

Appendices

Appendix 1: Pilot study on gender as a variable in the DDD corpus	99
Appendix 2: Full Diachronic Dolly Doctor Corpus.....	100
Appendix 3: Keyword list, DDD corpus compared to the ACE.....	312
Appendix 4: Keyword lists, 1990s and 2010s sub-corpora comparisons	317
Appendix 5: Keyword lists, DDD sub-corpora compared to the ACE.....	320

Appendix 1: Pilot study on gender as a variable in the DDD corpus

When building the DDD corpus, I initially coded each text file with the gender of the questioner. For four issues from 1994, each text file was labelled for the categories Female (F), Male (M) and Unspecified (U). Questions were coded for the Female category if the author (a) described themselves as having female anatomy (e.g. questions about breasts or tampons), (b) was identified by the magazine as female (e.g. under the section ‘For Her’), (c) explicitly stated their gender (e.g. “I’m a 15-year-old girl”), or (d) had a name consistent with a female identity. The reverse was true for the Male category. The files were also labelled for the reason behind this categorisation: name (n), explicit reference (e), content or anatomy (c) and/or identification by the magazine (m). Cases that were ambiguous, or which could not be determined with certainty, were marked as Unspecified. However, the unmarked reader of *Dolly*, and therefore author of questions, is female.

After coding four issues for gender, 20 question authors were Female, 35 were Unspecified and 0 were Male. Initially, differences in gender would have been an interesting variable, however the corpus did not contain sufficient data across gender categories to make this worth investigating. Similarly, differences in sexuality would have been an interesting variable, but after becoming familiar with this data, it was clear that sexuality was much harder to identify than gender, and where it was identifiable it was not diverse, with authors being overwhelmingly heterosexual. As a result of this pilot investigation, neither gender or sexuality were used as variables in this study.

Appendix 2: Full Diachronic Dolly Doctor Corpus

Data mark-up

Each text file was tagged with the advice column section and question title, for example:

```
<section> what should I do </section>
```

```
<title> love between friends </title>
```

However, this tagging was not ultimately used in the study.

The Australian Corpus of English contains mark-up such as word count and file type (e.g. Press Reportage). Minor changes were made to the tagging in the ACE to make this mark-up easy to exclude. When running analyses, the following mark-up was excluded:

```
<h>*</h>
```

```
<X>*</X>
```

```
<misc>*</misc>
```

```
<bl>*</bl>
```

```
<title>*</title>
```

```
<source>*</source>
```

```
<note>*</note>
```

```
<id>*</id>
```

```
<section>*</section>
```

1994_1_Q1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> tampon scare </title>

I am 13 and have been using tampons for over a year. Just recently my friend read that using tampons at my age can wreck your insides and could prevent me from having children. Is this true?

1994_1_A1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> tampon scare </title>

Using tampons at any age after your periods have started is very safe. The vaginal walls are stretchy and a tampon can easily fit inside without causing any damage. Stick to common-sense hygiene measures, including changing the tampon at least every six hours and washing your hands before and after inserting it. Overnight it's best to use a pad. A rare infection called "toxic shock syndrome" has been associated with tampon use, but is linked mainly to the use of super-absorbent tampons. There is no reason for you to stop using tampons if you find them convenient.

1994_1_Q2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> white dots </title>

About two weeks ago I had sex for the first time (I'm 16). We used a condom, but now I itch and have white dots around my genital area. I'm scared to go and see a doctor.

1994_1_A2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> white dots </title>

Condoms are a very reliable form of contraception, if used properly, and they protect you from most sexually transmitted diseases. The white dots and itching may be a minor infection, such as thrush, and could be unrelated to sexual intercourse. Wear cotton underwear and avoid tight-fitting clothing around your genital area, keep the area clean, and use an anti-thrush cream (available on prescription). Your irritation may also be caused by an STD, which can be passed on despite using condoms. Your doctor, or a doctor at a Family Planning Clinic, is there to help you. So, don't be afraid to go and see someone, especially if your symptoms don't soon improve.

1994_1_Q3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> itchy summer </title>

I'm 18 and have eczema. I've tried heaps of creams, but none seem to work. In summer it gets really bad on hot, sticky days. All I want is to have normal skin like everyone else.

1994_1_A3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> itchy summer </title>

Eczema is an inflammation of the skin which is often hereditary. Some people have skin that's unusually sensitive to things such as sweat, soap, wool, cosmetics, sand and certain foods. Eczema can flare up for no apparent reason, and is worse when

you're under stress. The skin becomes red and itchy, and while it may initially feel really dry, it often becomes moist, crusty and infected. Eczema is a common skin condition, that tends to affect young people more. Sadly eczema can't be cured, but most sufferers find it often subsides by their early 20s. For relief, try using moisturising Creams that contain sorbolene, glycerin and anti-inflammatory ingredients.

1994_1_Q4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> crippling cramps </title>

I am 15, and have recently been getting very bad cramps in my stomach. These cramps happen at least twice a week. They often get so bad that I can't stand up or walk. It can't be my appendix, as I've had this taken out. I did have a blockage in my bowel when I was younger, and I couldn't empty them. Could this be a blockage again?

1994_1_A4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> crippling cramps </title>

It's difficult to know what is causing your stomach cramps without having more information. It can depend on many factors, such as where exactly you get the cramps, what the pain is like, and whether you have any other symptoms such as fever, vomiting, constipation, diarrhoea, painful urination, vaginal discharge or period problems. Bowel blockages can certainly cause cramps, so there is a possibility that you may have a bowel infection, or be reacting to something in your diet. It would be useful to know what type of foods you normally eat. If you're sexually active, it's also important to consider a pelvic infection. You should see a doctor as the problem that is causing your cramps will be individual to you. The doctor will want some more information about your cramps and any other symptoms, and he or she may want to gently feel the outside of your abdomen to make a conclusive diagnosis. You can see a doctor confidentially, and you won't necessarily need any sort of internal examination.

1994_1_Q5.txt

<section> what should i do </section>

<title> he's doing drugs </title>

My boyfriend has just started doing drugs, and now he won't make love to me unless he is drunk, stoned or tripping. Often during sex he hurts me physically, but later he doesn't remember doing anything to hurt me. I love him very much, but feel that he is just using me for sex.

1994_1_A5.txt

<section> what should i do </section>

<title> he's doing drugs </title>

One of the difficult parts of any relationship is being clear about what you want and need without being unreasonable towards your partner. Your feeling of being used is a strong indicator that something is wrong. You both need to be involved in the serious decisions of a relationship - including your sexual relationship, and how it works. Talk to a trusted person about how you feel. This may help you get clear

whether sex with someone who's out of it, and doesn't even remember it, is what you want.

1994_1_Q6.txt

<section> what should i do </section>

<title> lost and lonely </title>

Recently, my two closest friends moved away, and I really miss them. I'm going to high school next year, and I won't have any friends there. I feel really heartbroken, but I don't know what to do.

1994_1_A6.txt

<section> what should i do </section>

<title> lost and lonely </title>

Losing friends can leave us feeling like we'll never have any friends again. Remember you already have the ability to make close friends, and you'll be able to do this again. Don't fight your sadness - acknowledge that it's a natural response. This will make it easier for you to eventually get over it.

1994_1_Q7.txt

<section> what should i do </section>

<title> more than friends </title>

I have a crush on a cute boy. We've been friends for ages, but how can I tell him that I want more than friendship?

1994_1_A7.txt

<section> what should i do </section>

<title> more than friends </title>

The best way to handle any relationship is to be clear and uncomplicated in the messages you give out. Sharing your feelings with your friend may change the way the whole relationship works. So, before you say anything, be sure that you could cope with any outcome, even the loss of your friendship. Be considerate about where and when you tell him.

1994_1_Q8.txt

<section> what should i do </section>

<title> won't wear bras </title>

We're very concerned about our friend. She's 13, and she needs to wear a bra. We don't want to tell her this, as she might get embarrassed. Her mum buys her bras, but she won't wear them.

1994_1_A8.txt

<section> what should i do </section>

<title> won't wear bras </title>

Your friend seems to have made a conscious choice not to wear a bra. Can you accept her making different decisions to you? Friendship often requires some compromise, and finding ways to accept your friend's decision may be more useful than struggling against it.

1994_1_Q9.txt

<section> sex and your body your genitals </section>

<title> it hurt to urinate </title>

I'm 16, and after having sex with my boyfriend (we used a condom), I developed cut-like sores around my genital area and one lip was inflamed. It hurt urinating and sitting in certain positions. The symptoms were gone within a week. Is this an STD? Can you get STDs from oral sex?

1994_1_A9.txt

<section> sex and your body your genitals </section>

<title> it hurt to urinate </title>

If your boyfriend penetrates you with his fingers before having intercourse it is possible to receive cuts from his fingernails. Such damage may not be noticed at the time if you're feeling sexually aroused, but it will cause soreness and mild inflammation afterwards. Make sure your boyfriend cuts his nails short and is gentle when he touches you. It's certainly possible that you have contracted an STD. Some STDs can be transmitted through oral sex as well as genital sex. While condoms are a good protective device, they aren't 100 per cent effective. If the soreness goes away there is probably nothing to worry about. However, if your genital area remains inflamed, you should seek medical advice.

1994_1_Q10.txt

<section> sex and your body your genitals </section>

<title> too much touching? </title>

I'm 16 years old, and recently I had sex for the first time with my boyfriend. He touched me a lot on my vagina and breasts, and now they feel sore. Is this bad for me, or is it OK to let him continue?

1994_1_A10.txt

<section> sex and your body your genitals </section>

<title> too much touching? </title>

One of the things that boys don't seem to realise is that gentle, slow touching is more pleasurable for the girl than hard vigorous movements. Too much vigorous touching can easily lead to bruising and soreness for some days afterwards. Your boyfriend needs to adopt a form of sexual behaviour that isn't damaging to you, and which you both enjoy. If you can talk to him about this, the problem should be easily solved. Try guiding his hand movements and respond positively to his most gentle touches. He should soon get the idea, and you can continue to enjoy your time together.

1994_1_Q11.txt

<section> sex and your body your genitals </section>

<title> red sores </title>

Recently after having sex, my boyfriend and I developed red sores that looked like dry skin around our genital areas. Going to the toilet after intercourse stings, is this an STD? Can STDs kill you, and do they stop you from having children when you're older?

1994_1_A11.txt

<section> sex and your body your genitals </section>

<title> red sores </title>

Given the symptoms that you've both experienced, it sounds as though you may have an STD, probably thrush. This is caused by yeast - often it's found in the body with no

harmful effects, but sometimes it multiplies out of control. It can be treated by washing the infected area with a weak vinegar solution (one teaspoon to a cup of water) or by the use Of Aci-jel, a cream available from a chemist. If the symptoms persist you should consult a doctor or Family Planning Clinic. There are a number of different STDs which could produce the symptoms you describe, and some, such as chlamydia, may cause infertility if they go untreated. You can obtain information on STDS from most libraries and medical facilities.

1994_1_Q12.txt

<section> sex and your body your genitals </section>

<title> sharp pains </title>

I'm 14 and recently my boyfriend penetrated me with his finger. I liked it at the time, but now I'm really uncomfortable and I get sharp pains sometimes. I don't know what could have happened.

1994_1_A12.txt

<section> sex and your body your genitals </section>

<title> sharp pains </title>

The main problem with digital penetration is sharp fingernails which can easily damage the area at the top of your vagina, particularly around the clitoris. These are the areas most sensitive to sexual stimulation, and yet they have a reduced ability to register pain during sexual activity. It is quite possible to receive small cuts and not to notice it happening at the time. You will feel it after the period of sexual arousal is over though. Try checking whether this has happened, by using a small mirror to examine your genital region. If it has, the cuts will usually heal in a couple of days or so. If the pain persists, or if there are signs of infection in the form of a discharge or a bad smell, then you should seek medical advice.

1994_1_Q13.txt

<section> sex and your body your genitals </section>

<title> strange wart </title>

I have a small lump on my labia (I think it's my labia. It's the flaps on my vagina). The lips are quite large and the lump is about the size of a wart, but it doesn't look like the wart on my hand. Sometimes it can be a little bit itchy. I'm not sexually active and have never had intercourse with a guy.

1994_1_A13.txt

<section> sex and your body your genitals </section>

<title> strange wart </title>

The labia majora or "large lips" are the outer part of the genital area. They are composed mostly of fat and numerous glands. The small lump you refer to may be a fat deposit, which is of no concern, or it may be a wart, especially since you have warts on your hands. If it is a wart it needs to be treated, because if it spreads to other parts of the genital region this may cause pain and discomfort. Genital warts can be passed on to other people during sexual activity if Condoms aren't used. Find out for sure by going to see your doctor or a Family Planning Clinic for an examination and appropriate treatment, if required.

1994_1_Q14.txt

<section> sex and your body your genitals </section>

<title> sudden bleeding </title>

My boyfriend and I haven't had sex yet. The other day things got a bit heated, and he put his finger inside me. Afterwards I noticed a fair amount of blood on my underpants and a stinging sensation, but no blood was present in my urine. It can't be my periods because I recently went on the Pill. I'm not sure if he might have cut the inside of my vagina or if he has broken the piece of skin that is normally broken during your first Sexual intercourse.

1994_1_A14.txt

<section> sex and your body your genitals </section>

<title> sudden bleeding </title>

You need to be careful that your sexual relations with your boyfriend aren't too rough, otherwise damage can occur. If your boyfriend's fingers were inside your vagina, then he may have torn the hymen, which is a thin layer of tissue at the entrance to the vagina. This would cause a small amount of spotting, but should not result in an extensive flow of blood. Another explanation could be that you have commenced your period. While the Pill stops ovulation, it doesn't stop your monthly period. If you continue to bleed and experience a stinging sensation, you should go to your doctor and see if any treatment is required.

1994_2_Q1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> when should I start shaving? </title>

I am 12 and shave my legs, but I'm scared the hairs will go black. What's the right age to start shaving?

1994_2_A1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> when should I start shaving? </title>

Shaving causes the hairs to grow back coarser and often darker than before. The hairs on your legs are lightened by exposure to sunlight and, when you shave them off, the hairs that grow back will usually be darker than before. If you are a fair-haired person, it's unlikely the hairs on your legs will be black, but you'll probably notice a slight difference in colour. You can start shaving at any age - many girls begin at puberty, while others don't shave their legs at all. However, once you start shaving, the skin on your legs can become irritated, so it's a good idea to keep your skin well moisturised with sorbolene, Aloe Vera or Vitamin E cream. If you develop a rash or find the hairs become thick and dark, you could stop shaving your legs or consider waxing your legs if you prefer them hairless.

1994_2_Q2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> have I got inverted nipples? </title>

I've been told inverted nipples either point inwards or there's just no nipples. I haven't ever seen what they look like, but I think I may have them. I am 16, and where my nipples are supposed to be, there are just no nipples My last boyfriend told me had inverted nipples, but I'm still not quite sure. Is this a turn-off for guys? Could you please explain what inverted nipples look like.

1994_2_A2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> have I got inverted nipples? </title>

Inverted nipples point inwards instead of outwards. The dark circles in the centre of the breasts (areolae) are present, but instead of the nipples protruding from the middle of the areolae, they point in, so they may look like a small dimple. Inverted nipples are quite common and can occur on one or both breasts. Inverted nipples are not always permanent and they're certainly not a turn-off. There's no difference in sensation with inverted nipples, and it's still possible to breastfeed with them. Your doctor will be able to tell you whether your nipples are inverted.

1994_2_Q3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> my periods have stopped </title>

I am 15 and had my first period when was 13. Since then, I haven't had another one. Please don't tell me to talk to my mum or see a doctor.

1994_2_A3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> my periods have stopped </title>

In the first two years after the menarche (first period), periods can be extremely irregular and vary from being very light to heavy and painless to quite painful. After this, they usually settle into some sort of pattern, occurring every three to five weeks. If you have absolutely no sign of a period, this may be due to weight loss, excessive exercise, taking the oral contraceptive Pill or a hormonal imbalance. If you are sexually active, pregnancy should not be ruled out as a possible cause. Although you may find it difficult to talk to your mother, she could help you and might even have had a similar menstrual pattern herself at the same age. Although it may seem embarrassing, doctors are used to talking to females of all ages about their periods. A local doctor or Family Planning Clinic will be able to talk to you confidentially. This might be the only way you can find out whether or not your menstrual cycle is normal.

1994_2_Q4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> itchy vagina </title>

My vagina is constantly itchy. I don't know what to do - the itchiness keeps me up at night. I haven't started my period yet.

1994_2_A4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> itchy vagina </title>

Vaginal itch can occur in girls and women of all ages. The causes include low hormone levels, skin conditions such as dermatitis and other allergies, and infections such as thrush (candida) and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

Vaginal itch can be very distressing and even painful. Treatment is usually simple and effective and may include vaginal creams or tablets. Keep the genital region clean, dry and well-aired by wearing cotton underwear, Wearing loose clothing and wiping from front to back after going to the toilet also helps. Go and see your doctor or

Family Planning Clinic for an accurate diagnosis and appropriate treatment. The doctor will discuss your symptoms with you and he or she may wish to examine the outside of your vagina. You probably won't need to have an internal examination if you're not sexually active.

1994_2_Q5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> mysterious infection </title>

Last year I slept with a guy I was going out with. When we broke up, I started going out with his best friend. My ex told my boyfriend he caught something from me, so I went and had blood tests which all proved to be negative. He said his penis became swollen and it hurt to pee for about 24 hours. He told everybody, including my boyfriend's parents. I'm so ashamed. I think my new boyfriend dumped me because of it. Is it possible to have something and not know you have it?

1994_2_A5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> mysterious infection </title>

A person can have a sexually transmitted disease (STD) without any symptoms. These people are called carriers and they can pass on an infection without knowing it. This might explain your situation. It's also possible that your ex-boyfriend's symptoms aren't related to having sex with you at all. You've certainly acted responsibly by going to your doctor and having tests yourself. However, blood tests and swabs occasionally don't show up some STDs, such as Chlamydia (also known as NSU). It's important to find out from your ex-boyfriend whether he had tests done at the time and what diagnosis and treatment he was given. You should then go back to your doctor in case you need the same treatment. In your future sexual relationships, it would be highly advisable that you use condoms to reduce the risk of you catching or transmitting infections.

1994_2_Q6.txt

<section> sex and your body sexual assault </section>

<title> incestuous sex </title>

I am 13 and have sex with my dad every night. My last two periods haven't come, and I'm worried I may be pregnant.

1994_2_A6.txt

<section> sex and your body sexual assault </section>

<title> incestuous sex </title>

You must stop having sex with your father. Incest is not only morally wrong, it's illegal. If you feel you can't talk to your father, or get him to stop on your own, you must tell someone you can trust (preferably an adult friend, a teacher or your school counsellor). Pregnancy may not be the reason your period has stopped, but you must make sure. You can test yourself with a home pregnancy kit, which you or a friend can buy from your local chemist, or go to your doctor or a Family Planning Clinic for a professional, confidential test.

1994_2_Q7.txt

<section> sex and your body sexual assault </section>

<title> my uncle touches me </title>

When I was nine my uncle used to touch me. Now, four years later, he's started again. I now have a boyfriend, but hate being hugged or kissed by my boyfriend.

1994_2_A7.txt

<section> sex and your body sexual assault </section>

<title> my uncle touches me </title>

No-one should touch your body against your will. You need to seek help to get your uncle to stop. Talk with an adult you trust, perhaps one of your parents, a teacher or your school counsellor. Alternatively, you could ring or visit the Rape Crisis Centre in your state. In the meantime, you have to try and make it clear to your uncle that you don't want him to touch you, and to avoid being alone with him. Your reaction to your boyfriend is quite understandable, but you need to seek help with your feelings, otherwise you may find the negative reactions to other guys' affection won't stop.

1994_2_Q8.txt

<section> sex and your body sexual assault </section>

<title> had sex with brother </title>

One night my parents were arguing loudly, so I got into my brother's bed for comfort. We ended up having sex.

1994_2_A8.txt

<section> sex and your body sexual assault </section>

<title> had sex with brother </title>

While your situation is understandable, sexual contact between siblings is not acceptable behaviour. And if you continue to have sex, it's likely your parents will find out, making the problem worse. Use the good feelings you share to cooperate in a search for help with the family violence. Talk to a school counsellor or contact a youth crisis centre in your area.

1994_2_Q9.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> love between friends </title>

I'm in love with my best friend. Lately I've found myself looking at her in a different way and wondering what it would be like to kiss her. My friend doesn't know about my feelings. What should I do?

1994_2_A9.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> love between friends </title>

Being clear and open about your feelings will give you and your friend an opportunity to review your relationship and decide whether or not you both want to change the way it works. Your new feelings will affect the relationship, so prepare yourself to deal with all the possible outcomes.

1994_2_Q10.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> he thinks I'm a child </title>

For a while now, I have liked a guy. The problem is the age difference; he is four years older. He thinks of me as a child and I'm scared to let him know how I really feel, as he'll probably laugh in my face.

1994_2_A10.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> he thinks I'm a child </title>

Expressing your emotions is important and needs to be given the respect it deserves. Although your age difference is not as critical as whether or not you communicate well together, it's important to decide whether the experience you've both had could support a fulfilling relationship. It might be worth talking with a trusted friend to get some feedback before you confront him.

1994_2_Q11.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> no self-confidence </title>

My boyfriend has hardly any self-confidence. He's a nice person and very good-looking, but he's been hurt in past relationships and I wonder if that has anything to do with his lack of confidence. How can help him?

1994_2_A11.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> no self-confidence </title>

Your care and appreciation are important ways in which you can help him, but it would also be a good idea to ask him whether he thinks there's a problem or not. Your local Community Health Services may be able to suggest groups that he could attend which deal with confidence and self-esteem. The experience of not being hurt by you may also help him.

1994_2_Q12.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> my best friend keeps dumping me </title>

My best friend has started hanging around another girl and ignoring me. She's done this before but has come back to me. I feel she's using me.

1994_2_A12.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> my best friend keeps dumping me </title>

Decide what you want from the friendship before talking with your friend about whether it has outgrown itself, or whether you need to renegotiate the way in which your friendship works.

1994_2_Q13.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> she's doing drugs </title>

I have a really good friend who is always going home from parties drunk and she's started getting into drugs. I would like to help her, but I don't know how to.

1994_2_A13.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> she's doing drugs </title>

You face a difficult situation. Talking to your friend about her behaviour may make her retreat, but making it clear that you care about her and will support her would be

valuable. Unfortunately, your friend is the only person who can be responsible for herself.

1994_3_Q1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> scarred for life? </title>

I'm 15 years old and have a face full of scars because I used to pick my pimples. I have olive skin and no longer have pimples, but the scars make me feel depressed.

