondays: 1-4 PM

Wednesdays: 1-5 PM

Thursdays: 8:30-11:30 AM

Tests for other STDs and treatments are available by appointment at the same location. Call to schedule an appointment.

STD and HIV testing is also available at the North Port Health Center, but they require that you make an appointment:

## **North Port Health Center**

6950 Outreach Way  
North Port, FL 34287  
Phone: (941)861-3820

### Hours for HIV/AIDS and STD Services:

Monday: 7 AM – 6 PM  
Tuesday: 7 AM – 11 AM and 3 PM – 6 PM  
Wednesday: 7 AM – 6 PM  
Thursday: 7 AM – 6 PM  
Friday: 7 AM – 6 PM  
Saturday & Sunday: Closed

The Sarasota Planned Parenthood offers the following services related to the testing and treatment of STDs:

- STD testing, diagnosis, and treatment, including:
  - bacterial vaginosis (BV)
  - chlamydia
  - genital warts
  - gonorrhea
  - herpes
  - HIV (testing and diagnosis only)
  - syphilis
  - trichomoniasis (trich)
  - STD prevention, including:
    - condoms
    - internal (or female) condoms
    - HPV vaccine (Gardasil)
    - STD/safer sex education

STD testing and treatment services are available during all business hours on a walk-in basis or by appointment.

For more information about the STD services at the Sarasota or Tampa Planned Parenthood locations, please call or visit their websites, provided above.

## **Sex Education**

Florida state law requires sexuality education. Local school boards decide which subjects this education must cover and the grade level in which topics are introduced.

Abstinence must be covered as the only completely effective protection against unplanned pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and infections, and HIV/AIDS.

Teaching about contraceptives, such as condoms, the pill, or the patch, is not required.

Classes must teach abstinence from sexual activity outside of marriage as the expected standard for all school-age students while teaching the benefits of monogamous heterosexual marriage.

### **Sexting**

In Florida, it is a noncriminal violation for a minor to have or send another minor any pictures or videos of someone that is nude. A minor will not be charged with this violation if they did not ask for the picture or video but someone just sent it to them, or they reported it to an adult and did not send the content to other people.

If all of these steps are not taken, this violation is punishable with up to 8 hours of community service or a \$60 fine. But multiple violations can mean different consequences, such as a felony charge.

**[Click here](#) to learn more about your rights about sex and sexuality in Florida.**