1994_3_A1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> scarred for life? </title>

If you're still picking at your skin you should stop, as it makes the scarring worse. Olive skin can make scars look darker but this fades after one to two years. Always wear a Factor 15+ block-out and, if you want to hide the scars, wear make-up over the top. When you've had no active pimples for a few years, you could undergo dermabrasion to reduce the scarring. This must be done by a qualified skin specialist. Although most young people experience acne, which often makes them depressed, you should try talking to a trusted adult about the way you feel.

1994_3_Q2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> calcium check </title>

I want to be sure I'm getting enough calcium, but I'm not sure how much I should be taking each day.

1994_3_A2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> calcium check </title>

Calcium is essential for healthy bones and teeth and is vital for the co-ordination of nerves and muscles. Having enough calcium when you're young helps provide bone strength for later life. This is particularly important for females who may be at risk of getting osteoporosis (thinning of the bones) after menopause (around the age of 50). Try to include about 800mg of calcium in your daily diet. The best sources of calcium are dairy products, but other foods rich in calcium include salmon, sardines, prawns, almonds, spinach and soya beans.

1994_3_Q3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> abnormal discharge </title>

I'm 17 years old and I'm pregnant. Recently, I've been getting an abnormal discharge - it's white and thick like cottage cheese. Also, I'm getting very itchy around the vulva. If it's thrush, could it affect our baby?

1994_3_A3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> abnormal discharge </title>

Your symptoms sound very much like vaginal thrush, also known as monilia or candida. This is a common problem among females - whether they are pregnant or not - and is caused by an overgrowth of a yeast in the vagina. It won't affect your baby

and can be treated by keeping your genital area clean and dry, wearing pure cotton underwear and avoiding tight pants or jeans. Most vaginal creams and pessaries available on prescription are effective and safe to use during pregnancy. Discuss your symptoms with your midwife, doctor or a doctor at a Family Planning clinic, because there are other infections which may affect you or the baby more seriously.

1994_3_Q4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> dry hair dilemma </title>

I am 13 and have long, thick, dry hair. I've tried various shampoos and conditioners, but I still get the same results.

1994_3_A4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> dry hair dilemma </title>

The most common causes of dry hair are the sun, using a hair-drier and the chemicals used to colour and perm your hair. Two-in-one shampoos and some medical conditions can also dry out your hair. Consult a hairdresser who can examine your hair and advise an appropriate treatment. You may simply need to trim your hair regularly or change to more suitable hair products.

1994_3_Q5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> aches and pains </title>

I experience constant headaches around my forehead and temples.

Does this mean I need glasses? I also sometimes get back and neck aches.

1994_3_A5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> aches and pains </title>

The most common kind of headache is caused by muscle tension (tension headaches). Migraines are also quite common, especially if others in your family have had them. These can be brought on by tiredness, stress and being unwell. Eye strain may cause headaches, but it usually causes blurred vision as well. Your back and neck aches could be due to poor posture, muscle strain or a previous injury. Ask your physical education teacher to show you some exercises to improve your back strength. Without more information it's difficult to know what's causing your aches. Your doctor should be able to help.

1994_3_Q6.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> unpredictable period </title>

I'm a 19-year-old girl who's been on the Pill for about a year. For the past four months, I've been getting my period every three weeks. I skipped a week of the Pill so I could take the right pill for the right week, but I still got my period a week early. How can get back to a normal cycle?

1994_3_A6.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> unpredictable period </title>

You've probably been getting "breakthrough bleeding" which can be a side-effect of the Pill. This is usually harmless, but it can be a nuisance. However, if you start skipping pills - either accidentally or deliberately to try to regulate your period - you may lose the contraceptive protection of the Pill. Make sure you use condoms. Your bleeding could be due to the Pill interacting with other medications you have been taking, Or you may have a more serious problem, such as a pelvic infection. Go and see your doctor. It could be a simple matter of changing to another brand of Pill.

1994_3_Q7.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> junk food junkie </title>

During the day I have a healthy diet, but as soon as I get home I eat junk food and then feel guilty. More than once I've tried to make myself throw up. How can stop this terrible habit? I'm desperately trying to lose weight.

1994_3_A7.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> junk food junkie </title>

It's important to eat a healthy, balanced diet, which can include a bit of junk food from time to time. Sometimes the desire to lose weight and feeling guilty about what you eat can get out of control and may lead to vicious cycles of overeating, vomiting and crash-dieting. This kind of behaviour is unhealthy and dangerous. Young people, especially, shouldn't go on strict weight-reducing diets as their bodies are growing and developing quickly. One hour of aerobic exercise three times a week is a good way to keep weight under control and improve your fitness. You should get some advice from a health professional about what foods you should eat and whether your weight is in the healthy range for your age and height. A dietitian, your local doctor or a trained person at a youth health centre can help you.

1994_3_Q8.txt

<section> what should i do </section>

<title> used to be best friends </title>

My best friend and I used to be really close, but suddenly our relationship has fallen apart. I don't see her on weekends anymore because she always says she's doing something else. She used to tell me everything but now, whenever I ask her something, she changes the subject.

1994_3_A8.txt

<section> what should i do </section>

<title> used to be best friends </title>

Your relationship is important to you, but do you know if it's still important to your friend? As people usually grow and change over time, their friendships also need to change. Talk to your friend about what she thinks is happening, and try to work out whether your relationship is one that you both want to keep working on. You might think about whether you still need the type of friendship you had, or whether it would be better to move on. Trying to guess what your friend is thinking will only confuse you more, so make an effort to talk to her instead.

1994_3_Q9.txt

<section> what should i do </section>

<title> thinks about suicide </title>

I'm 15 years old and very confused. Over the past year I have become depressed. Thoughts of suicide are always on my mind and I have attempted it once. I have one close friend who I can talk to, but I know I'm scaring her. I've tried talking to my parents, but they laugh at me and tell me I'll be fine, but I'm not. I'm scared.

1994_3_A9.txt

<section> what should i do </section>

<title> thinks about suicide </title>

You're really the only person who knows when you can't cope anymore. When this happens, you need to talk to someone outside your situation who will be objective, like a school counsellor. But, remember, the cause of your depression can sometimes take a little bit of time to work out. If you can see that you're scaring your friend with your depression, then try to look at your problems from her point of view - it might help you both.

1994_3_Q10.txt

<section> what should i do </section>

<title> dad's an alcoholic </title>

I'm 14 years old and my dad is an alcoholic. He recently quit smoking, but his drinking is now worse, and he's started to embarrass me. I'm scared of what he might do if I don't listen to him. Only one of my friends knows about his drinking. I can't talk to my dad or a counsellor.

1994_3_A10.txt

<section> what should i do </section>

<title> dad's an alcoholic </title>

You seem to have told yourself there's no answer to your problem before you've explored all the possibilities. Do you know for sure that you can't talk to a counsellor or a trusted adult? Your confusion and fear aren't surprising - you're being forced to cope with a situation that a 14-year-old shouldn't have to deal with because your father isn't performing his role. Think about who, other than yourself, would best be able to help your dad so that you can get back to being his daughter, not his minder. Adults sometimes need other adults to help them get back on track. Try talking to a trusted relative.

1994_3_Q11.txt

<section> what should i do </section>

<title> mum wants to say when I have sex </title>

I'm 15 years old and so is my boyfriend. We haven't started a sexual relationship - or even discussed it - but my mum keeps telling me it's her decision when I have sex. When I say it's not up to her she gets angry and lectures me about falling pregnant. Why is she doing this?

1994_3_A11.txt

<section> what should i do </section>

<title> mum wants to say when I have sex </title>

Many parents fear for their children's future, and this fear can sometimes affect the way they respond to different situations. Your parents want you to have the best of everything, but they also try to protect you, which makes it seem like you aren't being

given a say in your own development. Helping anyone, parents included, to understand that their fear is unfounded is a good way to release them from that fear. You seem to have a communication breakdown with your mum, so try to think of someone who'll be able to get you both talking.

1994_3_Q12.txt

<section> what should i do </section>

<title> she's mean to my sister </title>

I am 13 years old and, even though my 18-year-old sister can be a pain sometimes, I cry whenever she gets into trouble. She was born with a disability and my mum always seems to pick on her. Mum is divorced and every time I tell her to stop being so mean to my sister she yells at me. Please tell me what to do otherwise my sister will be sent to my dad's.

1994_3_A12.txt

<section> what should i do </section>

<title> she's mean to my sister </title>

It isn't easy watching something that hurts you, and it's also difficult trying to get other peoples' relationships to work. Talking with a trusted relative or your school counsellor about your concerns may give you some other ideas about how to help them both. Letting your sister know how much you care could help her cope with your mother's criticism - at least she'll know someone is on her side. Talk to your mum and let her know how distressed you feel. In the end, you can only work out your relationships with the people in your family individually, but talking to someone outside your family might help you manage your distress.

1994_4_Q1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> sweaty palms </title>

My hands are always sweaty - not just moist, they're soaking wet. I've been to see doctors, but they say it's not serious. It really bothers me - when I hold someone's hand they let go because of my sweaty palms.

1994_4_A1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> sweaty palms </title>

You have a condition called "hyperhidrosis" (excess sweating) which commonly occurs in the teenage years and may improve with time. The sweating can be on the palms, soles of the feet, the armpits or all three, but it doesn't cause body odour. These areas will sweat even on cold days if you feel anxious or stressed and, although it's not a serious condition, it can be embarrassing and unpleasant. There are treatments - mainly in the form of lotions - that a skin specialist can prescribe which may help, but these can have side effects. Try talking to your doctor or a doctor at a youth health centre about how it's affecting you. They can then refer you to a specialist if necessary.

1994_4_Q2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> are sunscreens safe? </title>

Is it safe to keep applying SPF sunscreens every time you go outside, or will they affect our health in 20 years from now? I don't think it's wise to keep applying chemicals to my skin when I don't know what their long-term effects will be.

1994_4_A2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> are sunscreens safe? </title>

SPF is not a chemical, it stands for "sun protection factor" and refers to how effectively a sunscreen will protect you from sunburn on a scale of two to 15. Sunscreens contain a variety of chemicals which help prevent the sun's ultraviolet radiation from causing sunburn, premature ageing of the skin and skin cancer. These chemicals, like all medicines in Australia, have undergone tests by a drug board before being made available to the public. However, like many chemicals and drugs, the long-term effects may not yet be known. What experts do know is that being exposed to the sun for long periods of time, or getting repeatedly sunburnt can cause skin cancer. Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world and this could be reduced if people protected themselves against the sun. Wearing a hat and sunnies is not enough, as UV radiation is reflected off water, snow and sand. To avoid sun damage, and even skin cancer, you should wear a SPF 15+ sunscreen whenever you go outside, and avoid going out in the Sun in the middle of the day.

1994_4_Q3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> I'm too skinny </title>

I'm 14 years old and am concerned about my weight. My friends constantly tell me how skinny I am and make jokes about it. I weigh 40kg and my waist measures 58cm. My legs (especially my ankles) are extremely thin. I eat all my lunch, lots of junk food and large meals for dinner. Is there something wrong with me?

1994_4_A3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> I'm too skinny </title>

Whether or not you're underweight depends on your height, where your pubertal development is at, and the size of your family members. Other factors to consider are whether you've been losing weight, physical symptoms such as vomiting or diarrhoea, your diet and how much exercise you do. A little junk food is OK, but you should make sure you eat a balanced diet and have three meals a day with snacks (such as fruit or biscuits) in between. If you've always been thin your weight is probably quite normal, but if you do have any worries, talk to your doctor.

1994_4_Q4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> cellulite concerns </title>

I'm 15 years old and have cellulite on my legs. I don't like wearing shorts or dresses because people can see it. Is there a cream that I can use on my legs to make it go away?

1994_4_A4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> cellulite concerns </title>

Cellulite is caused by the layer of fat beneath the skin. It's normal to have more of this fat around the thighs, hips and buttocks, especially during and after puberty. There are no creams or treatments that are guaranteed to make cellulite go away. Losing weight (and therefore fat) can help, but you shouldn't be going on a strict diet at your age as it usually does more harm than good. If you're overweight you could speak to your doctor about eating the right kinds of food and exercising to tone your leg muscles.

1994_4_Q5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> broken veins </title>

I've got broken veins around my nose which make it look red. People tease me about it, including my best friend. It's so embarrassing.

1994_4_A5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> broken veins </title>

Unfortunately there are no creams which make broken veins disappear, but you could cover them with a little make-up. It's really important to protect your skin from the sun by wearing a SPF 15+ sunscreen and a hat, as sunburn will make them worse. The only way to permanently remove broken veins is by laser treatment, which must be done by a specialist. This is effective and leaves no scarring. Your local doctor can refer you to a skin specialist.

1994_4_Q6.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> period pain </title>

I suffer from extremely bad period pain. It is so intense on the day I get my period that I can't move, and at night I can't sleep. Sometimes the pain even makes me throw up. I've tried everything from painkillers to exercise, but nothing gives me relief.

1994_4_A6.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> period pain </title>

The pain and vomiting you experience are caused by chemicals called "prostaglandins" which are produced by the lining of your uterus at the beginning of the menstrual cycle. Prostaglandins can also cause diarrhoea, fainting, sweating and fevers and the effect usually lasts one to two days. As women react differently to prostaglandins, some have only mild pains while others are severely affected and can't go to work or school. The best way to treat these symptoms are with anti-prostaglandin drugs such as Naprogesic, Ponstan, aspirin or other prescription-only drugs. The tablets must be taken the day before or right at the start of your period. If you wait until the pain or vomiting has begun the tablets won't work as well. The Pill helps reduce period pain, but it should only be considered if you need contraception, or if nothing else has worked. Talk to your doctor or a doctor at a Family Planning Clinic for more advice.

1994_4_Q7.txt

<section> sex and your body masturbation </section>

<title> is masturbation normal? </title>

I'm a 15-year-old girl who has never been kissed or experienced any other kind of physical contact with a male. One day when I was alone at home I fingered myself and touched inside my vagina. I feel so dirty and ashamed about it. Could you please tell me if touching myself will harm me, and if it's normal for girls my age?

1994_4_A7.txt

<section> sex and your body masturbation </section>

<title> is masturbation normal? </title>

As girls and guys go through adolescence their bodies undergo rapid physical changes, and their sexual urges increase substantially. This arouses curiosity about their bodies and about sex. The normal way in which most people find out about their bodies, and a way in which they can express their sexual urges, is through masturbation. Before most girls become sexually active with another person, and particularly during early adolescence, they discover more about their own sexual urges by touching their breasts, putting their fingers in their vagina and stroking their clitoris until they have an orgasm. If girls are to experience sexual pleasure later in life when they become sexually active with other people, they firstly need to know how their bodies work, and how they like to be touched. Masturbation is the natural way to find this out, while providing a safe outlet for your sexual urges. Although people are still sometimes embarrassed to talk about it, or refuse to talk about it because of their religious beliefs, most people regularly masturbate, and there's no reason at all for you to feel ashamed or dirty because you do too.

1994_4_Q8.txt

<section> sex and your body masturbation </section>

<title> I want to stop, but I can't </title>

I masturbate every night. I can't help it because it feels really good. I want to stop, but I can't. Can you give me some advice on how to stop?

1994_4_A8.txt

<section> sex and your body masturbation </section>

<title> I want to stop, but I can't </title>

Masturbation allows you to discover how to satisfy your sexual arousal and learn what kinds of sexual stimulation you like and dislike. This will be useful information to share with a sexual partner later in your life. So, why do you want to stop when it's not only pleasurable, but beneficial? Maybe it's because your religion believes that the purpose of sex is solely for procreating the human race, and it says that you shouldn't get pleasure from it. In this case, masturbating is seen as a sin because it encourages people to seek pleasure from sex. But, while everyone is entitled to their beliefs on what is morally right, medically speaking, masturbating isn't at all dangerous. If you really want to stop, try concentrating on other ways to release your tension, like exercising.

1994_4_Q9.txt

<section> sex and your body masturbation </section>

<title> do I touch myself too much? </title>

I like to masturbate every morning and night before I go to sleep because I find it relaxing and it helps me to relieve stress. Is it abnormal to masturbate so much?

1994_4_A9.txt

<section> sex and your body masturbation </section>

<title> do I touch myself too much? </title>

The frequency with which people need to masturbate varies enormously. Some feel the urge only occasionally, while others masturbate several times each day. There's nothing abnormal about this. Although in some religions masturbation is a taboo subject, it's a safe form of sexual behaviour. You should feel free to enjoy your body through masturbation, especially if it helps with relaxation and stress management.

1994_4_Q10.txt

<section> sex and your body masturbation </section>

<title> will it affect my health? </title>

I am a healthy and athletic 12-year-old girl. For the past eight months I've been masturbating regularly, but whenever I stop for a day or two I feel uncomfortable. Will masturbating affect my health or slow me down when I'm running, jumping and sprinting?

1994_4_A10.txt

<section> sex and your body masturbation </section>

<title> will it affect my health? </title>

Masturbation is an expression of the fact that you're becoming sexually mature. It allows you to reduce the tensions produced by your emerging sexual needs, while also teaching you more about your own body. It's a harmless activity with no medical or health consequences. Masturbating will certainly not decrease your performance in sport. In fact, some people say that it can have a positive influence on your life by reducing any built up sexual tensions.

1994_4_Q11.txt

<section> sex and your body masturbation </section>

<title> when I stimulate myself it hurts </title>

I'm 12 years old and have not yet started my periods. I masturbate quite often, but whenever I do so I end up in a lot of pain. Is something wrong?

1994_4_A11.txt

<section> sex and your body masturbation </section>

<title> when I stimulate myself it hurts </title>

Most people masturbate at least once in their lives - it is a normal form of sexual behaviour. You have to remember, however, that your genitals are sensitive, and you need to be careful that you don't hurt yourself. If you rub yourself too hard, you may damage the skin in the genital area. Be gentle when you touch yourself, and try using a lubricating cream, such as KY Jelly. Lubricating creams are available from all chemists.

1994_4_Q12.txt

<section> sex and your body masturbation </section>

<title> does it interfere with menstruation? </title>

Is it possible that masturbation can interfere with your periods somehow? Could it stop or delay them?

1994_4_A12.txt

<section> sex and your body masturbation </section>

<title> does it interfere with menstruation? </title>

Your periods occur due to changes in hormone levels in your body. As you go through your regular monthly cycle, your hormonal levels change and, if you don't become pregnant, the lining of your uterus breaks away and is expelled from your body in the form of a period. Sometimes, if you're under a lot of tension or you feel anxious about something, this hormonal balance is upset and your period may be delayed, or you may even miss it completely. Since your period is controlled by hormones, other things normally don't influence the timing of your period. Masturbation, no matter how often you do it, shouldn't affect your period, but if you're feeling really anxious about masturbating, this could cause your period to be delayed. Try not to worry too much about it, as it is a normal form of sexual behaviour.

1994_4_Q13.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I love her brother </title>

I'm in love with my best friend's brother. I want to tell my friend how I feel, but I fear she'll think I'm using her to get to her brother.

1994_4_A13.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I love her brother </title>

You need to separate our feelings about your friendship with your attraction to your friend's brother. Are you sure he wants to have a relationship with you? Guessing people's responses can be very confusing. Maybe you should talk to your friend about how she would react to your feelings towards her brother. That way, you'll be able to see clearly which relationship you value most, and what you need to do.

1994_4_Q14.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> my best friend's a liar </title>

Whenever we go out, my best friend lies to her dad about where she's going, and now she's started lying to me. She also shoplifts. If she doesn't stop, our friendship won't last.

1994_4_A14.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> my best friend's a liar </title>

Friendship can be a complex type of relationship, and you are going to have to deal with a difficult part of it - the difference between what you and your friend consider to be acceptable. Choosing whether or not to stick by your friend will be easier if you let her know how you feel about her lying, and how important her friendship is to you. This will also give your friend an opportunity to do something about her behaviour. By not talking to your friend, your situation may never get sorted out.

1994_4_Q15.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I've got no social life </title>

I'm so shy - I have no friends, no social life, bad communication skills, low self-esteem, no interests and no energy. What can I do?

1994_4_A15.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I've got no social life </title>

Admitting your shyness shows that you are honest about your own feelings, which is the first step in overcoming your problem. You should contact a counsellor at your local Community Health Service, who could help you develop some of the skills you feel you don't have. You should also see your local doctor to check that your lack of energy isn't something serious.

1994_4_Q16.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I still love my ex </title>

Eight months ago I broke up with my boyfriend of four years, and no-one has asked me out since. All my friends are getting engaged or married, but all I can see for myself is a very long and lonely future. I seem to spend more time thinking and dreaming about him now than did when we were going out. He was my first boyfriend. I'm now 21.

1994_4_A16.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I still love my ex </title>

Losing someone who has played an important part in your life is very difficult, but you can never relive the past, so don't waste even more of your time. Moving on in life is something you have to work at - it doesn't just happen. You have to try to manage your loss, and review what you want. Think about what you've gained from your past relationship, and take what you've learned about yourself into your future. Romanticising about the past can really distort your perception of the present. It's far more rewarding to try to focus on what's happening in your life right now.

1994_5_Q1.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> mum loves me less </title>

My parents are separated and I live with my mum and my two younger brothers. Mum always says that she loves us all evenly, but she treats my brothers much better than me - she's done this ever since they were born. As I'm only 13 years old, I can't leave home yet, and I don't want to upset her by going to live with my dad. Mum said that if I ever left home to live with my dad she wouldn't let me see her or my brothers ever again. I've tried talking to her about it all, but it hasn't made any difference.

1994_5_A1.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> mum loves me less </title>

Well done. You seem to have put a lot of hard work into finding a solution to your problem. Sometimes when you think about a problem over and over again, it can be difficult to see a solution. You might consider talking with a trusted relative or a counsellor in your local community health service. Having someone else think about your problem with you may help you to find other ways to present your concerns to your mum.

1994_5_Q2.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> she doesn't know </title>

I am very close to my 21-year-old sister. Since the death of our parents, I have moved in with my sister and her 22-year-old fiance. The problem is, I have strong feelings for my sister's fiance and he said he feels the same way about me. Nothing has happened between us yet because I don't want to hurt my sister's feelings. Do I follow my conscience or my heart?

1994_5_A2.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> she doesn't know </title>

You face a very serious decision, not so much about your conscience and heart, but about what values you will live by. You obviously love your sister and care a lot about your relationship. You might see things clearer if you ask yourself which relationship is more important to you. Taking things as slowly as you are, and not jumping in head first, is sensible as you'll need time to get your values clear before you can make such an important decision.

1994_5_Q3.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> her uncle touches her </title>

I have a close friend who is very confused and scared at the moment, because she thinks her uncle is making moves on her. Recently, she was swimming in her uncle's pool with her sisters and he kept grabbing her - he's always trying to touch her. She hopes she's imagining it as his wife is seven months' pregnant. My friend is afraid to tell anyone about her concerns in case they think she's over-reacting.

1994_5_A3.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> her uncle touches her </title>

Your support for your friend is invaluable, but by keeping her worries to herself, she is only isolating herself from help. First, tell your friend to make it clear to her uncle that she dislikes his advances and that she wants him to stop. If she feels she can't approach her uncle, tell her to talk to her parents - this will also stop her feeling so alone. If she feels she can't get help from her parents, school counsellors and counsellors at her local community health services could also give her advice and information on how she can get her uncle to stop touching her.

1994_5_Q4.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> depressed and lonely </title>

I am 14 years old and I'm in love with a 16 year old guy. I want him to know how I feel because I have been very depressed and lonely lately. He often looks at me, but that doesn't necessarily mean he feels anything for me. I am very shy and sometimes I feel as though suicide is the only way to deal with my loneliness and depression.

1994_5_A4.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> depressed and lonely </title>

Loving someone can be very painful and not knowing how he feels leaves you guessing and arguing with yourself. Talking with him and getting to know him will put some perspective into your feelings and give you some feedback on whether a relationship with him is possible. If your shyness holds you back, talk with a school counsellor about how to deal with your lack of confidence, and how you can stop feeling depressed and lonely.

1994_5_Q5.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I can't get on with mum </title>

I'm 13 years old and can't get along with my mum. She's accused my boyfriend of giving me drugs, but he doesn't take drugs and neither do I. One day she practically shouted it out and everyone heard. Now there are terrible rumours about us.

1994_5_A5.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I can't get on with mum </title>

When two people start disagreeing, it's useful for them to talk with someone else about the situation. You might like to suggest to your mum that you both go to talk with a counsellor about exactly what's causing the lack of communication and respect in your relationship. Getting that clear may well lead to solutions about how to negotiate better together in the future.

1994_5_Q6.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> scared to commit </title>

At the moment I'm caught between two guys who like me. I like both of them and I don't want to have to choose. A close friend of mine is encouraging me to go out with one of them. Recently, I was with this guy, but I don't want the relationship to go any further. I think I'm too scared to commit to one because I'll lose the other, but the thought of becoming serious with either of them turns me off. Why am so scared of settling down with one guy?

1994_5_A6.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> scared to commit </title>

Being liked by someone doesn't necessarily mean you automatically like the person back. No-one can really tell you who to like or go out with. Having a close relationship with someone involves a lot of give and take. Knowing what you like about someone and wanting that person to like you back is important if you want to be in a close relationship. To help you decide who you want to go out with, think about what you find attractive and interesting in a guy and ask yourself whether the guys you are talking about fit the bill. Two people liking you means that you will need to think about these things doubly hard.

1994_5_Q7.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> vegetarian diet </title>

I am 13 years old and have just started being vegetarian, but my mother is really concerned about my protein and iron intake now that I don't eat meat. What foods can I eat to ensure I still get these nutrients?

1994_5_A7.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> vegetarian diet </title>

Protein is quite easy to replace in a vegetarian diet as it's found in eggs, nuts, bread, milk, cheese, and pulses like soya beans, lentils and chickpeas. Iron is more of a concern since the amount found in red meat is greater and more readily absorbed by the body than from other sources like green leafy vegetables, pulses, wholemeal bread and cereals. Iron deficiency is quite common in females, even if they're not vegetarian. Symptoms of iron deficiency include tiredness, poor stamina, frequent infections, a shortness of breath and dizziness.

1994_5_Q8.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> what is constipation? </title>

I find it difficult to go to the toilet. What is constipation? Is it harmful? What do laxatives do and are they bad for you? I am 14 years old and my problem is getting worse.

1994_5_A8.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> what is constipation? </title>

Constipation is when it becomes difficult to defaecate, or pass a bowel motion. Your bowels open less frequently than normal and the motions become hard and sometimes painful to pass. Whether or not constipation is harmful depends on what's causing it - the most common reason is a lack of fibre in the diet. Other causes are a lack of exercise, prolonged travel and not going to the toilet when your body tells you to, because it's inconvenient. There are many different types of laxatives and they work in different ways - either by making the faeces softer and easier to pass or by speeding up the frequency of bowel motions. They should never be used on a long-term basis (except under medical supervision). A common misconception is that laxatives cause weight loss - they don't. To make your motions regular again, increase the amount of fibre in your diet - try to eat wheat or oat-bran for breakfast, eat only wholemeal or wholegrain bread and plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. If your problem gets worse, consult your doctor because occasionally there are other causes of constipation which require medical treatment.

1994_5_Q9.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> pimply arms </title>

I have these disgusting pimply things on my arms. I'm so embarrassed about them that I can't wear togs or singlets.

1994_5_A9.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> pimply arms </title>

I'm not sure if the pimply things are acne or something else. If they're real pimples, you can treat them with pimple creams which you can buy from chemist shops, or stronger prescription-only creams and tablets, and by washing your skin with an antibacterial soap or foam. It's possible that they're not pimples at all. See your doctor for an accurate assessment.

1994_6_Q1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> fear of tampons </title>

I'm afraid of using tampons because of TSS. I've heard you can die from it. Is this true?

1994_6_A1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> fear of tampons </title>

TSS stands for Toxic Shock Syndrome. It's caused by a bacterial infection and is very rare. It's been known to occur with the use of super (large) tampons, but it can also be unrelated to tampon use. Although there have been some fatal cases of TSS, generally it can be treated with antibiotics. To minimise the risk of getting TSS, avoid using super tampons, change your tampon every four to six hours, and wear pads to bed at night. Make sure you wash your hands well before and after changing a tampon, and keep your genital area clean by taking a bath or shower every day. The risk of getting TSS is so small that it shouldn't stop you from using tampons, particularly if you follow these common-sense hygiene guidelines.

1994_6_Q2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> lots of blackheads </title>

I have a lot of blackheads, but I don't know why because I clean my skin every day and take care of it.

1994_6_A2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> lots of blackheads </title>

During puberty, changing hormone levels in your body cause an increase in the production of sebum, a waxy substance which moisturises your skin. Excess sebum can block the glands which then form whiteheads black when they come into contact with air. Keeping your skin clean is the most important way to reduce the number of blackheads you have - wash your face twice a day with an antibacterial soap or foam. Try not to wear too much make-up as it can block the glands further and make the blackheads worse. Avoid picking your skin as this can lead to infection and scarring. You obviously look after your skin well, but you may need a little more help. Try a medicated cream that decreases sebum production. Some creams are available over the counter at the chemist, while others need to be prescribed by a doctor. You may want to talk to your doctor first to get some advice. Fortunately, as you go through puberty, your body adjusts to the new hormones, and pimples and blackheads tend to become less of a problem.

1994_6_Q3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> bad breath </title>

I have really bad breath and I don't like going near people because I'm afraid they will smell it. My other problem is that really like this guy in my class, and our school camp is coming up soon, but I don't want my bad breath to spoil it all.

1994_6_A3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> bad breath </title>

Bad breath can be caused by mouth infections, poor dental care, or problems with the nose, tonsils and sinuses. It can also be caused by the type of food you eat - onions and garlic, for example, can leave strong odours. Keeping your teeth and gums clean and healthy is the most important way to reduce bad breath, so make sure you brush your teeth at least twice a day, and use dental floss once a day. Regularly gargling with an antiseptic mouthwash will help, and you can also freshen your breath by chewing mint-flavoured gum, or fresh herbs like parsley. Make sure that you have a regular dental check-up. Your doctor may also be able to detect any other problems in your mouth that can contribute to bad breath.

1994_6_Q4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> lumpy nipples </title>

I have small lumps on my nipples. They are a bit like cysts, and when I squeeze them a white substance comes out. I'm 15 and they have been there for over a year. How can I get rid of them and what are they?

1994_6_A4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> lumpy nipples </title>

These lumps are called Montgomery's follicles. They are glands which produce a waxy substance to keep the nipples and areolae (the dark circles around the nipples) smooth and moist. They can become more prominent just before menstruation, during pregnancy, or when the nipple is cold or stimulated. There's no need to get rid of them as they're a normal part of the breast - without them the nipples would dry out. And don't ever squeeze them or you could cause infection.

1994_6_Q5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> hairy breasts </title>

I am 13 years old and I have little hairs on my breasts, especially around my nipples. Is this normal? Please help me because I just can't talk to anyone about this.

1994_6_A5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> hairy breasts </title>

It is quite normal to have hairs growing around your nipples. During puberty hair growth is stimulated in various parts of the body, such as the armpits and pubic region. Many girls will also notice hair growing on their nipples and on the area between their belly-button and pubic hair region. How much hair grows in this area varies from person to person, and there's no need to worry about what is happening to you. Some girls shave or wax the hair on their legs or bikini line, while others don't

mind having a little body hair. The nipples are very sensitive, so if you want to remove the hairs it's best to gently pluck them.

1994_6_Q6.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> binge eating </title>

I often eat so much that vomit. Afterwards I don't eat for ages, but then I do it again. I've tried telling my mum but she doesn't believe me because I'm not fat.

1994_6_A6.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> binge eating </title>

Eating large amounts of food then making yourself vomit can be a sign of an eating disorder such as bulimia. Bingeing on food and then starving yourself is dangerous and can affect your metabolism and growth. If the vomiting gets out of control, you can also upset the salt and water balance in your body. This kind of eating behaviour will not necessarily cause weight loss, so people around you may not realise it's happening. Many people who binge eat and then vomit are preoccupied with their weight or body shape, or feel unhappy with them selves generally. The fact that you see this as a problem is the first step towards helping yourself and is a very positive sign - but don't try to sort it out by yourself. Try talking to your mum again, or another trusted adult, and consult your doctor or your local community health service where you can get some expert advice.

1994_6_Q7.txt

<section> sex and your body contraception </section>

<title> want to have safe sex </title>

Are condoms guaranteed to work? I'm thinking about having sex with this guy I like, but I've heard that condoms can break or fall off. I want to have safe sex, but I'm confused about what kind of contraceptive to use.

1994_6_A7.txt

<section> sex and your body contraception </section>

<title> want to have safe sex </title>

When used properly, condoms are an effective form of contraception - and they protect you against catching STDs. However, they can fail for a number of reasons. The condom must be fitted properly (if you're not sure how to fit a condom correctly, there are clear instructions included in the packets of most condom brands). After the guy ejaculates, and before his penis becomes flaccid, he needs to hold onto the base of the condom to prevent it slipping off while he withdraws his penis from your vagina. If a lubricant is being used it must be water based, such as KY Jelly or Lubafax. Don't use condoms that have been carried around for a long time, be careful not to tear the condom when removing it from the packet, and use only condoms that conform to Australian Standards (these will have an AS number printed On the pack). Finally, never use the same condom more than once.

1994_6_Q8.txt

<section> sex and your body contraception </section>

<title> don't want to fall pregnant </title>

I'm 16 years old and have been going out with this guy for two years. After thinking about it for six months, we've decided to have sex. We know our decision is right, but if he uses a condom and I go on the Pill is there any chance I could fall pregnant? My parents are very strict.

1994_6_A8.txt

<section> sex and your body contraception </section>

<title> don't want to fall pregnant </title>

This is an important decision, and it's good to see you're taking it seriously. While no measure you take to protect yourself from pregnancy is infallible, there are certain precautions that you can take to reduce the risks. The Pill is one of the more reliable methods of contraception. Taking the Pill regularly will significantly decrease your chances of becoming pregnant. However, while the Pill guards against pregnancy, it won't stop you from contracting sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Using a condom as well as the Pill will decrease your chances of becoming pregnant even more, and will also help guard against diseases. Your decision to use both methods of contraception is a sensible one.

1994_6_Q9.txt

<section> sex and your body contraception </section>

<title> what does spermicide do? </title>

I've heard that if you use a spermicidal cream with a condom it helps make sex safer, especially if the condom has a hole in it. Is this true?

1994_6_A9.txt

<section> sex and your body contraception </section>

<title> what does spermicide do? </title>

It's certainly important when you decide to have sex that you take measures to prevent yourself from becoming pregnant and catching an STD. Using a spermicidal cream combined with a condom will help protect you from both of these things. The cream helps to kill the sperm in the semen so that it won't fertilise the egg and cause pregnancy. Using a spermicidal cream simply gives you extra protection against pregnancy, in case the semen escapes from the condom either through a hole in it, or because the condom wasn't used correctly.

1994_6_Q10.txt

<section> sex and your body contraception </section>

<title> where do I get the pill? </title>

I've been thinking about having sex for sometime now, but I'm unsure about where I can get the Pill. Since I'm only 13, I'll definitely use a condom, but I want to get the Pill to eliminate any risk of becoming pregnant. I don't want to ask my mum as she might think I'm cheap.

1994_6_A10.txt

<section> sex and your body contraception </section>

<title> where do I get the pill? </title>

Your first sexual experience is a significant event in your life, so you need to feel totally comfortable with your partner before you decide to take this step, and you need to take time to look at ways of preventing yourself from becoming pregnant and contracting an STD. To get the pill you need to get a prescription from a doctor or

your local Family Planning Clinic. If you talk with your mother about having sex, she may be more supportive than you think.

1994_6_Q11.txt

<section> sex and your body contraception </section>

<title> will it work if I'm on medication? </title>

I'm 17 and I take the Pill. Recently my friend said that if you're on antibiotics the Pill doesn't work. Is this true?

1994_6_A11.txt

<section> sex and your body contraception </section>

<title> will it work if I'm on medication? </title>

It's true that some medications, including antibiotics, can interfere with the Pill and make it less effective. If you need to take antibiotics, remain on the Pill and use another form of contraception at the same time, such as a condom or a spermicidal Cream. Also, after you've completed the course of antibiotics, the Pill will not be immediately effective again, so use the additional contraceptive for a further seven days. If you want more information about the particular medication you're taking, ask your doctor or your local Family Planning Clinic.

1994_6_Q12.txt

<section> sex and your body contraception </section>

<title> I vomited before we had sex </title>

My boyfriend and I have been going out for six months and we've just started having sex. The other night we went out and ate something that made me feel really sick and I vomited. Later I felt OK and we had sex. I'm on the Pill, but what if I threw it up. Could I be pregnant?

1994_6_A12.txt

<section> sex and your body contraception </section>

<title> I vomited before we had sex </title>

For the Pill to be effective it must be absorbed from the intestines after it's swallowed. This may not happen if it's removed from the stomach too quickly, either through vomiting or diarrhoea. If this occurs, an extra form of contraceptive should be used, such as condoms. If you've had unsafe sex, the morning-after pill can be used as an emergency back-up measure within 72 hours of sexual intercourse. It contains a massive dose of hormones to either delay ovulation, or stop a fertilised egg from connecting to the uterus wall - it can have severe side-effects and shouldn't be used as a regular form of contraception. For more information, you can contact your doctor or local Family Planning Clinic.

1994_6_Q13.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> torn in two </title>

I have discovered that I'm attracted to my best friend's boyfriend and I think he feels the same way. I am torn between my loyalty to my best friends and my love for this guy.

1994_6_A13.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> torn in two </title>

You face a serious decision about trust and loyalty. You should think about what makes you interested in a guy who has a girlfriend already, rather than someone you're free to have a relationship with. This will help you decide whether you give priority to your feelings for this guy or your friendship.

1994_6_Q14.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> mum traps me </title>

My mum never lets go out, and she says a lot of hateful stuff when try to defend myself. I don't have any friend because I'm so shy, and I can't see a counsellor because I'm not allowed out of the house.

1994_6_A14.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> mum traps me </title>

When you feel trapped, its difficult to think clearly. At some stage you will have to talk with your mum, but it's important to get some of your ideas sorted out first. Your school counsellor will be able to help you do this. Unhappiness can make people lose motivation, but you should really make an effort to talk to your school counsellor. Whether or not you make the effort will determine how serious you are about resolving your problem.

1994_6_Q15.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> classroom courtship </title>

If a teacher has relationship with a student, is it a serious offence? What if the teacher doesn't have the student for any classes? Can they be fired from the school or permanently forbidden to teach?

1994_6_A15.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> classroom courtship </title>

If a teacher has as intimate or sexual relationship with a student, they are breaching the boundaries of professionalism. It is a serious offence, and most schools would take immediate action. Schools have a duty of care called "in locus parentis" while students are at school, which means they are standing in for parents. It might be useful to contact a counsellor at your local Community Health Services to get some information and support on how to deal with your situation.

1994_6_Q16.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> he won't like my body </title>

I want to have sex with my boyfriend. Although we're both only 13, I'm sure he wants it, but I'm afraid that if we have sex he would be disappointed with my body. How can improve my self-confidence?

1994_6_A16.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> he won't like my body </title>

Your body is at the beginning of its change to womanhood, and it's probably looking exactly how it's supposed to. Accepting yourself for who you are is the first step to improving your self-confidence. Despite the fact that, in most Australian States, you're not legally old enough to have sex, you might like to think about waiting until you're more comfortable with your body before you take this step.

1994_6_Q17.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> dad treats us badly </title>

I'm 15 years old and I hate my dad because he treats my mum, my sister and I really badly. All of my life he's been moody - he slams doors, yells, swears and ignores us for weeks for no reason. I have no-one to talk to about my problem, as my school counsellor doesn't help and my relatives wouldn't keep it a secret. I've been contemplating suicide, but I don't want to go to a professional counsellor because I haven't got any money, and I don't want anyone to find out. I've told my mum that I'm serious about suicide, but she said not to be stupid. My friends don't listen to me, either - they don't want to know because they can't help me. I've lost interest in school and tend to get bored easily.

1994_6_A17.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> dad treats us badly </title>

You seem to be clear on what your problems are, and closed to any options you have. Your loss of interest and energy isn't surprising given how alone and concerned you feel - your sadness seems to be colouring your world. If you contact your local Community Health Service, you can talk to a counsellor in complete privacy without having to pay. Trying to sort out your dad's problems isn't an easy thing for you to try to do and you may have to look to someone else to help you out.

1994_6_Q18.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> diets don't work </title>

I'm 15 and overweight. I've tried to make myself throw up, but haven't been able to yet, and dieting just doesn't work.

1994_6_A18.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> diets don't work </title>

Try to talk to your mother or a close relative about your concerns. She may help you understand why you find it hard to change your eating habits, and suggest that you visit a doctor or dietitian. Some people develop unhealthy eating habits without realising it. Getting advice from someone outside of your normal support group (like a doctor) can help break the cycle.

1994_6_Q19.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> problem parent </title>

My parents separated about a year ago, and my mother recently told us that she is seeing another man. My father has become very emotional and he asks me for my mother's boyfriend's name, address, phone number, etc. He also asks for the name and

address of the man who my mother met her boyfriend through. He told me not tell my mother about this, but I'm afraid that if I give him the information he'll do something crazy. On the other hand, if I tell my mother about it, I'm scared that she'll mention it to my father and then he'll blame me. I really resent my father for putting this kind of pressure on me.

1994_6_A19.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> problem parent </title>

Being stuck in the middle of your parents' relationship is a very uncomfortable place to be. Try to talk about your concerns with both parents, explaining that you want to be connected with each of them, but not torn between them by holding secrets or carrying information. If you feel you can't talk with your parents, a trusted relative or a counsellor from your local Community Health Services could give you support and help you work this through with your parents.

1994_7_Q1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> itchy vagina </title>

I'm 15 years old and, for the last four to five months, the outer labia of my vagina has become very red and itchy and the left side has become extremely inflamed. I have rubbed Vitamin E cream on the area, but it hasn't helped at all.

1994_7_A1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> itchy vagina </title>

It sounds as though you could have either a form of dermatitis, such as eczema; an infection, such as candida; or an allergy. If you're sexually active, then it could be a sexually transmitted infection, such as a wart virus. Consult your doctor or a Family Planning Clinic to get the problem diagnosed and treated. The doctor may only need to look at the area to do this. If you've never has sex then you certainly won't need an internal examination. Meanwhile, keep the area clean by washing it well with water. Avoid soap and try not to scratch yourself. Applying a soothing cream like Sorbolene two or three times a day may help.

1994_7_Q2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> is liposuction safe? </title>

I recently came across newspaper ad about liposuction, claiming it is only minor surgery and takes a few hours, and doesn't require you to be hospitalised. Is this true? It describes liposuction as an easy, safe and quick way of getting rid of any unwanted fat. Is it expensive? Does it have any side effects?

1994_7_A2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> is liposuction safe? </title>

The most important thing to know about liposuction is that it is not a method of losing weight, it's a form of cosmetic surgery which can re-shape parts of the body when the body is fully grown and developed. It involves sucking fat from the body and then wearing re-shaping girdles for weeks on end to stop fat from reforming in the same

places, usually the side of the thighs, the stomach and the neck. Possible side effects include scarring, blood loss, infection and bruising. Liposuction must be done by a qualified plastic surgeon trained in using the specialised equipment. The machine used isn't available in most public hospitals and the operation isn't covered by Medicare. Anyone who just wanted to lose weight wouldn't benefit from this operation. If you're concerned about your weight, talk to your doctor.

1994_7_Q3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> break the habit </title>

I can't seem to stop biting my fingernails. Can you give me some advice? I'm 16 years old.

1994_7_A3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> break the habit </title>

Biting fingernails is a common habit which many people do almost subconsciously. Simple behavioural techniques can help you quit, such as painting an unpleasant tasting "polish" (available from most chemists) on your nails. Each time you bite your nails the bitter taste reminds you of what you're doing. It may be more useful to think about which situations you're in when you bite your nails. You may find that you do this when you're worried or stressed - such as before exams. Look at other ways of dealing with stress - you may want to talk to a parent, school counsellor or your doctor for more advice.

1994_7_Q4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> thick blood clots </title>

During my period my blood always comes out in thick clots. It stops me from being able to use tampons. How can it be fixed so I can use tampons?

1994_7_A4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> thick blood clots </title>

Periods can be unpredictable for the first couple of years of menstruation and they may be light and irregular. After this they can become heavy, painful or more frequent. This is because your body is still adjusting to the major hormonal changes of puberty. If your periods become really heavy, the blood forms clots. Although it's ok to use tampons, it's difficult for a tampon to absorb the clots properly. If blood loss is extreme, you may also become a little anaemic and feel tired. Although your periods are probably quite normal, it would be a good idea to talk to your doctor or Family Planning Clinic.

1994_7_Q5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> heavy discharge </title>

I have very heavy vaginal discharge between periods. It's uncomfortable and feels like I've wet my pants. My sister says I may not be cleaning myself properly, but I do. How can I overcome this problem?

1994_7_A5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> heavy discharge </title>

During the menstrual cycle, your bod prepares itself for fertilisation of an egg. The hormones which control this get your vagina, cervix and Fallopian tubes ready to receive Sperm by making mucous in these areas very thin and easy for sperm to penetrate. This runny mucous appears as a clear slightly white vaginal discharge that can be quite heavy. Your discharge is probably perfectly normal and isn't a sign of poor hygiene at all. If you find it really uncomfortable you could wear a mini-pad to help absorb the wetness. But If the discharge is smelly, itchy, painful or a different colour, or if you are sexually active, see your doctor.

1994_7_Q6.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> looks to kill </title>

I haven't been eating anything except dinner, and I vomit it back up. I'm doing a modelling course and feel I have to be thin. Every time I look through a magazine I envy the skinny girls and I would die to look like them. I'm 14 years old and exercise a lot, but it doesn't seem to do a thing. I don't look fat, but feel like I am. I have to be thin, but I don't want to become anorexic. Am I bulimic? I can't tell my mother either.

1994_7_A6.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> looks to kill </title>

It's great that you're asking questions about your body weight, body image and your attitudes towards food and eating. This shows you want to take care of yourself, and that you're ready to get help. It seems that you've been comparing yourself to today's supermodels who are really very unusual when compared to the average, healthy female population. Models are often very underweight. At your age, your body is rapidly growing and developing and needs all the right nutrients to do so. It's impossible to say whether you have an eating disorder without more information. However, skipping meals, vomiting, exercising excessively, and worrying constantly about being thin are not in the best interests of your health. I would encourage you to see a trained health professional. Your local doctor will also be able to help.

1994_7_Q7.txt

<section> sex and your body rape </section>

<title> I think I've been raped </title>

I am 14 years old. I've had a steady boyfriend for about one year but we hadn't ever slept together. On our last date he wanted to have sex with me, but I didn't want to. We were kissing, but then he started to undo my top. I tried to stop him, but he was too strong. I kept saying no, but he wouldn't stop. Is this rape?

1994_7_A7.txt

<section> sex and your body rape </section>

<title> I think I've been raped </title>

You should talk to your parents or another trusted adult about what has happened. Your boyfriend forced himself on you against your will, but from the information provided in your letter it's not possible to say whether or not you've actually been raped. However, your boyfriend must respect your wishes not to have sex - especially

since you're under 16, which is the age of consent in most states. If your boyfriend did force you to have sex, he may have committed two crimes: having sex with a female under the age of consent and rape.

1994_7_Q8.txt

<section> sex and your body rape </section>

<title> too scared to tell anyone </title>

I'm 15, and whenever my mum and step-dad go out my 17-year-old step-brother rapes me. He also threatens to rape my nine-year-old sister if I tell Mum. I can't tell my best friend because she likes him and won't believe me. I made an appointment with the school counsellor, but I didn't turn up in case my step-brother was watching.

1994_7_A8.txt

<section> sex and your body rape </section>

<title> too scared to tell anyone </title>

You certainly need to seek help. If you're unable to speak with someone face-to-face, you could talk to your local Rape Crisis Centre over the phone (look under 'R' in the White Pages). It's also important for you to speak with your mother about what has happened. Your reluctance to do this and the feelings you have about what has happened are perfectly understandable. However, someone from the Rape Crisis Centre should be able to help you sort through your feelings and work out a way of talking with your mum. Try not to be afraid of your step -brother- you must do something to stop him, but you need help and support in order for this to occur.

1994_7_Q9.txt

<section> sex and your body rape </section>

<title> my babysitter threatened to kill me </title>

I'm 15 years old and my parents get a friend of theirs to sit with me when they go out. They trust him, and I did too until the other night - he made me sit on his lap and then he started lifting my dress up. I tried to stop him, but he pulled out a pocketknife and said he'd kill my parents if I tried to stop him or tell anyone. He then raped me. I tried to scream, but he put his hand over my mouth. The next day told my mum, but she wouldn't believe me - she said it must have been a dream I'd had. What should I do? I'm scared that if tell someone he'll kill my family.

1994_7_A9.txt

<section> sex and your body rape </section>

<title> my babysitter threatened to kill me </title>

If your parents don't believe you, you must tell someone else about what's happened. This man is trusted by the family and he's broken that trust in a terrible way. You've been put in a very serious situation that you shouldn't have to face. You need to speak with an adult friend, a teacher, a counsellor or phone a Rape Crisis Centre. You must stop this man. Don't panic about his threats. If you talk to someone about his threats and actions, he won't be able to harm you or your family ever again.

1994_7_Q10.txt

<section> sex and your body rape </section>

<title> don't want to report him </title>

I'm 15 years old and about a month ago my boyfriend and I decided to wag school together and go to his house (both his parents work). We went into his room to get out

of our uniforms and into casual clothes. When I was dressed I threw a pillow at him and he chased me around his room. When he caught me we started kissing and then we fell onto the bed. I felt like he really loved me, but then he put his hand down my top and started feeling my breast. Next he undid my bra, and I started to feel really uncomfortable, so I told him to stop. He didn't. Suddenly he was on top of me, and then he raped me. The next day I found out from a friend that it's not the first time he's done something like this. I don't want to report him, but maybe if I do the others who have been raped by him will come forward, too.

1994_7_A10.txt

<section> sex and your body rape </section>

<title> don't want to report him </title>

You have every right to take criminal proceedings against your ex-boyfriend if he made you have sex with him against your will and you're a minor, and he must be prevented from doing it again. You should phone a rape counsellor at your local Rape Crisis Centre who will explain the courses of action which you should take and who will also talk to you about your feelings.

1994_8_Q1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> brown discharge </title>

I'm 16 years old and after my monthly period I get a brown discharge which carries on for a few days. Is there anything I can do about it?

1994_8_A1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> brown discharge </title>

The brown discharge you describe is probably just a continuation of your period that contains some blood, mucus and cells from the lining of your uterus. Most periods last between five and seven days, and tend to be heavier on the first couple of days - during the last few days you can often experience brown spotting. If your periods last longer than a week, or if they're very close together or irregular, you may want to consider hormone treatment (such as the Pill) to regulate them. If you're sexually active, and the brown discharge is smelly, you could have some type of infection. Go and see your local doctor or Family Planning Clinic.

1994_8_Q2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> no diet works </title>

I'm 14 and overweight. I weigh 90kg. I've got a pretty face, but guys always bag me out! When I go to the beach they yell rude comments. I've tried lots of weight-loss plans, but none has worked - I can't stick to them.

1994_8_A2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> no diet works </title>

Reaching a healthy weight for your age and height takes time and patience. You're still growing and developing, and shouldn't be trying to lose weight quickly. Extreme reductions in your food intake, such as crash diets, tend to be unsuccessful and can be dangerous. Get some advice about nutrition and weight control from a doctor or

dietitian. They will assess your weight, height and body shape, and compare these to other members of your family. They'll also ask you questions about what you eat and how much you exercise. It may be useful for them to talk to your parents to discuss the kind of food the family eats. You sound worried about how guys look at you, but how you feel about yourself is more important. This is something you can also talk to your doctor or another trusted adult about. Remember, although people's rude comments can hurt, they basically reflect their own childishness and insecurities, and you should try not to take notice of them.

1994_8_Q3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> purple stretch marks </title>

A few months ago I put a lot of weight on on my legs, thighs and buttocks, and I now have large, red-purple stretch marks around these areas. Can you tell me how to get rid of them, or how to prevent more damage? Is there a cream I can buy that will disguise them so I can wear swimmers?

1994_8_A3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> purple stretch marks </title>

Although stretch marks are often red or purple when they first appear, they fade to light pink or white and may even become narrower with time. Many girls develop stretch marks on their thighs, hips and breasts when their bodies change shape during the first stages of puberty. It's important that you spend time really looking after your skin by always eating a healthy, balanced diet, keeping the skin well moisturised with Sorbolene cream, Vitamin E cream or Aloe Vera cream, avoid spending a lot of time out in the sun, and exercising and toning your legs, thighs and buttocks.

1994_8_Q4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> left with acne scars </title>

I've had acne for the past two years, and now have scars on my cheeks. Are they permanent? Is there a way to make them less noticeable? I've heard that you can get a beautician to buff away a layer of your facial skin, and the scars. Is this safe?

1994_8_A4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> left with acne scars </title>

Acne scars, like any other scars, fade with time. To what extent this happens will depend on how deep the scarring is now, your skin type, and your future skincare routine. Keep your skin clean, avoid picking any pimples you have now, and prevent sun damage by always wearing an SPF15+ sunscreen. If your skin is now free of pimples, you could wear a little make-up to cover the scarring, but make sure you clean it off each night. There is a treatment called dermabrasion which involves scraping the top layers of skin away. It can be an effective way to treat scars, but it must be done by a skin specialist, and it can be very expensive. See your local doctor first to get a referral.

1994_8_Q5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> hairy face </title>

Help! I have a moustache, sideburns and long eyelashes. I like my eyelashes, but I'd like to get rid of my other facial hair. Mum mentioned electrolysis. Will the hair grow back?

1994_8_A5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> hairy face </title>

Electrolysis is a method of permanently removing hair. It is useful for treating small areas such as above the lip, but it should only be done by a beautician trained in electrolysis. The costs vary - I suggest you ring a few beauty salons to find out how much it is. Alternative ways of treating unwanted facial hair include bleaching and waxing. Neither of these are permanent, but they're cheaper and may be satisfactory for you.

1994_8_Q6.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> oozing nipples </title>

I'm scared I might have breast cancer. My breasts aren't very big, but a hard, white substance has been oozing out my nipples. I'm 15 years old.

1994_8_A6.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> oozing nipples </title>

The white, waxy substance in your nipples is called sebum and is produced by glands in the areola (the dark circles around the nipples). Sebum is the body's natural moisturiser and stops the nipples from drying out. Breast cancer usually presents itself as a lump or firm area in the breast, and sometimes it may cause a discharge from the nipple. Breast cancer has not been known to occur in young people, but from the age of 20 onwards the chance of developing breast cancer gradually increases. Females may also develop breast lumps which are non-cancerous cysts or benign growths. It's a good idea to learn how to examine your own breasts so that you become familiar with your body and can detect changes, such as lumps, early on. Your local doctor or Family Planning Clinic can show you how to do this.

1994_8_Q7.txt

<section> sex and your body orgasm </section>

<title> what's an orgasm? </title>

What is an orgasm, and how long is it supposed to last?

1994_8_A7.txt

<section> sex and your body orgasm </section>

<title> what's an orgasm? </title>

There are various stages to sex. The first is interest in the act. The next stage is a growing state of sexual excitement, when a female's vagina becomes wet/ the final stage is orgasm (described as a brief, intensely pleasurable sexual experience) which is accompanied by a series of contractions that occur in the female's vagina. The strength of the orgasm and how long it lasts varies from one person to another, and from one occasion to another. Many females don't have an orgasm every time they have sex. In fact, some females don't ever have an orgasm during intercourse,

although they are able to have one while masturbating. The likelihood of experiencing an orgasm during intercourse increases if there is extra stimulation of the clitoris.

1994_8_Q8.txt

<section> sex and your body orgasm </section>

<title> I've never had one </title>

I've just started having sex with my boyfriend, but I never seem to be able to have an orgasm.

1994_8_A8.txt

<section> sex and your body orgasm </section>

<title> I've never had one </title>

Generally, females find it harder to reach orgasm than males. If you want to, there are some things you can do to help yourself experience an orgasm. If you're sexually active, make sure that your lovemaking isn't rushed. Males, particularly when they're inexperienced, tend to move too fast. So, take control of the situation, tell your boyfriend to slow down, and spend lots of time in foreplay, even to the point that you reach orgasm without having intercourse. Through this intimate, shared experience your boyfriend will learn that it's the clitoris, not the vagina, which is your most sexually responsive area. If you are still worried, speak to your mother, a trusted adult or your local doctor.

1994_8_Q9.txt

<section> sex and your body orgasm </section>

<title> how will I know? </title>

I'm not sure if I've had an orgasm. Is there an easy way to tell whether or not you're experiencing one?

1994_8_A9.txt

<section> sex and your body orgasm </section>

<title> how will I know? </title>

It's sometimes difficult to tell when you've had an orgasm because they occur in varying degrees of intensity. For some females, pleasurable sensations build up to a high level of sexual excitement, but then remain at this level without reaching the peak of an orgasm. Others obtain a distinct orgasm (a brief period of intense sexual pleasure), accompanied by vaginal contractions. This is followed by a drop in sexual excitement and a feeling of relaxation. Most females only reach orgasm through clitoral stimulation. If you're sexually active, it may be useful to find the kind of stimulation that you find pleasurable.

1994_8_Q10.txt

<section> sex and your body orgasm </section>

<title> is "coming" the same? </title>

What's the difference between an orgasm and "coming"?

1994_8_A10.txt

<section> sex and your body orgasm </section>

<title> is "coming" the same? </title>

"Coming" is a slang word that's commonly used to describe an orgasm. They are the same thing - the sexual release that occurs when a person reaches a sexual climax.

Basically, males ejaculate through their penises when they have an orgasm, but females don't have such an obvious indicator.

1994_10_Q1.txt

<section> sex and your body STDs </section>

<title> my ex infected me </title>

My ex infected me with something which caused pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). A Pap smear showed that the infection has gone, but the PID hasn't. Could I infect my current boyfriend if we have unprotected intercourse? Does PID diminish my chances of having children?

1994_10_A1.txt

<section> sex and your body STDs </section>

<title> my ex infected me </title>

PID is an infection that mainly affects the Fallopian tubes and ovaries. While Pap smears (tests that detect cancer of the cervix) are sometimes used to detect PID, they are not reliable for this purpose. If you believe you have PID, you should have a specific test for it. Chlamydia is commonly associated with PID and, if this is the source of your infection and it remains untreated, it may well reduce your chances of having children. It's also quite possible for you to infect your partner. Have your condition treated by a physician as soon as possible.

1994_10_Q2.txt

<section> sex and your body STDs </section>

<title> can virgins get STDs? </title>

I'm considering having sex with my boyfriend. Can you catch an STD from a guy who's a virgin?

1994_10_A2.txt

<section> sex and your body STDs </section>

<title> can virgins get STDs? </title>

Deciding to have sex means you need to seriously consider both contraception and protection from STDs, and you should only do it when you both feel comfortable. If your boyfriend is a virgin, it's unlikely that he would have an STD, but the best way to prevent infection is to use a condom when you have sex. If you think you may have an STD, see a doctor immediately as most infections can be cured if they're treated early enough.

1994_10_Q3.txt

<section> sex and your body STDs </section>

<title> the info on AIDS </title>

Can you get the AIDS virus when a guy puts his penis inside your vagina, or does he also have to ejaculate?

1994_10_A3.txt

<section> sex and your body STDs </section>

<title> the info on AIDS </title>

You can get AIDS through the exchange of body fluids, like blood and semen. This can occur during intercourse and oral sex, whether the guy ejaculates or not. The best way to prevent getting infected with AIDS is to always use a condom. There are no

symptoms of infection until you develop full-blown AIDS, so you can have the HIV virus for many years without knowing it. If you think may have HIV, have a blood test at an STD clinic, or at your local medical centre.

1994_10_Q4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> do lovebites cause cancer? </title>

Can love bites give me cancer? My friends think that if they are on your breasts they can cause breast cancer. Is this true?

1994_10_A4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> do lovebites cause cancer? </title>

There are lots of rumours about kissing and sex, and this is just another one. Lovebites are a result of strong sucking or biting that breaks the tiny blood vessels under the skin. Other than leaving a bruise, they're harmless and there's no relationship between lovebites and cancer of any sort. Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women, but it rarely occurs in young women under 25. Breast cancer can be screened with regular self-examination and breast checks by your doctor.

1994_10_Q5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> can bulimia make me bald? </title>

I've had bulimia for two years. Nobody knows and I'm scared because I can't stop. Recently my hair's been falling out in big chunks. Could this have anything to do with bulimia?

1994_10_A5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> can bulimia make me bald? </title>

It's scary when things feel out of control, especially if nobody else knows what you're going through. You sound like you're ready to talk to a trusted person, and there are many health professionals who are experienced in dealing with eating disorders like bulimia. They'll give you confidential advice and support. Contact a youth health centre, an eating disorder clinic at a hospital, or your doctor. When someone has bulimia they alternate between starving themselves and going on uncontrollable binges of eating and vomiting. This can cause the body's metabolism to change and can dangerously upset the salt and fluid balance. It's possible that your hair loss may be caused by bulimia.

1994_10_Q6.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> my lashes are too short </title>

I'm 13 and I really hate my eyelashes - they're really short. Can I make them grow longer?

1994_10_A6.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> my lashes are too short </title>

Like the rest of the hair on your body, the colour, length and thickness of your eyelashes is due to genes inherited from your parents. There's no medical or cosmetic treatment which makes eyelashes grow longer, but make-up like mascara and eyeliner can make them look longer and thicker. Your body is going through lots of changes at the moment, and you might be comparing yourself to your girlfriends and wishing that some things were different. This is a completely normal part of adolescence and you'll soon find you're much happier with your face and body.

1994_10_Q7.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> are laxatives dangerous? </title>

I'm a vegetarian and I'm thinking of using laxatives to lose weight. Do they have any bad effects on your body or menstrual cycle?

1994_10_A7.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> are laxatives dangerous? </title>

Laxatives are designed to help the bowel empty when there is an underlying problem, such as constipation. They're not for people with normal, healthy bowels, they don't cause weight loss - only temporary fluid loss - and if they're not used properly they can be quite dangerous. The menstrual cycle can be affected by many activities aimed at losing weight, especially excessive exercise or food restriction. Vegetarian diets can be healthy, but often lack crucial nutrients, such as iron and protein, so it's important to eat well. Talk to your doctor or a dietitian, who will assess your weight and height, and your diet and exercise patterns, and advise you on healthy ways to control your weight.

1994_10_Q8.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> should I tell my friend? </title>

I saw my best friend's boyfriend at the movies with another girl, and he saw me too. Should I tell her, or wait to see if he tells her?

1994_10_A8.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> should I tell my friend? </title>

If the guy hasn't already told your friend that he cheated on her, I would take him aside and say, "Look, I saw you at the movies with another girl. Now be honest with my friend and tell her you've done this. I give you a week to do so, or I'll tell her. And just remember it's going to sound a lot worse coming from me!"

1994_10_Q9.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> my parents hate my guy </title>

I'm in love with a wonderful guy. We have great times together and we think the same way. The problem is, my parents hate him because he dropped out of school (he's 17) and doesn't have a job. I'm 16.

1994_10_A9.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> my parents hate my guy </title>

Ultimately it's your life and you've got to choose what you want to do, but try to explain to your parents that you do feel serious about this guy. Your parents only want what's best for you and they're probably just worried. But I don't advise falling in love too early in life - a lot can and will change between 16 and 21.

1994_10_Q10.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> which boy should I go for </title>

Two boys I really like asked me to go to the same party. One is a cool surfer and the other is quiet and not as popular, but he's got an interesting personality. Who would you go for?

1994_10_A10.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> which boy should I go for </title>

I'd go for the one I like the most. If the only thing that's making you like the surfer is that he's popular and a surfer, then it's not going to last. It boils down to what the actual person is like, not how popular or how cool they are. I think you know who it is deep down.

1994_10_Q11.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> don't feel ready for sex </title>

I've started seeing her boyfriend's best friend. He thinks we should have sex too, but I don't think I'm ready. I'm sure he'll drop me if I don't have sex with him. I really like hanging out with these guys.

1994_10_A11.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> don't feel ready for sex </title>

There's no point in having sex with this guy just because your best friend does. You wouldn't jump off a cliff if she did! What's important is whether or not you are ready, so don't feel pressured into taking such a big step. If the guy doesn't want to hang out with you because you won't have sex with him (I know this sounds cliched) he's not worth hanging with!

1994_10_Q12.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> am I in love with him? </title>

I've got a great friendship with this guy, but recently he got a girlfriend and I feel so jealous. I think I might be in love with him.

1994_10_A12.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> am I in love with him? </title>

Feeling jealous doesn't mean you're in love. I feel jealous when my girlfriends get boyfriends because they can't spend as much time with me. Ask yourself if you're really in love with him. If you are, and he's got a girlfriend, there's nothing you can do at this stage.

1994_10_Q13.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> is it ok to ask him out? </title>

I've just moved interstate and I don't have any friends, but there's a guy I see on the bus every day who I really like. We smile at each other and have chatted a couple of times. Should I ask him out?

1994_10_A13.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> is it ok to ask him out? </title>

I think it's great for girls to ask guys out, it's no different from guys asking girls out. I did that with my current boyfriend. Why not ask this guy out to something casual during the day, like the movies or lunch?

1994_10_Q14.txt

<section> Dear Blake </section>

<title> </title>

In July Dolly, Jamie Lee asked how to show a guy you like him, and you said to smile at him. I like this guy who's three years older than me, but when I smile at him he just smiles back or turns away. To him a smile means nothing more than a smile. How do I tell this guy how I feel when he doesn't realise I like him?

1994_10_A14.txt

<section> Dear Blake </section>

<title> </title>

A smile is just the first step to getting to know a guy, it's up to you to take it further. The fact that he either smiles back or looks away means one of two things - that he's shy and doesn't know how to approach you, or that he's just not interested. Hopefully it's the first option! Try to get to know him better by making small talk whenever you get the opportunity, or even try the old trick of getting a friend to tell him how much you like him - but don't stop smiling!

1994_10_Q15.txt

<section> Dear Blake </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 14 and I've been a paraplegic for 12 months. When guys approach me, or I see them walk in my direction, I get really nervous and self-conscious. Do you think there are some boys who will be able to see beyond my wheelchair? After all, I'm the same person, only I'm sitting down.

1994_10_A15.txt

<section> Dear Blake </section>

<title> </title>

No matter how hopeless your situation might seem at the moment, I'm sure there are guys who will see you for what you really are - not just someone in a wheelchair. As you say, you are just the same person you've always been, only you've got a new way of getting around. I firmly believe there is someone for everyone in this world, no matter what obstacles are thrown in front of us. You shouldn't feel self-conscious

about your injury. Instead, try to focus on the positive things and take pride in how you're getting on with life.

1994_10_Q16.txt

<section> Dear Blake </section>

<title> </title>

My best friend's brother and I ended up naked together a couple of times. So far all we've done is touch each other. I like him a lot, and really trust him so I feel ready to try going a bit further, but don't know what to do. I am 15 years old and my friend's brother is 18.

1994_10_A16.txt

<section> Dear Blake </section>

<title> </title>

Don't worry about not knowing what to do when you're alone with a guy and things start to get hot. Nobody is expected to know everything about sex. Don't be in too much of a hurry to have sex. Take your time and wait till you feel totally ready. When the moment is right just do what comes naturally, but something you must remember is that in most states it's actually against the law for someone under the age of 16 to have sex. When you do eventually decide to have sex, don't forget to use a condom!

1994_11_Q1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> baggy eyes </title>

I have trouble relaxing and don't get enough sleep. I get these huge bags under my eyes that won't go away. I've tried everything, from concealers to frozen tea bags, but nothing works.

1994_11_A1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> baggy eyes </title>

It's OK to try cosmetics and other remedies to help get rid of the bags under your eyes, but they won't stop them recurring if you don't try to solve the underlying problems. Stress is one reason why lots of people have trouble sleeping and relaxing. If you're dealing with a difficult situation, like a heavy study schedule or family troubles, you might find it helpful to talk to someone about how you're feeling. If you would rather talk it out in complete confidence with someone professional, call your doctor, a school counsellor or Youth Health Centre. Otherwise, try some of these tips for getting a good night's sleep: avoid caffeine after 4pm, don't eat a huge meal before bedtime; relax in a warm bath before bed; do 20 minutes of aerobic exercise three times a Week; learn some relaxation exercises, like yoga, and take a natural relaxant, like a cup of hot milk, or chamomile tea about half an hour before you go to bed. Also, some people get bags under their eyes despite having no trouble sleeping - it may be genetic, or due to other medical conditions, such as sinus problems or allergies. Smoking, alcohol and other drugs can also be responsible. If you think any of these things may be contributing to your under-eye bags, see a doctor.

1994_11_Q2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> I hate wearing my swimsuit </title>

I feel uncomfortable wearing my swimsuit because I have stretch marks on my breasts and thighs. Is there a cream or medication that makes them go away?

1994_11_A2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> I hate wearing my swimsuit </title>

Most girls experience a growth spurt at the start of puberty that's accompanied by the appearance of breasts, pubic hair, wider hips, and menstruation. Depending on your skin and genes, acne, facial hair and stretch marks can also appear. Stretch marks occur when the body changes shape, and usually affect breasts, thighs and hips. They won't disappear completely, but they fade with time. Look after your skin by keeping it moisturised, avoiding sunburn, eating a well-balanced diet and exercising sensibly.

1994_11_Q3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> dieting diabetic </title>

I'm 163cm tall and I weigh 57kg. I want to go on a diet, but I'm a diabetic and it could kill me. I'm supposed to eat six meals a day, but I've been missing meals which is mucking up my insulin and making me sick. I don't want to die, but when I look at magazines I feel so ugly compared to models.

1994_11_A3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> dieting diabetic </title>

Your weight is normal for your height and average among females, so comparing yourself to a minority of girls whose height is over 170cm is unrealistic. Also, it's unhealthy to go on a crash diet - and if you're a diabetic it's life-threatening. Regular exercise will help control your weight, but to avoid hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar), make sure you have a carbohydrate load before exercising. Why not try talking to someone about how you feel.

1994_11_Q4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> toxic shock worry </title>

I'm sick of using pads and want to switch to using tampons, but I'm worried about (TSS) Toxic Shock Syndrome. Is it alright to use tampons at night? Also, I find it really difficult to insert them.

1994_11_A4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> toxic shock worry </title>

It's common to have a bit of difficulty inserting a tampon the first few times you try it. It's a good idea to look at some diagrams that show how the vagina slopes up and back, then try inserting one or two fingers into your vagina to feel which way the tampon needs to go. You may find it easier to use a lubricant, like Vaseline or KY Lubricating Jelly, at first (smear a little on the tampon or at your vaginal opening), or try using a mirror so you can see what you're doing. Change your tampon every four to six hours and wear pads at night. TSS is caused by a bacterial infection and is very rare. It's been known to occur with the use of super tampons, but can be unrelated to tampon use. Although there have been fatal cases of TSS, it can be treated with

antibiotics. Wash your hands before and after inserting a tampon and keep your genital area clean to minimise infection.

1994_11_Q5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> my mole changed colour </title>

A mole on my bottom has got bigger and changed colour, but I don't want to go to my doctor in case it's cancerous.

1994_11_A5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> my mole changed colour </title>

Don't panic. It's quite common for moles to grow during puberty. Although you're nervous about telling your doctor, you'll probably feel relieved afterwards, and it's a good idea to have moles checked regularly anyway. The best way to prevent cancer is to look out for the changes associated with it, and treat it before it gets out of control. Symptoms to beware of are a change in size or colour, and itching or bleeding. Removing a mole is usually a simple procedure that's done in the doctor's rooms. Melanomas (cancerous moles) are common in Australia because fair-skinned people are exposed to lots of sun and UV radiation. So, if you have to go out in the Sun, wear a wide-brimmed hat, sunglasses and an SPF15+ sunscreen on all exposed skin.

1994_11_Q6.txt

<section> Dear Blake </section>

<title> </title>

I love my brother's friend, but the problem is my brother is very protective. I know his friend won't go behind my brother's back, but I think he feels the same way I do.

1994_11_A6.txt

<section> Dear Blake </section>

<title> </title>

Your brother is being selfish. I think it's time you had a talk with him about how much this guy means to you. Ask your brother what he'd do if he were rapt in a girlfriend of yours - he just might see things a bit differently.

1994_11_Q7.txt

<section> Dear Blake </section>

<title> </title>

I've been going out with this guy for about two months, but we can't have a conversation because he's so shy.

1994_11_A7.txt

<section> Dear Blake </section>

<title> </title>

You don't have to talk all the time - the most important part of a relationship is that you feel comfortable with each other. Relax and enjoy being with him and after a while conversation will start.

1994_11_Q8.txt

<section> Dear Blake </section>

</title> </title>

I hate my parents because they won't let me go out with guys. A guy I really like asked me out but I had to say no. I've tried talking to my parents, but they just won't listen.

1994_11_A8.txt

<section> Dear Blake </section>

</title> </title>

Don't hate your parents. The reason they're so strict is because they love you and want to protect you. Try to understand how they feel and make the most of the time you do have with this guy. Don't get too aggro - the more mature you appear to your parents the earlier they will let you start dating.

1994_11_Q9.txt

<section> sex and your body sex </section>

</title> sex is painful </title>

I am 17 and when I have sex with my boyfriend I get these sharp stabbing pains in my stomach. My doctor said that my uterus is retroverted. Does this mean I'm sick?

1994_11_A9.txt

<section> sex and your body sex </section>

</title> sex is painful </title>

The fact that your uterus is retroverted doesn't mean you're sick. It simply means that your uterus tilts backwards in the pelvis rather than forwards. This occurs commonly in healthy, normal women. While some females with a retroverted uterus do have pain during sex, this can often be reduced by trying different sex positions. If it isn't, there's a possibility that you have an additional complication, such as an infection, so you should seek further medical advice.

1994_11_Q10.txt

<section> sex and your body sex </section>

</title> is he too big? </title>

After sex I find it incredibly painful to go to the toilet - the pain is so bad that it makes me cry. This doesn't happen to me at any other time. Is my boyfriend's penis too big for me?

1994_11_A10.txt

<section> sex and your body sex </section>

</title> is he too big? </title>

Penis size is unlikely to be the cause of your problem. However, intercourse is clearly causing you pain, and the likely reason for this is that you aren't properly aroused or lubricated before your boyfriend puts his penis inside your vagina. The solution is to have lots of foreplay (kissing and touching each other) to make sure you're properly aroused before sex, and use a water-based lubricant, like KY Lubricating Jelly (as well as a condom, of course).

1994_11_Q11.txt

<section> sex and your body sex </section>

</title> all desire is gone </title>

I love my boyfriend and we've been together for six months, but I'm just not interested in being physical with him anymore. Is this temporary or should I break up with him?

1994_11_A11.txt

<section> sex and your body sex </section>

<title> all desire is gone </title>

In the early stages of a romance it's not unusual to feel affectionate all the time - but as the relationship develops, other things may become important, like sharing and providing support for each other. And if you're under lots of stress, you might not feel like being intimate. However if you feel that you're not attracted to your boyfriend at all, then your relationship may have changed and he may have become a friend instead of a boyfriend.

1994_11_Q12.txt

<section> sex and your body sex </section>

<title> am I still sexy? </title>

Lately when I've been masturbating my boyfriend, he hasn't come. Is this because he doesn't find me attractive anymore? What can I do?

1994_11_A12.txt

<section> sex and your body sex </section>

<title> am I still sexy? </title>

There are a number of reasons why your boyfriend may not ejaculate. The most likely is that he's worried about something. Although it's easy for you both to worry about this happening again, it will only make the situation worse. Relax and don't focus on whether he comes or not. By taking the pressure off his sexual performance, you'll both experience far greater enjoyment from sex.

1994_12_Q1.txt

<section> Dear Blake </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 13 years old and my boyfriend is 16. He always comes out with me and my friends, but when he asks me to go out with him and his friends say I can't because I'm scared of how to act and what to say.

1994_12_A1.txt

<section> Dear Blake </section>

<title> </title>

It can be frightening for a girl to go out with a bunch of guys for the first time, but you really have nothing to worry about. All you have to do is be yourself. I know it's easy to say, but you don't have to prove to anyone how cool you are or that you know all the right things to say. All you have to do is relax, be friendly and try to have a good time. You'll probably find you get on really well with all the guys and you'll look forward to going out with his gang again.

1994_12_Q2.txt

<section> Dear Blake </section>

<title> </title>

Many magazines - including Dolly - say you shouldn't act too keen when you like a guy, but I really like this boy and I think that if I don't act fast and ask him to go out with me I'll lose him to another girl. Should I tell him I like him or forget it?

1994_12_A2.txt

<section> Dear Blake </section>

<title> </title>

When girls are really keen and come on too strong it can be a bit frightening for us guys. Also, if a girl is all over you like a rash it can be annoying and she can come across as desperate which can put us off. But there is a difference between being too keen and acting fast. Sometimes you do have to act fast to get what you want. I think you should tell this guy that you like him, or if you're a bit scared ask a friend to, but you definitely have to let him know. I certainly don't think you should forget it - just go for it.

1994_12_Q3.txt

<section> Dear Blake </section>

<title> </title>

A while ago this guy asked me out. I said no because I didn't know a thing about him, but now I've got to know him like him a lot. The problem is, he doesn't like me any more and he's going out with one of my friends. He keeps on bragging to me about all the things he does with her. Is he trying to hurt me and make me jealous, or do you think he just doesn't realise how much it hurts me?

1994_12_A3.txt

<section> Dear Blake </section>

<title> </title>

This guy is definitely out to make you jealous and he knows exactly how much he's hurting you. It sounds like he still likes you and may just be with your friend to get back at you. Are you sure you want to go out with a guy who acts this way? The last thing you'd want to do is break up your friend's relationship and risk losing her, right? But if you're prepared to risk it, you have to let him know how you feel and wait until they break up. This way you'll save your friendship (hopefully) and get your man.

1994_12_Q4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> I want a nose job </title>

I'm considering having a nose job and I would like to know if there is an age restriction and what the average cost would be? Would I need my parents' permission and what does the process involve?

1994_12_A4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> I want a nose job </title>

During the teenage years your facial bones are still growing and your face changes, along with the rest of your body. Cosmetic surgery is definitely not advisable during these years unless there are physical deformities as a result of a previous injury or severe burns. It's also sensible to wait until you're a little older when you'll feel more comfortable with all the changes your body has gone through. Most cosmetic surgery is not covered under Medicare and you would have to pay for the entire cost of the

surgery as well as the hospital bed for a few days. A nose job, or rhinoplasty, causes bruising, swelling and pain which usually disappear after a couple of weeks. You do not need your parents' permission for a medical procedure if you are over 16, but if you're under 16 it is ideal but not essential to have their consent, depending on what you are having done.

1994_12_Q5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> scaly scalp </title>

I'm 15 years old and have everything going for me - but I have psoriasis on my scalp and it's so embarrassing. People think I have bad dandruff. I've tried all sorts of things but nothing works.

1994_12_A5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> scaly scalp </title>

Psoriasis is a common condition which causes scaling of the skin. This means the top layers of skin become thick and can flake off, appearing a bit like dandruff if it's on the scalp. Most psoriasis is mild and only affects small patches of skin, but it's really important not to scratch it because it just makes the scaliness worse. There are many creams and shampoos available to treat your condition, but if you have tried quite a few of the over-the-counter preparations and found that they're not working it would be a good idea to see a skin specialist for a thorough assessment and treatment tailored to your own needs. You'll need to get a referral from your local doctor. And remember, treatment by doctors is always confidential.

1994_12_Q6.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> skinny as a stick </title>

Everyone talks about being fat and how they would die to be skinny. Well, I am very skinny and I get called "Stick" or "Toothpick" at school. Could you tell me how I could gain some weight without stuffing myself with fatty foods?

1994_12_A6.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> skinny as a stick </title>

It's really common for young people to feel uncomfortable about their changing body shape, especially if they think they're very different from "the average". Our body weight, height and shape, whether above or below average, is largely determined by the genes inherited from our parents. During puberty girls may grow up to 30cm taller and gain up to 25kg in weight. Your weight will also be affected by your own metabolism, the foods you eat and the amount of exercise you do. A balanced diet is important for your overall health. Eating junk food won't necessarily make you heavier, but it could affect your bowels, skin, hair and bones if you miss out on important fibre and vitamins. If you want to put on weight you should eat a well-balanced diet, but try to eat a little more than you do now. It's also really important to exercise a lot and try to build yourself up. If you'd like more information about nutrition, you could speak to a health and personal development teacher or see your doctor or a dietitian.

1994_12_Q7.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> scary dizzy spells </title>

I've been getting really bad dizzy spells. These have caused my vision to blur and sometimes my body starts shaking. I can't speak to my parents about it or they would get worried. Please tell me how these spells are caused and how they could be stopped.

1994_12_A7.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> scary dizzy spells </title>

Your dizzy spells could be due to a number of different things. You might just be recovering from a temporary viral infection or you may not be eating and sleeping properly. To understand what's going on better I would need more information, such as when and how often they are happening, whether you are normally fit and healthy and what other things have been happening in your life lately. Go and see your doctor who can make a full examination. You might feel better if you told your parents - it sounds as though they care about you very much and would want to help.

1994_12_Q8.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> lots of freckles </title>

I have so many freckles on my face and I really hate them. Is there any way to get rid of them? Do they fade as you get older? I try to use foundation to cover them up, but it doesn't work very well.

1994_12_A8.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> lots of freckles </title>

Freckles are caused by the sun and are much more common on fair-skinned people. If you have skin that freckles easily, it's a sign that you need to protect your skin from the sun. Fair skinned people are also at a higher risk of sun spots and skin cancers. Freckles are permanent, but they do fade with time. The only way to prevent more freckles - and to help your freckles fade - is to protect your skin from the sun's UV radiation. Try to avoid direct sun exposure during the middle of the day and always wear an SPF15+ sunscreen, a hat and sunnies.

1994_12_Q9.txt

<section> sex and your body abused from above </section>

<title> my teacher touched me </title>

Recently a male teacher told me to stay behind after school even though I hadn't done anything. Then, while I was writing lines he came over and started touching my breasts. Please help me, I'm afraid he'll do it again.

1994_12_A9.txt

<section> sex and your body abused from above </section>

<title> my teacher touched me </title>

Teachers have a very trusted, special relationship with their students. Most teachers realise the importance of their position and positively help in the development of their students. Occasionally this doesn't happen. What your teacher has done is illegal and

he has violated the very special position he holds. He may be doing this with other students also. You need to report him immediately. You should never have been placed in this situation, and you need to take action so it doesn't happen again. Speak with a trusted teacher, your school counsellor, or your parents.

1994_12_Q10.txt

<section> sex and your body abused from above </section>

<title> I was sexually abused </title>

I'm 14 and I've just realised that when I was younger I was sexually abused by one of my brother's friends. When he stayed at our place he used to take me into a room and put his hand down my pants. He said it was OK, and that he was allowed to do it, so I thought it was OK, too. What should I do?

1994_12_A10.txt

<section> sex and your body abused from above </section>

<title> I was sexually abused </title>

Your realisation is quite common about females who have been sexually abused when they were young. Some event triggers a memory you'd rather not have, which can be quite disturbing. It's important that you come to terms with this past experience so you can have normal relationships with guys in the future. Help can be provided by a psychologist. Don't be worried about seeking such assistance as you will be dealt with confidentially. You'll be asked to discuss your feelings and given strategies to overcome your bad memories. Psychologists in private practice can be found in the Yellow Pages. Alternatively, you can make an appointment at your local health clinic at little or no cost to you.

1994_12_Q11.txt

<section> sex and your body abused from above </section>

<title> my babysitter rapes me </title>

I'm 14. As my mum works night shift, she hired a babysitter, who is my mum's friend's 15-year-old son. After a few weeks he started to talk about sex, then he raped me. I've tried talking to Mum but she won't believe me.

1994_12_A11.txt

<section> sex and your body abused from above </section>

<title> my babysitter rapes me </title>

You have every right to feel safe and free from abuse in your own home. If your mother will not understand the seriousness of your situation then you should discuss the problem with an adult you can trust. This might be a family member, your school counsellor, someone at the Family Planning Clinic, or a sexual abuse counsellor at your local hospital. Any one of these people can help you deal with the situation, most probably by helping convince your mother that your problem is very real.

1994_12_Q12.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> jealous crush </title>

I'm 14 and I've liked this guy for about two years. My friends all thought I was mad, but now they think he's really cute, too. He knows my feelings, but I don't know how he feels - meanwhile, my friends are starting to like him more and more. How can I control the jealousy I'm feeling?

1994_12_A12.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> jealous crush </title>

Sounds like you're obsessed rather than in love with this guy. And you may have built him up to be something he's not. Try talking to him and getting to know him. You never know, he may be a complete loser! Remember, you don't own him simply because you've had the longest crush. Jealousy is no good for the soul, and true friends should trust each other. Life is not a competition.

1994_12_Q13.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I want my boyfriend back </title>

I've just dumped my boyfriend for no real reason. The thing is, I still really love him but I'm too scared to ask him to go out with me again. His friends have told me he's now going out with someone else, but I know he's not. How can I get him back?

1994_12_A13.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I want my boyfriend back </title>

First, think about why you dumped him. Do you really want him back, or are you jealous of the rumours? Forget the gossip - he's the one you've got to talk to. Be honest and truthful, not only to the situation, but to yourself.

1994_12_Q14.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> three-year love </title>

For three and a half years I've loved this guy. I've sent him lots of letters telling how I feel - without signing them - and I think I might soon tell him face-to-face. Should I tell him the letters were from me?

1994_12_A14.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> three-year love </title>

Three and a half years is a lot of minutes! Do you actually converse with this guy? Because if you're friends, being open about your feelings should be easier. If you don't really know him, he's probably a bigger part of your life than you are of his. Come clean. Honesty is the best policy.

1994_12_Q15.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> which guy's for me? </title>

I'm 16 and in a sticky situation. I've slept with two of my best friends a couple of times (separately, of course), and I think it's causing friction - they both want to go out with me! I like them both very much. What should I do?

1994_12_A15.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> which guy's for me? </title>

I hope you're practising safe sex! If you care about your friendship with these guys, stop sleeping with them, or you'll end up losing one of them. Until then, have fun.

1994_Sp_Q1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> bruised nipples </title>

I'm 13, and I have an embarrassing problem - both my nipples look bruised. Is it part of puberty, or should I get treatment?

1994_Sp_A1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> bruised nipples </title>

During puberty, the breasts and nipples will undergo quite dramatic changes in shape and colour. The nipples and areolae (the dark circles around the nipples) usually turn a much darker colour - before puberty, they are light pink, but in adult females, they're a dark brown-pink colour. Sometimes, small purple-blue veins can be seen underneath the skin of the breast and nipple. During puberty, the areolae and nipples grow larger, and protrude even more than in the adult breast. I'm sure your nipples are quite normal for a 13-year-old, but if you are worried, you could ask your doctor to check them for you.

1994_Sp_Q2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> yellow discharge </title>

I'm 12, and haven't got my period yet. Every time I go to the toilet, I find yellow and white stuff in my underwear. I don't feel any pain, but I often need to go to the toilet. My friend says it's natural, but I am still worried. Please help me.

1994_Sp_A2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> yellow discharge </title>

The most likely cause of your problem is thrush, also called monilia or candida. It is caused by a yeast, which commonly exists in the body without causing any problems. Sometimes, however, it can suddenly start to grow out of control. This may be related to some change in your body chemistry, perhaps because you've been taking antibiotics or other medication. The fact that you need to go to the toilet frequently may indicate that your bladder is also infected. It is most important that you seek medical attention for this before any permanent damage is done. Thrush is easily treated with medication, and clears up rapidly. Tell your mum if you can, and go to your doctor or a Family Planning Clinic. You can go to a clinic without an adult, and there'll be no charge for the consultation. If you live in a town without a clinic, go to the outpatients section of your local hospital.

1994_Sp_Q3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> are tattoos dangerous? </title>

I am 14, and I'm thinking about getting a tattoo, but one of my friends I could get AIDS or skin cancer. Is this true? Is there anything else I should know before get a tattoo? Also, where would be the best place to go?

1994_Sp_A3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> are tattoos dangerous? </title>

Tattoos are a permanent mark on your skin. Removal is extremely difficult, and scarring usually results. Although you may want a tattoo now, if you tire of it in a couple of years, you'd be faced with the problem of what to do with it. An alternative is to experiment with adhesive tattoos, which are now commonly available. They look real, but wash off after a few days. Real tattooing involves injecting dye into the skin. It is important to go to a reputable tattooist who uses sterilised needles, to minimise the risk of a viral infection, such as AIDS. Tattooing is quite expensive, and it can be painful. The Tattoo Association of Australia will be able to recommend a good tattooist, if you decide you really want to get a tattoo.

1994_Sp_Q4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> facial hair </title>

I have a problem with facial hair. I tried using hair removers, but now I'm starting to have an allergic reaction. Can you get tablets to remove the hair? If so, will it affect hair on other parts of my body?

1994_Sp_A4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> facial hair </title>

If your skin is reacting to chemical hair removers, you should stop using them. Bleaching and waxing may also irritate your skin. Electrolysis will permanently remove your hair, but it must be done by a professionally-trained beautician. There are tablets available which diminish excess hair, but these can only be obtained by a doctor. They are only prescribed if there is a major problem with excess facial or body hair, or if a hormonal imbalance is suspected.

1994_Sp_Q5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> irregular periods </title>

I have had my periods for the past seven years, but over the past six months, I have only been getting my periods every second month. I don't understand what is going on. Could you please help me?

1994_Sp_A5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> irregular periods </title>

Although it is normal for periods to be irregular for the first two years, it is a little unusual for them to change pattern after several years, as in your case. There are several possible causes, including weight loss, excessive exercise, shift work, recent travel, being on the pill, or hormonal imbalances. It may just be that this is a normal cycle for you. However, you should talk to your doctor, or your local Family Planning Clinic. They'll ask you for more information, so that they can determine whether any tests need to be done, and why this is happening.

1994_Sp_Q6.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> I think they're haemorrhoids </title>

I'm 15, and I think I have haemorrhoids. How do you get them? Is there a remedy which doesn't involve going to the doctor? My doctor is male, and I'd be embarrassed if I had to go to him. It hurts when I have bowel movements, and I bleed.

1994_Sp_A6.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> I think they're haemorrhoids </title>

Haemorrhoids, also known as piles, are enlarged veins around the opening of the anus. The veins enlarge when pressure in the abdomen increases - for example, during pregnancy, or in people who are constipated. They may be painful, and bleed during a bowel motion. Pain and bleeding can also be caused by an anal fissure, a small tear in the skin around the anus, which is also caused by constipation. Include more fibre-rich foods in your diet, such as grains, fruit, vegetables and legumes, and drink eight glasses of water a day. This will help keep your bowel motions soft and easy to pass. Please see a doctor if the pain and bleeding persist. If you are embarrassed, you may want to find a female doctor. Haemorrhoids are a common problem, and any doctor will be able to help you sort it out.

1994_Sp_Q7.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> they pick on me </title>

Everyone in my family yells at me. I'm the only one who has to clean the house. My brothers do anything they want, but I'm not allowed to do anything. My dad is always going through my room, but my mum won't let me say anything about it to him. I'm not doing well in school, either.

1994_Sp_A7.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> they pick on me </title>

It can be difficult to work out with family members just where you fit with each other, and what you need from each other. Try and get clear what your father is concerned about, and what he is looking for when he searches your room. Then try and work out some way you can demonstrate to your parents that they have no need to worry. You might find it useful asking a relative or a school counsellor to help you talk to your parents. Once you've got your home life sorted out, you may find it easier to concentrate at school.

1994_Sp_Q8.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I like her guy </title>

My best friend and I made a pact to both find boyfriends by the end of the year. She has a crush on a guy at school, but hasn't spoken to him. When she was away, I met him, and we ended up talking for a long time. I really like him, and he really likes me too. I don't want to blow my chances with him, but I don't want to lose my best friend, either. Should I tell her, or go along with her plan to get them together?

1994_Sp_A8.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I like her guy </title>

When two people like or love the same person, it's a confusing and difficult situation. Think about what you value most about your relationship with your best friend. Is it honesty, is it the fact that you always agree, or is it something else? You will have to decide whether you're going to be honest about what was, after all, an accidental meeting. Remember that talking about the tricky situations is what makes a relationship effective. However, you may have to face the fact that you may have to choose between them, so sit down and think about your relationships with these two people. What do you get (and give) in each relationship, and where do you want these relationships to go? This may help you work out which relationship is more important to you.

1994_Sp_Q9.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> she's so fake </title>

We have a friend who acts like a total bitch to us when she is around boyfriend. She constantly puts us down and tries to make us look stupid. She acts so fake around him, and he doesn't know what she's really like. We're tired of her sick, immature little game.

1994_Sp_A9.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> she's so fake </title>

Friendship is a complex and demanding creature. Have you worked out why your friend is behaving like this with you? Are you sure that your friend realises what she is doing? If you want to break the pattern, you may first have to make her realise that there is one. It could be that, because she's trying to juggle her relationships with her boyfriend and her friends, she doesn't realise how she's behaving. If you want your friendship to continue, then ask her directly what going on. This will help you avoid all confusions and distortions that come from guessing. Work out what you expect from her before you talk to her, so she can decide whether she is capable of giving that to you.

1994_Sp_Q10.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> he wants sex everywhere </title>

I am 13, and have found the man of my dreams. He is 37. There's just one problem. Wherever we go, he wants to have sex. I was trying on bras in a shop, and he came into my cubicle and took all my clothes off. It's getting embarrassing. I don't know what to do.

1994_Sp_A10.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> he wants sex everywhere </title>

This man is exploiting you. In Australia, it is illegal for men to have sex with girls who are under 16. At his age, he knows that what he's doing is wrong, and could harm you, because your body and emotions aren't fully mature yet. The way he is treating you is obviously making you very confused. Speak to someone you can trust, such as a counsellor or friend, about the relationship. Remember, whenever you have sex, you need to protect yourself against unwanted pregnancies or STDs by using a condom.

1994_Sp_Q11.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I'm ugly and fat </title>

I'm really overweight and ugly. It doesn't help that my best friend's the opposite. I'm embarrassed to be me.

1994_Sp_A11.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I'm ugly and fat </title>

You seem to be judging who and what you are solely on appearance, which is a very limited way to look at yourself. No wonder you're feeling sad and unacceptable. Comparing yourself to your best friend is obviously getting you down - isn't it about time you started comparing yourself to other people, too? Better yet, don't worry about whether other people are better than you - start accepting yourself for who you are. Work out what it is you value about yourself, and what it is that draws other people (like your best friend) to you. Realise that you're a special, unique person, and live life your way, instead of trying to copy someone else's life.

1994_Sp_Q12.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> he forces me to have sex </title>

My boyfriend and I had anal and oral sex recently. I was scared, but he forced me. Is that rape? I'm 12, and recently started menstruating, but my period is late. Am I pregnant? If I am, can I sue him?

1994_Sp_A12.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> he forces me to have sex </title>

Rape is when someone is forced to have sex against their will. This includes oral, vaginal and anal sex, as well as other sexual acts. In most cases, people are raped by people they know. Just because he's your boyfriend doesn't mean he can force you to have sex. No-one deserves to be abused in such a way. You can't become pregnant from oral or anal sex, although you are at risk of catching an STD such as chlamydia or the AIDS virus. If he did have vaginal sex with you, you could be pregnant. However, if your periods have just started, it may just be that they are still settling into a pattern. Still, you should see your doctor or go to a Family Planning Clinic, to check if you are pregnant. People who have been raped need help and support. You'll find the number for your state's 24-hour telephone rape crisis service in the phone book.

1995_1_Q1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> tampon trouble </title>

I'm 14 and I still can't insert a tampon properly - even though I follow the instructions! When a tampon is put in correctly, should I be able to see it?

1995_1_A1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> tampon trouble </title>

Being able to insert a tampon easily takes practice. Look at a few diagrams which show how the vagina slopes up and back and then look at your own vagina using a mirror. Try inserting one or two fingers inside your vagina (wash your hands first and make sure your nails are short) and feel the direction it goes. It might help to use a lubricant like Wetstuff or KY-Lubricating Jelly. Now smear a bit of lubricant on a tampon, or at the vaginal opening, and try inserting it. You might find it easier if you squat or lie down with your knees bent up. Push the tampon in as far as you can but leave some of the string hanging out so you can easily remove it (you shouldn't be able to see the actual tampon). Always wash your hands before and after inserting tampons and don't leave them in for more than six hours. If you still find it difficult to insert a tampon it might be worth talking to a friend who uses them.

1995_1_Q2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> am I overdosing? </title>

I take Panadol to relieve back pain or stomach pain every time I have my period. Sometimes when the pain is unbearable I take another two Panadols after two or three hours although the instructions say not to take another one for at least six hours. I've been doing this since I was 13. Will it affect my health?

1995_1_A2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> am I overdosing? </title>

Period pain is usually worse on the first few days of a period. The pain is caused by chemicals called prostaglandins which are released from the uterus at the start of a period. Prostaglandins make the uterus contract severely, causing pain and allowing blood to flow out from it. They can also cause dizziness, headaches, nausea and vomiting. Paracetamol (Panadol, Tylenol) and anti-prostaglandin drugs (Ponstan and Naprogesic) can provide relief, but they're more effective if they're taken at the very first signs of pain or just before. Paracetamol is safe if taken in appropriate doses, but can be bad for the liver and even fatal when too much is taken. You shouldn't take any more than eight 500mg Panadol tablets in 24 hours. The fact that you need more Panadol only two hours after a dose suggests that you may need to take them earlier (before the pain starts, if you can predict it) or try Ponstan or Naprogesic. A hot water bottle placed on your lower abdomen may also help. If this doesn't work, visit your doctor or Family Planning Clinic. Sometimes the Pill is prescribed for very severe cases of period pain.

1995_1_Q3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> I hate my legs </title>

I'm 16 and I hate my legs. They're extremely thin - except for the tops of my thighs which are quite wide. This makes my legs look stupid and I'm too embarrassed to wear shorts or swimmers. I've tried to eat more and do lots of exercise, but nothing helps. Will I be stuck with legs like this forever?

1995_1_A3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> I hate my legs </title>

When puberty hits, so many changes happen to your body that it can take a while to get used to the body shape and size you end up with. There are hundreds of possible shapes and sizes for every body part and don't forget that it's quite normal for girls' hips and thighs to widen after puberty. Eating more is unlikely to change the shape of your legs - it's best to stick to a balanced diet as it's more important for your general health. Aerobic exercise is great for your fitness but won't necessarily change the shape of your legs. If you concentrate on toning your legs it will help make them firmer, but it might also make your thighs bigger. At 16 your body is still changing shape and it may be a few years before you feel really comfortable with it.

1995_1_Q4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> sick of being moody </title>

Lately my moods have been changing three to four times a day. I get angry for the slightest reason and cry really easily - sometimes for no reason. I'm 15. All my friends are getting sick of me.

1995_1_A4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> sick of being moody </title>

Changing moods can be due to many things, sometimes it's difficult to work out why. Puberty and adolescence alone can make some people moody - people who used to like talking and mixing socially might suddenly want to spend more time alone. Often these mood changes, which are a normal part of adolescence, can be worse or get out of control when other things in your life are upsetting you. There may be things happening at home or at school or in relationships with your friends which cause underlying stress. Other reasons for changing moods may be related to your overall health - what you're eating, how much you're exercising and whether you're using any medication or drugs. It can be difficult to pinpoint the causes of moodiness. Sometimes talking to someone can help. If you don't want to speak to a parent, a doctor or a counsellor can help to sort out what's going on.

1995_1_Q5.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I don't want to hurt her </title>

My best friend broke up with her boyfriend recently. He was the one who called it off, and she still likes him a lot. I think I might be in love with him. When they were going out, I spent more time with him than she did. I don't want to hurt my friend, but I can't help the way feel. Should I ask him out?

1995_1_A5.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I don't want to hurt her </title>

You could really end up hurting your friend if you're not careful, She will feel that you have betrayed her trust if you ask him out. If you're really keen and he honesty feels the same, then chill out for a while and if anything happens, make sure you tell your friend before she finds out from anyone else.

1995_1_Q6.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> her brother likes me </title>

My best friend's brother is gorgeous and I know he likes me. The only problem is that my best friend doesn't want me to talk to him. They don't get on too well. I want to go on a date with him, but I don't want to do it behind my friend's back.

1995_1_A6.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> her brother likes me </title>

Your friend may be freaking out that she's going to lose you to her brother. Try to talk with her about your feelings for her brother and reassure her that you will continue to be her friend.

1995_1_Q7.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> jealous boyfriend </title>

I'm 13 and I've been going out with this guy for a couple of months who gets really jealous. It's alright for him to talk to girls, including my best friends, but if I talk to a guy he just about cries. Lately I've been yelling at everyone because I can't go on like this - please help!

1995_1_A7.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> jealous boyfriend </title>

Talk to him about how you feel. You're both a little young to be this serious about a relationship and he shouldn't be jealous if you explain your feelings. Let him know how you feel and that you think he is overreacting. Try not to take it out on others, they're your friends and they are there to help you.

1995_1_Q8.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> too shy to talk </title>

I really like this guy who sits next to me in geometry, but we never talk to each other. I wouldn't have a clue how to start a conversation with him because I'm so shy - the most I can manage is a "hi" before class. How can I get him to talk to me?

1995_1_A8.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> too shy to talk </title>

Don't be shy. Make a deal with yourself to say a little more to him each day and don't be too nervous. It's hard to make conversation with people you're interested in, but try talking to him and make sure you act interested in him, too.

1995_1_Q9.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I want to get intimate </title>

I'm 18 and have been best friends with a guy for five years. Recently, I've felt sexually attracted to him and want more than friendship.

1995_1_A9.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I want to get intimate </title>

I would go for it. You have nothing to lose, and he may feel the same way. Don't be embarrassed if he doesn't, you obviously have a great friendship with him and you won't jeopardise that.

1995_1_Q10.txt

<section> sex and your body first-time sex </section>

<title> when is the right time? </title>

When is the right time to have sex - what's a good age?

1995_1_A10.txt

<section> sex and your body first-time sex </section>

<title> when is the right time? </title>

The "right time" varies considerably. For some people it's quite early, while others are virgins well into their 20s. Some people have sex on the first date and others wait till they're married. What influences people are considerations like their religious beliefs, their cultural/family background, whether or not their friends are experienced, their own values and whether or not they've met a person who they want to have sex with. But what's important is that you're not pressured into having sex, and that you make up your own mind about whether or not you're ready for the responsibility. You can only do it for the first time once.

1995_1_Q11.txt

<section> sex and your body first-time sex </section>

<title> I'm still a virgin </title>

Last night my boyfriend and I decided to have sex for the first time, but he couldn't get his penis inside me.

1995_1_A11.txt

<section> sex and your body first-time sex </section>

<title> I'm still a virgin </title>

There are a few reasons you might have found penetration difficult. It could be that your boyfriend didn't maintain a hard erection - in spite of popular belief, lots of young guys do suffer from this problem. If this is the case, you should try again when his penis is fully erect. Another reason could be that you weren't quite ready and hadn't achieved a sufficient state of sexual arousal and lubrication to allow his penis to enter you easily. This problem can be approached a few ways. You can practice penetration using your finger to get used to how it will feel. Also, it's a good idea to spend lots of time in foreplay to ensure that you're fully aroused. If your vagina still isn't lubricated then, in addition to the condom, you could use a water-based lubricant such as K-Y Lubricating Jelly. Finally, you might find that kneeling over your boyfriend, with him lying on his back, will give you more control.

1995_1_Q12.txt

<section> sex and your body first-time sex </section>

<title> is this normal? </title>

When we make out my boyfriend lies on top of me, pushing his penis against me, but we keep our clothes on.

1995_1_A12.txt

<section> sex and your body first-time sex </section>

<title> is this normal? </title>

There are many ways people can express themselves sexually. What you and your boyfriend are doing is called simulated intercourse. It's a perfectly normal form of sexual expression. It helps both of you to express your sexual needs and to explore what you like and don't like.

1995_1_Q13.txt

<section> sex and your body first-time sex </section>

<title> use a towel as a precaution </title>

I'm a virgin. Will I bleed much the first time I have sex?

1995_1_A13.txt

<section> sex and your body first-time sex </section>

<title> use a towel as a precaution </title>

Bleeding the first time you have sex is caused by tearing the hymen which is a small band of skin at the vagina's entrance. The amount of bleeding is usually minor and quickly stops. Many girls will already have broken their hymen before having first-time sex, especially if they do lots of sports. Bleeding is also less likely if you've been using tampons regularly because they tend to gradually stretch the hymen. But if you're worried, just lay a towel over the bed as a precaution.

1995_1_Q14.txt

<section> dear blake </section>

<title> </title>

I'm often told that I'm nice, good-looking and friendly, but boys never seem to bother with me. I haven't had a boyfriend since I was 13 (I'm 15). I am a bit shy, but not enough to give out the wrong vibes. Could it be because I hang around a not-so-popular group or is there something wrong with me?

1995_1_A14.txt

<section> dear blake </section>

<title> </title>

There's nothing wrong with you - any guy who's worried about what kind of group you hang around with isn't worth worrying about. Liking your friends and valuing their friendship is a lot more important than trying to attract a supposedly cool guy. The important thing is that you're happy and, in the long term, you'll get a much classier guy than one who judges you by your friends.

1995_1_Q15.txt

<section> dear blake </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 15 years old and the only guys that are interested in me are ones I don't like. I've tried to make myself more attractive by getting my hair cut, but that didn't work so I got it permed. Then I heard that a guy I have the hots for likes brunettes (I'm naturally blonde) so I dyed my hair brown, only it came out orangey-red. Now it looks gross! What can I do to make guys think I'm beautiful?

1995_1_A15.txt

<section> dear blake </section>

<title> </title>

Changing your hairstyle isn't the way to make guys think you're beautiful. Guys look at the whole person rather than one aspect. Choose a hairstyle that you're happy with, not one you think guys will like. Your obsession with hairstyles is probably a turn-off to most guys. The last thing guys want is a girl who gets a new hairstyle as often as she changes her clothes. If you really think you need to change, look at your whole self, including your personality and attitude.

1995_1_Q16.txt

<section> dear blake </section>

<title> </title>

I really want to go out with this guy, but my friend said he has sex with anyone. I'm 13 and really frigid. I don't like to hold hands with guys or anything - is he right for me?

1995_1_A16.txt

<section> dear blake </section>

<title> </title>

Going on what you tell me, no, he's not right for you. If you don't like touching guys at all you might have your hands full with this guy. That is, if your girlfriend is telling you the truth about him being willing to do it with anyone. I'm not saying she's lying, but maybe she has her reasons for making out that he gets around. But whatever the truth is, if you really want to go out with this guy you have to try to get over your fear of holding hands.

1995_3_Q1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> will I get my period? </title>

I'm 14 and haven't had my periods. But for a year I've noticed a yellow-white discharge. Does this mean I'm not going to get my periods?

1995_3_A1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> will I get my period? </title>

There's heaps of time yet for your periods to come. They can start at any time between 11 and 16, and will depend on when you start developing breasts and pubic hair and growing taller. Timing will also be influenced by genetics - when your mother or any older sisters started their periods will give you an idea of when to expect yours. The discharge you are experiencing sounds normal and shows that your body is producing plenty of oestrogen, the hormone that causes many of the changes associated with puberty, including menstruation. Oestrogen causes your vagina to enlarge and become moist. This moisture appears as a clear or white discharge which dries yellow on your undies. There are also glands in the cervix (the opening of the uterus) which become active during puberty and produce mucous. This will continue after you get your periods and is a sign of a healthy reproductive system. If a discharge becomes painful, very smelly, itchy or different in colour, it's best to have a check up to rule out an infection.

1995_3_Q2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> sex and periods </title>

Can you get pregnant if you have sex when you've got your period?

1995_3_A2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> sex and periods </title>

Yes. To fall pregnant, an egg is released from your ovaries and you need to have sperm inside you to fertilise it. During a period, your uterus is shedding its lining, so it's less likely for an egg to be released at this time. However, it's still possible to get pregnant. The menstrual cycle varies from month to month. Also, sperm can survive inside the uterus for days so if you have sex during a period, the sperm may survive until the next egg is released and cause fertilisation. Some couples use the timing of periods or rhythm method as a form of contraception instead of condoms, but it's not advisable for young people as it can have a high failure rate and doesn't protect you from STDs. If you'd like more information about periods or safe sex, talk to your doctor or Family Planning Clinic.

1995_3_Q3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> I suddenly gained 20kg </title>

I had a good figure then suddenly when I turned 13 I gained 20kg which won't go away. I've stopped eating junk food and started exercising but not 1kg has been lost.

1995_3_A3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> I suddenly gained 20kg </title>

During your teenage years your body is growing at a much faster rate than you ever remembered and it's changing shape pretty drastically, too. You're likely to be noticing skin changes like pimples, body and facial hair and that you're sweating more. Feeling emotional and having mood swings is also normal. These are probably all due to the hormonal changes that occur during puberty. Weight gain is a natural and necessary process, too. Girls can easily gain up to 25kg during puberty and will deposit more body fat on the hips, buttocks, thighs, stomach and breasts. Your ideal weight depends on your height and age, as well as your genetic make-up. Your doctor will be able to tell you whether your weight is healthy for your height by using a growth chart or calculating a formula. Being overweight could be due to an imbalance in the amount you eat and the amount you burn up - so if you have a balanced diet and regular exercise, then the shape you end up with is what's best for you! Beauty comes from within. Love your body for what it is and you will be beautiful.

1995_3_Q4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> can I get them removed? </title>

I have lots of moles on my face, arms, chest, back and neck. Can I get them removed with laser surgery? Would I be covered by Medicare?

1995_3_A4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> can I get them removed? </title>

Laser surgery is not used as a method for removing most types of moles or scars. In Australia it's mainly used for skin lesions and birthmarks associated with abnormal blood vessels. Laser surgery can only be performed by doctors with special training and is generally not covered by Medicare. It sounds as though you have quite a lot of moles on your body - if this is the case it would be advisable to have a yearly check up with your local doctor or skin specialist to look out for any changes in the size, shape or colour of the moles. If you want moles removed for cosmetic reasons or because your doctor is worried about one of them then this is done by cutting them out.

1995_3_Q5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> I've a lump in my breast </title>

I'm 13 years old and have a lump the size of a pea in my left breast. I'm scared it might be cancer.

1995_3_A5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> I've a lump in my breast </title>

Examining your breasts regularly is a good habit to get into and it's the best way for women to notice any changes. Don't panic as breast cancer is not known to occur in girls under 20. As you're probably still going through puberty, you may be feeling normal breast tissue that's still developing. This can feel lumpy and may be a bit sore or tender. It's possible that you might have a benign (non-cancerous) growth or a cyst (a lump filled with fluid), but these would be unusual at your age. It might be worth a visit to your doctor or Family Planning Clinic to get some reassurance.

1995_3_Q6.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> am I being harassed? </title>

When I started my new job I got comments about my body and I accepted them as compliments. Now, I'm getting asked personal questions about my sex life. I'm too scared to tell the boss as I am the only female and the last thing I want to do is get fired.

1995_3_A6.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> am I being harassed? </title>

Get a grip girl! I think things have just got a little out of hand. Tell them to get lost or make it a joke. I think the worst thing to do is to get embarrassed or act like they're getting to you. If you do this, I'm sure that they'll leave you alone.

1995_3_Q7.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> scary hairy legs </title>

I'm 13 and my legs are very hairy and I get teased at school. I'd shave or wax them, but my mother won't let me. What should I do?

1995_3_A7.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> scary hairy legs </title>

Wax 'em! Get rid of it. Use a match if you have to! No, I'm just joking about the match, but I reckon get rid of it at all costs. Forget what your mum says, do it in the bathroom, she can't make the hair grow back, can she?! Once it's done, it's done. Just make sure you do it properly and don't cut yourself.

1995_3_Q8.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> my friend's just too friendly </title>

I feel really uncomfortable around one of my friends. She always touches me. All my other friends are in the same situation. We found out that she pashed her old best friend. We don't know what to do.

1995_3_A8.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> my friend's just too friendly </title>

Well, I was accused of kissing my friends at school and apparently I was the instigator, so I've been in your friends position and I know how she feels. Me and my mates used to do it for fun, though. You have to accept people whatever their sexual preference is. Just tell her to stop touching you and that it makes you feel uncomfortable.

1995_3_Q9.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I've fallen in love </title>

My best friend is a guy. I tell him everything, except that I've fallen in love with him. I feel it might wreck our friendship. Should I let him know how I feel about him?

1995_3_A9.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I've fallen in love </title>

Definitely. What's the harm? I would just be prepared for the consequences. If you do it the right way I don't think you'll wreck the friendship. Your feelings are not going to change whether you tell him or not. Don't throw yourself at him, just tell him one night when the right situation presents itself.

1995_3_Q10.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> she won't wear her bra </title>

I have a friend who doesn't wear a bra. She's got about a size A bra, but she won't wear it. How can I get her to wear one without hurting her feelings?

1995_3_A10.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> she won't wear her bra </title>

What business is it of yours?! Leave your friends alone. What is your interest in her wearing a bra? Besides, bras can be uncomfortable. Julie on Models Inc. never wears one!

1995_3_Q11.txt

<section> sex and your body getting intimate </section>

<title> I got really wet </title>

I recently slept with my boyfriend for the first time. During and after sex I got really wet. I went to the toilet afterwards and had a discharge running down my leg. Is this from me or him, because we didn't use a condom. Is it normal?

1995_3_A11.txt

<section> sex and your body getting intimate </section>

<title> I got really wet </title>

The wetness that you experienced before and during sex is due to the lubricating fluid produced from the walls of your vagina. The fluid assists intercourse and generally indicates a system that is functioning well. The discharge that you noticed after sex is mainly the fluid from your boyfriend's ejaculation. You should use a condom to stop this ejaculation from entering your vagina. It'll also help protect you from pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

1995_3_Q12.txt

<section> sex and your body getting intimate </section>

<title> scared of intercourse </title>

I'm scared of having sexual intercourse with my boyfriend because everyone says it hurts your first time. Is this true?

1995_3_A12.txt

<section> sex and your body getting intimate </section>

<title> scared of intercourse </title>

Pain during first-time sex doesn't always happen. When it does, it's generally because the girl is not sufficiently aroused. To help you become aroused, spend time having foreplay before sex and make sure your vagina is well lubricated.

1995_3_Q13.txt

<section> sex and your body getting intimate </section>

<title> am I too young? </title>

I'm 13 and my boyfriend is 15. We've been together for two years and we have a great relationship. I'd like to have my first sexual experience with him but I think I am too young.

1995_3_A13.txt

<section> sex and your body getting intimate </section>

<title> am I too young? </title>

You are very fortunate to have such a good and long-standing relationship with your boyfriend. When you first have sex is a very important decision and, if you do decide to have sex, it will change the kind of friendship that you have. There is no "right" age for first sex and only you can decide what is best, so don't be pressured to do anything that makes you feel uncomfortable.

1995_3_Q14.txt

<section> sex and your body getting intimate </section>

<title> too shy to cuddle </title>

I am 13 years old and have a boyfriend. I've never kissed a boy, and I'm too shy to cuddle him or hold hands. I love him heaps but don't have the guts to make a move, or touch him more, how do I become more "unshy"?

1995_3_A14.txt

<section> sex and your body getting intimate </section>

<title> too shy to cuddle </title>

It's hard to know how to show your affection for a boy. Some girls seem to be more at ease than others, but everyone gets there eventually. When you're with your boyfriend, try to relax and enjoy your time together. The first thing you could do is hold his hand or put your arm around his waist. After that you'll find that cuddling and holding hands becomes more automatic and natural. He's probably feeling just as anxious as you!

1995_3_Q15.txt

<section> sex and your body getting intimate </section>

<title> why is this happening? </title>

When I have sex the muscles inside my vagina tense up. This makes it very painful and sometimes impossible to have intercourse, why could this be happening and is there a way of preventing myself from becoming tense?

1995_3_A15.txt

<section> sex and your body getting intimate </section>

<title> why is this happening? </title>

Your muscles around your vagina become tense if you are anxious. You need to be relaxed before you begin to have intercourse. So spend lots of time in foreplay. This can be very exciting and arousing and you'll find it will prepare you both psychologically and physically for intercourse.

1995_3_Q16.txt

<section> dear blake </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 16 years old and I've just found out that my boyfriend is gay. What should I do?

1995_3_A16.txt

<section> dear blake </section>

<title> </title>

The first thing you have to do is make sure this is true. How can you be sure? Did he tell you? Maybe he's just going through a time of uncertainty. If he does like boys and still wants you, I think you'd better get out. If he is bisexual this is bad news - you'll never know what he's getting up to behind your back and there is the risk of disease. Suggest he sees a counsellor. Maybe it's a good idea if you go, too.

1995_3_Q17.txt

<section> dear blake </section>

<title> </title>

I've always wanted a male best friend but the guys I consider mate material like me in a girlfriend way. I say I want friendship and I don't give out signals, so why do they get serious with me?

1995_3_A17.txt

<section> dear blake </section>

<title> </title>

I bet thousands of girls have just read your letter and thought "half her luck". Most girls would kill to have guys lining up to go out with them. Due to human nature it's hard for a guy to be close to a girl without getting involved. There are exceptions, but it's very difficult to have a purely platonic relationship. You're going to have to make it clear to potential guy friends that you're not interested in them.

1995_3_Q18.txt

<section> dear blake </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 15 and in a relationship with one of my teachers. We love each other and have slept together. One of the Year 12 boys threatened to tell the principal if I didn't have sex with him and five of his friends. I did what they wanted, but now they keep harassing me for more. I don't know what to do, I love this teacher, but I don't want to have to sleep around to stay with him! Why are they asking me to do this?

1995_3_A18.txt

<section> dear blake </section>

<title> </title>

You should have just let them go to the principal (bet they wouldn't have, anyway). This isn't your problem but the teacher's. He's the one who is committing the illegal act by sleeping with a minor and getting involved with one of his students. You should tell him what's been happening. As to why the guys are doing it, once they have you in a corner they're going to take you for all they can get.

1995_3_Q19.txt

<section> dear blake </section>

<title> </title>

I really like this guy but another guy asked me to go out with him and I said "Yes", thinking he meant as friends. Then I got a letter from the guy I liked saying that "I've blown my chances with him". Now he doesn't like me. What should do?

1995_3_A19.txt

<section> dear blake </section>

<title> </title>

That's easy. Just show him a copy of your letter in Dolly. He'll see how much you mean to him. Good luck.

1995_4_Q1.txt

<section> sex and your body doing it </section>

<title> I want my virginity back </title>

I'm 19, and nine months ago I lost my virginity. Now I'm depressed and miserable because I want it back. Is it possible to reverse the situation?

1995_4_A1.txt

<section> sex and your body doing it </section>

<title> I want my virginity back </title>

Being a virgin means that you haven't had sexual intercourse. This is true both mentally and physically so once you've had sex it's not really possible to reverse the situation. The hymen is a thin membrane of tissue at the entrance to the uterus which is broken during sex or other types of strenuous physical activity. Whether or not you have sex is an important decision and you need to be sure that it's what you want - you shouldn't be pressured into it. However, once this has happened, there's nothing to be gained by wishing it hadn't. Learn from this experience, but don't feel bad about it. Life's too short for regrets.

1995_4_Q2.txt

<section> sex and your body doing it </section>

<title> I can't reach orgasm </title>

I'm 17 and I've had sex quite a few times now but I just can't get anywhere near an orgasm. My boyfriend has all the fun and I can't talk to him - I just go along with him. Will this happen every time I have sex or will I eventually be able to orgasm?

1995_4_A2.txt

<section> sex and your body doing it </section>

<title> I can't reach orgasm </title>

In order to reach orgasm you need to be relaxed and allow yourself to enjoy the experience. You also need to be stimulated to arousal. Girls differ in the types of stimulation they like, so experiment to find out what arouses you. This can involve general body stimulation, as well as stimulation of the breasts and genitals, including the clitoris. The clitoris is a small projection in the area where the lips that cover your genital area meet. It's made up of tissue similar to the tissue in the penis. If the clitoris is not stimulated, you're unlikely to orgasm.

1995_4_Q3.txt

<section> sex and your body doing it </section>

<title> did I have a miscarriage? </title>

Four months ago I had sex with my boyfriend without contraception. Afterwards I missed a period and a month later I had a really heavy period which lasted four weeks. Is it possible that I was pregnant and miscarried?

1995_4_A3.txt

<section> sex and your body doing it </section>

<title> did I have a miscarriage? </title>

From what you've written alone, it's not possible to tell. However, you may well have been pregnant. You should definitely consult your doctor to see whether you've had a miscarriage and whether you need to have a curette. This is a process where the uterus is cleaned out and any remaining fragments of the foetus is removed. To avoid these concerns in the future, it's important that you use contraception. The Pill is the most reliable way of preventing pregnancy and condoms are the best way to prevent STDs.

1995_4_Q4.txt

<section> sex and your body doing it </section>

<title> sex in the bath </title>

Sometimes my boyfriend and I have sex in the bath. Is the water that might be entering my vagina harmful? We don't want to give up doing this as it's more exciting than having sex in bed.

1995_4_A4.txt

<section> sex and your body doing it </section>

<title> sex in the bath </title>

Water entering the vagina isn't harmful as long as it's clean. However, if the water contains soap or bacteria, and bath water usually contains both, then there could be a chance of vaginal irritation or infection. If you notice any vaginal discomfort then this might be the cause. Until then, keep enjoying your underwater sex.

1995_4_Q5.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> will he cheat? </title>

I've started going out with a guy who lives six suburbs away from me, but there's lots of pretty girls between here and there! Do you think he'll two-time?

1995_4_A5.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> will he cheat? </title>

Nothing's 100% sure so you'll just have to trust him. Chill out and enjoy the ride of lurve! If worst comes to worst and he does do the dirty, show him the door and tell him to use it - life's too short and you deserve better.

1995_4_Q6.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> oops it's serious! </title>

My problem is serious. I keep farting. I can't help it. I eat normal foods and stuff - but I just can't go to a doctor.

1995_4_A6.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> oops it's serious! </title>

You have two choices my friend - live the rest of your life in your bedroom with an air-freshener, or see doctor. If this was my problem (and praise the Lord, its not!) I'd choose the doc. Find a doctor that you're at ease with, maybe ask a friend for their choice. If you truly can't bring yourself to see a GP, I'd advise you to alter your diet - cut down fatty foods, eat more vegies, salads, fruit and pasta, and drink loads of water.

1995_4_Q7.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I want to dress like a girl </title>

I'm a 16-year-old guy with two sisters who dressed me up for a fancy dress party as a girl - with make-up and jewellery. I want to do it again but what if I'm discovered?

1995_4_A7.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I want to dress like a girl </title>

Michael, if it feels good, babe, just do it! Many people enjoy the creativity of dressing up and taking on a new character (just ask the Home and Away crew) so this could be a sign for you to join a drama group and make a full-time hobby out of it.

1995_4_Q8.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I'm fat and ugly </title>

I hate myself! I feel like I'm ugly, fat and dumb. What can I do?

1995_4_A8.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I'm fat and ugly </title>

Everyone goes through stages of self-doubt - even Cindy and Elle have days of feeling butt-ugly! The trick is how you deal with it, and I know that you can! It all starts with approving of yourself. Say it over and over, "I approve of myself". Slowly you will see the changes. Also, check out some positive-thinking books at your local library and then... the world will be your oyster.

1995_4_Q9.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> will I start developing? </title>

I'm 15 and haven't started developing yet. All my friends have and they think I should see a doctor. What's wrong with me?

1995_4_A9.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> will I start developing? </title>

Everyone goes through puberty at different rates and at different times. With girls, it usually starts with the development of breasts. Shortly after breasts appear, hair starts to grow in the genital area as well as under the armpits. You might also notice a clear or white-yellow discharge on your knickers. Although the average age for girls to get their periods is around 12 or 13, it's still normal for you to start at 16. It's influenced by your genetics - and your overall health. A small percentage of girls and boys experience puberty later than most but usually this is nothing abnormal. If you're worried, have a chat with your doctor.

1995_4_Q10.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> I have no eyebrows </title>

I'm 13 years old and, I know it sounds weird but, I don't have very much hair on my eyebrows and my eyelashes are short. Is there any type of cream I can use that would help them grow longer?

1995_4_A10.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> I have no eyebrows </title>

The amount of hair on the scalp and body, the colour and texture vary between races and individuals. Very fair hair also looks thinner than dark hair. A balanced diet also affects the condition of your hair. Various medical conditions can cause hair to fall out, including weight loss, iron deficiency and hormonal problems. The amount of hair on your body is probably normal but see a doctor if you're still worried. You could also use a little make-up to darken your brows.

1995_4_Q11.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> my skin reacts to cosmetics </title>

I have very sensitive skin and I've tried lots of specially-recommended cosmetics and creams but hours later my face turns red and my eyes puff up. What can I do and what cosmetics are best for my skin?

1995_4_A11.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> my skin reacts to cosmetics </title>

There are two types of skin reactions which people can experience with cosmetics - a true allergic reaction and a skin irritation. Skin irritation is much more common and means your skin is very sensitive when exposed to a whole range of products - it can become red and itchy and may swell up a bit. The best way to avoid this is to always use products which are hypo-allergenic. Try cleaning your face with hypo-allergenic soap, then moisturise with sorbolene with glycerine, which are both inexpensive and readily available from chemists or supermarkets. For make-up, look for cosmetics that are genuinely hypo-allergenic. To find out if your skin is actually allergic to cosmetics you'd need to have a skin patch test by a skin or allergy specialist. This involves placing different substances on your skin (usually on your forearm) and checking for an allergic reaction. If you're finding that everything you try aggravates your skin, it might be worth a visit to a specialist to get advice on how to best care for your skin. You'll need a referral from your doctor and may need to pay a fee (above Medicare) when you go.

1995_4_Q12.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> can I lose fat off my face? </title>

I'm a 16-year-old girl and I'm 55 kg, 170cm tall and I have a very fat face and a double chin. Am I overweight? Is there something I can do to lose the fat on my face? I also have stretch marks on my breasts and bottom.

1995_4_A12.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> can I lose fat off my face? </title>

You're quite tall for your age but your weight is actually just below the average - so you're definitely not overweight! The shape of your face isn't due to any weight problem but rather to your genetics. At 16 you're still growing and your body and face will continue to change shape for a while. Stretch marks are common during puberty because of all the rapid changes in your body shape. They can be quite dark or pink or purple at first, but they become lighter and narrower with time. Using a good body moisturiser like Vitamin E cream or aloe vera on your skin helps by keeping it moist and supple.

1995_4_Q13.txt

<section> dear blake </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 17 and I've never had a boyfriend. It seems guys only go for girls with the bra size of Pamela, the jean size of Elle and the face of Cindy! I don't have any of these but

don't look bad, and my friends say I've got a great personality. I don't act desperate and I'm not an airhead or a bimbo, so what am I doing wrong?

1995_4_A13.txt

<section> dear blake </section>

<title> </title>

It's not completely true that guys'll only go for girls who look like Elle and the gang, but it's a sad fact that many of us do set our sights on the more attractive girls first. But looks aren't the only things that count - a great personality is just as big an asset. That's why it's a mystery to me that you can't find a guy. Sometimes luck has a lot to do with it, and maybe the hand of fate is saving you for someone really special. You know the saying about those who wait...

1995_4_Q14.txt

<section> dear blake </section>

<title> </title>

I'm a 13 year-old girl who only enjoys the thrill of the chase. When I like a guy I flirt, but if he starts to like me I go off him. Heaps of guys hate me because of this, what can I do?

1995_4_A14.txt

<section> dear blake </section>

<title> </title>

I know a couple of girls just like you and you're right, us guys do find it hard to take. Guys can hate these types of girls because they give the impression that they're too good for everyone. The fact that you realise you have a problem tells me that it isn't too serious. Maybe it's just that you're young and are afraid of committing yourself at this stage. As to what you can do, find a guy that you really like and try to stick with him. We're not all that bad. Trust me!

1995_4_Q15.txt

<section> dear blake </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 15 and have been with my boyfriend for three months. I love him, but I got with his older brother, who's 16. My boyfriend doesn't know and I don't plan to tell him - we fight a lot, which doesn't help. But the more I see his brother the more I want him. He wants to go out with me, too. I don't know if I should drop my boyfriend and go out with his brother.

1995_4_A15.txt

<section> dear blake </section>

<title> </title>

Man, what a mess! First of all, on the bright side - you've got the choice of two guys. But on the dark side - somebody (and it looks like it's going to be the younger brother) is going to get horribly hurt. You have to decide soon and if you choose the 16-year-old, make sure you end it with your boyfriend immediately. Then, to reduce the pain for him, wait a few months before you make it known you're on with his big brother.

1995_5_Q1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> I was raped, now I'm pregnant </title>

I was recently raped by this guy at my best friend's party. They all just sat around and watched and yelled things. Now I'm pregnant. I can't tell my mum because she didn't even know I went to the party. I'm only 13. Help me please.

1995_5_A1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> I was raped, now I'm pregnant </title>

What happened to you is very wrong and very serious and not in any way your fault. It's important for you to be able to tell someone about it and get support, as it's too big an issue to keep to yourself. If you're pregnant it's also important to get some medical advice as early as possible so you can find out about your options and make a decision about what you're going to do. You could contact a child protection unit (as you're under 16) or a sexual assault centre at one of the hospitals listed in the front section of the White Pages. Alternatively, you might feel more comfortable talking to your own doctor or to a doctor or counsellor at a youth health centre. Although you feel worried about your mother's reaction it's really important for you to have a trusted adult to confide in. A doctor or counsellor could help you talk to your mum if you find it hard to do on your own.

1995_5_Q2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> too frequent periods </title>

I got my periods seven months ago. I used to get them every four weeks and they lasted for five days, but recently I get them every two weeks and they last eight days. What's causing this?

1995_5_A2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> too frequent periods </title>

Periods can be irregular for the first couple of years. You might have a slight hormone imbalance which is causing this. This is common during puberty and isn't dangerous. If the bleeding is very heavy, makes you feel unwell, or is a nuisance, you can consider taking the Pill to regulate your periods. See your doctor or visit a Family Planning Clinic.

1995_5_Q3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> I have very large breasts </title>

I'm 16 and have large breasts for my age, which have always sagged. It's becoming very embarrassing to wear swimsuits or dresses without a bra. Is there any way to lift, firm and shape them? And if so, how long would it take? Are there any types of bras that would help?

1995_5_A3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> I have very large breasts </title>

Your body and breasts are probably still growing so it would not be wise to do anything too drastic at this stage. You may find when you've stopped growing that

everything is more in proportion. It's important to wear bras and clothes that are comfortable, particularly if you're moving around or exercising. There are plenty of good, supportive bras available which can help lift and firm your breasts. It's a good idea to have a bra fitted properly by a trained consultant - try department stores or an underwear shop. In a few years when you have completely stopped growing, you could consult a doctor or a reputable plastic surgeon if you're still concerned.

1995_5_Q4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> pregnant from oral sex? </title>

I recently performed oral sex on my boyfriend and swallowed a large amount of semen. Can I get pregnant by swallowing sperm? Is it dangerous?

1995_5_A4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> pregnant from oral sex? </title>

To become pregnant, a sperm needs to enter your vagina, swim through the uterus and into the Fallopian tubes where it can fertilise an egg. This occurs with the penetration of the penis into the vagina during sex, although it can happen if semen gets deposited just outside the vagina. Oral sex won't make you pregnant but it does carry a risk of catching STDs, particularly if condoms aren't worn. Herpes, gonorrhoea and wart viruses can all be transmitted from the genitals to the mouth and throat and there's also a very small risk of transmitting HIV and Hepatitis B from semen if there are ulcers, bleeding gums or cuts inside your mouth.

1995_5_Q5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> I've lost my appetite </title>

I'm having lots of stomach problems. I was diagnosed as having gastro reflux and was put on Zantac tablets. I've also lost a lot of weight. I'm 13, 170cm tall and I weigh 54kg. Is this okay? What sort of food should I be eating and will I get my appetite back?

1995_5_A5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> I've lost my appetite </title>

You're tall and thin for your age, but not too underweight. You shouldn't be losing weight as your body needs to grow and develop rapidly at this stage. You should be eating a balanced diet which includes plenty of bread, cereals, fresh fruit and vegies, some meat and small amounts of fatty foods. Gastro-oesophageal reflux is when acid from the stomach goes up the oesophagus (tube that connects your mouth and stomach) causing stomach pain or heartburn. It's unlikely that this would cause a lot of weight loss. You should talk to your doctor again about your symptoms, what you're eating and whether you're worried about your weight.

1995_5_Q6.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I have sex with my dad </title>

I'm 11 years old and I have sex with my dad. I really enjoy it and so does my dad. Now I think I'm pregnant. What should I do and what will my mum say?

1995_5_A6.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I have sex with my dad </title>

Your problem is serious and should be handled by professionals. Approach your school counsellor or your doctor as soon as possible.

1995_5_Q7.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> still a virgin </title>

I'm 13 and feel too ashamed to tell anybody that I'm still a virgin. All my friends have had sex but I don't feel ready to.

1995_5_A7.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> still a virgin </title>

There's nothing wrong with being a virgin. Be different. Do what you want. You'll know within yourself when the time is right - sex should be something special, with a special person. It is not something you do just to say you have done it.

1995_5_Q8.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> mum hates me </title>

I need help! I told my mum I wanted to go and live with my dad. She said I could but I'd never hear from her again. Now she hates me and I want to run away. How can I get things back to normal?

1995_5_A8.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> mum hates me </title>

Swallow your pride and apologise. We all say stupid things we don't mean and I'm sure your mum will realise this. Running away from home won't solve anything.

1995_5_Q9.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> bitchy friends </title>

I'm having a few problems with my friends. We used to be close but now they go out without me. How do I make new friends?

1995_5_A9.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> bitchy friends </title>

Socialise and go to some out-of-school activities. Talk to as many people as you can and after a while, you'll find other friends you can trust and have some fun with.

1995_5_Q10.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> no-one wants me! </title>

I'm a 15-year-old guy and I really like this girl, but every time I ask a girl out, she says no. Can you tell me how I can get a girl to go out with me?

1995_5_A10.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> no-one wants me! </title>

Sorry buddy, there's no sure way of getting a girl to go out with you. Just be yourself and don't be too overpowering. At 15, you've got heaps of time ahead of you to go out with girls, so don't worry if it takes a while.

1995_5_Q11.txt

<section> sex and your body could I be gay? </section>

<title> am I gay? </title>

A few years ago, my best friend and I used to be sexually involved. Now when I'm with my boyfriend I can't enjoy it unless I pretend it's another girl that I'm having sex with. He's starting to notice that something is wrong but I just can't bring myself to tell him what it is.

1995_5_A11.txt

<section> sex and your body could I be gay? </section>

<title> am I gay? </title>

It's not at all surprising or unusual that your first sexual experience was with your best friend. After all, a best friend is the person who you know most intimately, trust, and with whom you share your inner most thoughts. So it is quite natural that such a relationship extends into the area of sexuality. For a few people, this early sexual preference for other girls lasts throughout their lives. But for most, it doesn't, and it's a "phase" which soon switches to an overriding preference for males. If you can, show your boyfriend the type of caressing and sexual activity you used to enjoy with your girlfriend. There's no need to explain it, just show him. But if your feelings don't change with time then it's worth considering the idea that, like many other females, you are simply more attracted to girls.

1995_5_Q12.txt

<section> sex and your body could I be gay? </section>

<title> we're not interested </title>

We have two lesbians in our Year 8 class who are always trying to make advances on the other girls. They used to be our friends but now we all avoid them. What can we do to show them we are not interested in them but not hurt their feelings?

1995_5_A12.txt

<section> sex and your body could I be gay? </section>

<title> we're not interested </title>

You might feel certain that these girls are lesbians, but could it be that they're just being friendly and not making passes at you? If you're sure these girls are making sexual advances towards you and your friends, remember that while everybody is entitled to their own preference in sexual relationships, this does not entitle anybody to hassle other people. Explain, if you can, in a friendly way, that you're simply not interested in sexual relationships with females - don't give any hint of a "maybe" response. If you can offer back your friendship, on the basis of them respecting your sexual preferences, then so much the better. It's too easy to dismiss or ridicule people who have a different sexual preference. As a last resort tell them that if they keep hassling you and your friends, someone is bound to complain to an adult.

1995_5_Q13.txt

<section> sex and your body could I be gay? </section>

<title> I'm attracted to other girls </title>

I find myself attracted to girls' bodies. Sometimes I feel like rubbing myself up a girl. Am I turning into a lesbian? I also have a boyfriend who I have been going out with for years.

1995_5_A13.txt

<section> sex and your body could I be gay? </section>

<title> I'm attracted to other girls </title>

It's very likely that you're going through a phase of sexual attraction which is common for girls of your age. Although you have a boyfriend, your social life is mostly with other girls. So it's quite natural that you want to experience affection towards girls and even the intimacy of sexual attraction. This doesn't necessarily mean that you're going to become exclusively lesbian. It might be that you would like to try a close relationship with a girlfriend and find out what kinds of relationships really make you happy. Alternatively, it might be that you're not attracted to your boyfriend anymore and it's time to end the relationship.

1995_5_Q14.txt

<section> sex and your body could I be gay? </section>

<title> my best friend kissed me </title>

Last night I spent the night at my best friend's house - I've known her for years. We were talking and all of a sudden she kissed me and touched me in places that friends shouldn't. I told her I'd better go home and left. I know I shouldn't tell anyone because it's none of my business but I'm really worried about her.

1995_5_A14.txt

<section> sex and your body could I be gay? </section>

<title> my best friend kissed me </title>

As girls develop, they have a strong urge to express their sexual feelings. This generally happens when most of their friends are girls, and since girls often have little contact with boys at this stage, their first sexual experience is often with a close female friend. This is perfectly normal but, as with any relationship, it's essential that both of you want it. You're quite right not telling anyone else about what happened. You don't want to harm your friend and she's probably feeling just as bad about what happened. So talk to her, explain that while you really care for her as a friend, you don't want a sexual relationship. If she values you, she will understand and your friendship will become even stronger.

1995_6_Q1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> is something wrong? </title>

I'm 16 and on the Pill. When my boyfriend and I have sex, a white discharge comes out afterwards. We've been having sex for a while. Is something wrong, or is this normal?

1995_6_A1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> is something wrong? </title>

It's great that you and your boyfriend are taking precautions such as the Pill. You haven't mentioned whether you also use condoms, because they are the only effective way to prevent STDs. The discharge you've noticed could be a few things, depending on whether you use condoms and whether you and your boyfriend have had previous sexual partners. It's most likely that the white discharge that occurs only after sex is a combination of your boyfriend's semen and your own vaginal fluid (which is produced when you're sexually aroused). This is normal and you don't need to do anything about it except to wash your genital area carefully each time you bath or shower. If the discharge is smelly, painful, green, yellow or blood-stained, then you should have an STD checkup. It's also normal to get a clear or white discharge as part of the menstrual cycle, although the Pill usually makes this less noticeable.

1995_6_Q2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> itchy and irregular </title>

I'm 14 and have had my periods for a year. When I first got them, everything was fine for four months but now I get them every two or three weeks and my vaginal area gets very itchy. I don't talk to my mum and I can't go to a doctor because mum comes in with me. What can I do to become regular again?

1995_6_A2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> itchy and irregular </title>

For a couple of years after your first period, your menstrual cycle can be irregular and unpredictable, after this it usually falls into some sort of pattern. What you're experiencing sounds like a slight hormonal imbalance that causes frequent and often quite heavy periods. This is extremely common during puberty and there's no need to do anything about it unless the bleeding is very heavy or you're finding it too uncomfortable or inconvenient. If this is the case, an option is to go on the Pill to regulate your periods. The vaginal itch could be a number of things - sensitivity around your genital area, especially if you're washing or touching the area a lot, or perhaps an infection such as thrush. Some people find it awkward or embarrassing to talk about periods and other normal body changes, but usually feel relieved once they have. Don't be afraid to talk to parents, teachers or other trusted adults. Or try visiting your doctor or Family Planning Clinic, who will keep your problem confidential.

1995_6_Q3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> mole alert </title>

For the last couple of years I've had a large mole on my left breast. It wasn't there when I was younger but it suddenly appeared one day. Could it be cancerous? Will it become cancerous? I'm 14.

1995_6_A3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> mole alert </title>

Moles can appear out of the blue until young adulthood and moles that have been present in your childhood can grow during puberty. It's impossible for me to say whether the mole on your breast is completely benign but I suggest that you get it

checked out. Look out for warning signs of a sudden change in colour or size, itching or bleeding. If you have any of these symptoms or if you have lots of other moles on your body it might be a good idea to have them all checked out. Australia has one of the highest rates of cancerous moles, so don't forget to avoid the sun in the middle of the day, use SPF15+ sunscreen on your face and exposed parts of your body and wear a hat and sunnies when you're outside. But get that mole checked anyway.

1995_6_Q4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> don't want to eat animals </title>

I'm a 13-year-old New Zealander and although our meat is nice, I can't stand the thought of eating it. I want to become a vegetarian, but could this be bad for me? Will I end up lacking the nutritional requirements I need to grow healthy and strong?

1995_6_A4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> don't want to eat animals </title>

Some people become vegetarians because they believe they'll lose weight or be healthier, but this isn't necessarily true. Red meat is the best source of iron and all meat is a good source of protein - these are essential for good health but they can be obtained from other foods. If you choose not to eat meat then it's important to get plenty of iron from green, leafy vegetables and cereals. Eating these with a good source of Vitamin C (like orange juice or tomatoes) helps the body absorb iron. Non-meat sources of protein include bran, wheat germ, pasta, bread, cheese, eggs, and most nuts. Vegetables high in protein include kidney beans, soya beans and lentils. Have a chat to a dietician or a GP about the five food groups and what makes up a balanced diet.

1995_6_Q5.txt

<section> sex and your body going down </section>

<title> how do I give oral sex? </title>

My boyfriend's asked me to give him oral sex. I want to, except don't know if I should blow or suck. What do I do?

1995_6_A5.txt

<section> sex and your body going down </section>

<title> how do I give oral sex? </title>

Oral sex is something you learn and the more you practice, the better you get at it. Most guys like to have their penis sucked and the most sensitive part is the front and around the top - use your tongue to stimulate it while you're sucking. Once it's erect, you may not be able to fit it all in your mouth, so move it in and out using your lips and tongue. Don't suck too hard or use your teeth as it's very sensitive and you could hurt him. Just relax, be gentle, go slowly, and let him guide you. And remember, only do the things you feel comfortable with and don't do them just to please your boyfriend.

1995_6_Q6.txt

<section> sex and your body going down </section>

<title> can I get mouth sores? </title>

I recently gave my boyfriend a head job. A day after, the inside of my mouth was covered in pimple-type sores and they're still there. Could they be from oral sex?

1995_6_A6.txt

<section> sex and your body going down </section>

<title> can I get mouth sores? </title>

It's difficult to know from your description whether the infection in your mouth is due to oral sex - it may be totally unrelated. But then again, they may have been caused by the irritation brought about by sucking your boyfriend's penis, particularly if it was for any length of time. Another explanation could be that you've caught an STD which can be transmitted through either oral, anal or vaginal sex. To be on the safe side, you need to see a doctor or go to a Family Planning Clinic immediately and they'll give you medication to cure any infection.

1995_6_Q7.txt

<section> sex and your body going down </section>

<title> should I eat lemons first? </title>

I'm in a relationship with a guy and he wants me to give him a head job, but I've heard it's better to eat two lemons before sucking his penis. Is this true?

1995_6_A7.txt

<section> sex and your body going down </section>

<title> should I eat lemons first? </title>

It's not necessary to eat two lemons before having oral sex. This story may have come from the view that mouth infections can be decreased if your mouth is acidic. Although this help with some infections, it won't prevent STDs, which can be transmitted during oral sex. Certainly the decrease in infection is not worth the unpleasant experience of eating two lemons before having oral sex. The best way of preventing most STDs is for your boyfriend to use a condom when you have oral sex.

1995_6_Q8.txt

<section> sex and your body going down </section>

<title> can I get cramps? </title>

I have been having sex with my boyfriend for two years. Lately, he keeps forcing me to give him head. Last time I choked and spat up semen and swallowed some. I've had cramps for four days, is it due to this?

1995_6_A8.txt

<section> sex and your body going down </section>

<title> can I get cramps? </title>

Some people like to and are ready to have oral sex, others are not. It's important that you're not forced to engage in oral sex if you don't want to. If you go too far down on your boyfriend's penis, your body responds as though you have something caught in your throat and it may cause you to choke or gag. Sometimes, as guys get more sexually excited, they thrust harder and your boyfriend may have pushed his penis further into your mouth without realising - he would have ejaculated in your mouth, too. But swallowing the semen would not have caused the cramps. They may have been caused by something totally unrelated to oral sex, or they could be from tension and anxiety that you may have in relation to the experience. Remember, if you're going to have oral sex, you should always enjoy it and wear a condom.

1995_6_Q9.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> first kiss </title>

I'm 13 and I've just broken up with the first boy I've ever kissed and now I can't imagine kissing anyone but him. Will I get over it?

1995_6_A9.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> first kiss </title>

Of course. It might not feel like it now, but take my word for it. We all get stuck behind our fears sometimes, but once you feel comfortable with another guy, you'll get over your fear. Then you look back and wonder what you were so worried about.

1995_6_Q10.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I'm really lonely </title>

I can't get close to anyone. I'm 16 and I've never had a boyfriend. I'm shy and don't have confidence in myself. How can I stop being so lonely?

1995_6_A10.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I'm really lonely </title>

Firstly, forget about trying to get people to like you. You're a great person, so just relax and be yourself. You have to learn to love yourself and realise that as long as you know you're fabulous, that's what really matters.

1995_6_Q11.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I feel really used </title>

My boyfriend makes me have sex with him and his friends. I'm sick of it and want it to stop. I'm 14.

1995_6_A11.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I feel really used </title>

Don't ever let anyone use you - and if people are making you have sex with them, then I think it's time to talk to the police or a counsellor. Truthfully, your boyfriend sounds like a piece of crap and I'd forget about him. Anyone who uses you like that is clearly rotten and I'm sure that one day his karma will catch up with him. If you can, talk to your parents, a friend or a teacher. Forget about boys and sex for the moment and try to spend some quality time with your girlfriends.

1995_6_Q12.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> she's a square peg </title>

My best friend and I are really close, but she's very straight. I like having a wild time at parties, but she gets mad when I do. Should I drop her and go out with people more my type?

1995_6_A12.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> she's a square peg </title>

No. Don't drop your friend because she's really straight. Relationships with people who are different from you can be very interesting. Sure, have some friends who like to do the same things as you, but try to respect and understand how your best friend is feeling. If things work out between you guys, you could both learn a lot from each other. Try to be tolerant!

1995_6_Q13.txt

<section> dear blake </section>

<title> </title>

A boy in my form is really nice and to me, he's the best person in the world - but everybody thinks he's really ugly. He laughs funny and wears glasses, plus he hangs around with this real geek. Will everyone tease me if go out with him?

1995_6_A13.txt

<section> dear blake </section>

<title> </title>

Who cares what everyone else thinks? What matters the most is what YOU believe. You say this guy is "the best person in the world", so what more do you want? Just because "everyone else" thinks he's ugly is no reason for you to change your opinion of him. There comes a time when you have to start being your own person and making up your own mind. Is having glasses and a funny laugh really that much of an issue? You're crazy if you worry about other people teasing you - they're the ones with the problem.

1995_6_Q14.txt

<section> dear blake </section>

<title> </title>

I'm a 15-year-old girl who is going out with a 16-year-old guy, I really like him a lot and it couldn't be better, but I'd like to date other people. I don't know how to tell him and don't want to lose him completely. I don't think I could handle him dating other girls.

1995_6_A14.txt

<section> dear blake </section>

<title> </title>

Well, you've certainly given yourself the right pen name! How could you possibly expect him to be a good boy while you're seeing other people? You can't have your cake and eat it, too. I think the problem is you don't really love this guy, but you don't want anyone else to have him either. If you did love him you wouldn't feel like seeing other people. Commitment is a big part of a relationship. So you should make up your mind whether you want this guy or not.

1995_6_Q15.txt

<section> dear blake </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 14 and I've been going out with a 20-year-old guy for five months. We both want to have sex but I'm a virgin and I'm afraid it will hurt! Will he laugh and make fun of me if I cry? Would it be less painful if I was on the top or the bottom?

1995_6_A15.txt

<section> dear blake </section>

<title> </title>

The fact that you think this guy might laugh at you when you're in pain tells me that you don't feel totally comfortable with him, so maybe he isn't the guy that you should be losing your virginity to. You also have to remember that this guy is an adult so he'd be breaking the law by having sex with someone under 16. First-time sex for a girl can sometimes hurt (that's why it's best if you have an understanding guy) but that's not always the case and it depends on the individual. As to what position would hurt the least, I'd say being on top is best for you because you're more in control. And if sex hurts, it's OK for a girl to tell a guy, so don't be afraid.

1995_7_Q1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> terrible odour </title>

I have this terrible odour and no matter how much I wash myself, it keeps coming back. I've ended up losing most of my friends because they can't stand the smell. I sometimes have two showers a day but it doesn't make a difference. Nothing helps.

1995_7_A1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> terrible odour </title>

I assume that the odour you mention is underarm odour. This is quite common around puberty and is usually because of overactive sweat glands. Sometimes the amount of sweating increases with stress and it can be embarrassing. Keeping clean, as you have been, is really important. If you find that using a good anti-perspirant deodorant isn't enough, you can try using DriClor, which is available without a prescription from a chemist. DriClor is sometimes a bit strong and can cause drying. If this doesn't work, it might be worth a visit to a doctor or skin specialist to check it out a bit more.

1995_7_Q2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> stuff in my jocks </title>

I'm a 13-year-old boy and I have a problem. For about three weeks I've been getting this clear, jelly-like stuff in my jocks and after that I get blood coming out of my penis. Am I having periods? Am I turning into a girl?

1995_7_A2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> stuff in my jocks </title>

The problem you've noticed does sound like it needs medical attention. Girls going through puberty will notice staining on their undies - but this is not normal for guys. Boys have their first ejaculation early in puberty, soon after the testes and pubic hair start to grow. This usually happens at night (a wet dream) and will leave some semen and staining on the sheets. The clear stuff you've noticed in your undies and the blood coming from your penis don't have anything to do with periods or turning into a girl.

You might have an infection in the genital area or even with your bladder or kidneys. If you are sexually active, it might be a sexually transmitted infection. Go and see your doctor so you can get the right treatment.

1995_7_Q3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> a cure for eczema? </title>

I have eczema and my hands feel gross when I hold hands with my boyfriend. It disturbs him. I also have dry legs and arms. Is there a cure?

1995_7_A3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> a cure for eczema? </title>

Eczema is a common condition where the skin is very dry. This makes it more sensitive than normal and it becomes itchy and inflamed easily - for example, in cold weather, when it comes into contact with soap, or when you are under stress. Although there is no permanent cure, there are plenty of effective treatments for eczema. It's best to start with the basics, like a healthy diet, some exercise and plenty of sleep. Next, your skin needs plenty of moisturiser, and the best ones are cheap, hypo-allergenic ones like sorbolene with glycerine. You may need to apply this two or three times a day. Where the skin is badly inflamed, you may need to use medicated creams, available on prescription. These work well and can be used for short periods of time.

1995_7_Q4.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> </title>

My bra size is 18DD but I'm only 17. All the guys I've gone out with said they only went out with me because I have big boobs. Why don't they like me for who I am and not for me breasts?

1995_7_A4.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> </title>

The type of guys you've been seeing are too immature to see past your physical features and look to the person inside you. You should find a guy who's sensitive to your concerns and has interests similar to yours. The most important thing is to get to know a guy before you start going out with him - this way you develop a relationship based on feelings rather than looks.

1995_7_Q5.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> </title>

I'm a 17-year-old girl who's been madly in love with a guy for 10 months. He knows I like him, but I was told he worries what my dad would think (they know each other really well). He's nearly 18 and I need some help to make the first move because I'm sure he won't do it. I don't know what to do without making a total fool of myself. What should I do or say?

1995_7_A5.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> </title>

Would your father oppose a relationship between you and this guy? You say they know each other, but if your dad likes him, there shouldn't be a problem with you seeing him. Swallow your pride and talk to him - find out if he feels comfortable about a relationship with you. If he does, ask him out!

1995_7_Q6.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 14 years old and I'm confused. I like four guys and they all like me. I'm going out with one guy and I don't think I like him as more than a friend. What should I do?

1995_7_A6.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> </title>

If you're unsure of feelings for your boyfriend, the only fair thing to do is explain how you feel - then stop seeing him. As for the other guys, make a decision based on what you know about them. Once you decide which one you like most, let him know how you feel and stick by your convictions.

1995_7_Q7.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> </title>

I'm in love with a 22-year-old guy and I'm 14. He is in my heart and I can't stop thinking about him. What should I do? Does age really matter?

1995_7_A7.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> </title>

I think the age difference could end up being a barrier to your relationship. Your interests, feelings and lifestyles will probably be really different, making the relationship difficult. Try to find a guy who has similar interests to yours and build a friendship with someone you're comfortable with - that will be more stable than a relationship with someone so much older than you.

1995_7_Q8.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> he's my only friend </title>

I'm a 13-year-old girl and my only friends are my boyfriend and one of his mates. The girls in my class think that when I'm around boys I stick my chest out. What should I do?

1995_7_A8.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> he's my only friend </title>

Some people are not always compatible with members of their own gender. The girls are jealous of your friendships with boys. The most important thing is that you have someone you can trust and rely on.

1995_7_Q9.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I'll chicken out </title>

I'm 14 and I have a boyfriend who I love very much. I'm worried that when the time comes to have sex I'll chicken out. Will I ever feel comfortable about having sex?

1995_7_A9.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I'll chicken out </title>

I can't tell you when you'll be ready because only you will know that, but don't rush into it. Trust your instincts. Talk about it with your boyfriend, tell him your fears and be sure that when you make love you're emotionally ready. Ruining a relationship over the sex issue is unnecessary.

1995_7_Q10.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> my first kiss </title>

I'm 14 years old and have never been kissed. I like this guy who also likes me, and I think it could lead to my first kiss, but if I went out with anyone, my dad would have a heart attack. I don't want to fight with my dad, but I really want to date this guy!

1995_7_A10.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> my first kiss </title>

The first kiss is always a bit of a disappointment but that's because it can only get better. Kiss him, get it out of the way, but don't hurt your dad. Ultimately the trust and respect of your parents is more important than a sloppy kiss off a boy.

1995_7_Q11.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> copycat friend </title>

One of my best friends is trying to crack on to this guy who she knows I like. She recently broke up with her boyfriend and now thinks she can flirt with any guy that likes me! And she's always copying me in whatever I do. How can I tell her to stop without ending our friendship?

1995_7_A11.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> copycat friend </title>

There's two ways to approach this. Either take it as a compliment or tell your friend to keep her nose out of your business. Friendly competition is healthy but if it gets to the point where your friendship is suffering, something must be done. Just make sure that if it's a race to the finish line, you always win.

1995_7_Q12.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> he's using me </title>

I'm 14 and have been involved with a guy, who is 24, for two years. He has also been involved with another girl and has recently told me he's going to marry her. I love him

very much and don't know how to let go of him. All my friends say he's only using me. Is he?

1995_7_A12.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> he's using me </title>

You may love him very much but if the feeling is not reciprocated, you are wasting your energies. If he cannot commit to you then he is not worth your time. The age difference isn't always an issue, but he is more experienced than you in many ways and in a relationship like this, you must be careful. I promise you, there will be many others.

1995_8_Q1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> I'm really saggy </title>

I'm 16 and the skin between the flaps of my vagina has gotten really saggy over the past year. I'm still a virgin and can't use tampons because every time I try I get a sharp pain inside me. Can I sleep with my boyfriend while I'm in this condition? Is there anything I can take to make it go away?

1995_8_A1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> I'm really saggy </title>

The flaps of the vagina you are referring to could be the labia majora (the outside lips which are covered with pubic hair) or labia minora (the thinner, pinkish inside lips). Both of these grow a lot during puberty and can become quite long. In some women they do become a bit saggy, too. It's also common for girls to feel some sort of discomfort or pain when they first try to use tampons. What you've been feeling is unlikely to be due to any serious problem and shouldn't cause hassles later when you feel ready to have sex. It does take time to get used to changes in your genital area and often lots of practice to get used to inserting a tampon. The vagina slopes up and back and inserting a tampon in the wrong direction can cause discomfort. You can practice by putting your fingers in your vagina to feel the direction it goes in. You can also practice with a tampon (even if you don't have your period) by smearing lubricant on the tampon to slide it in more easily.

1995_8_Q2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> my breasts are too small </title>

I'm 15 years old and I have very small breasts. I have had my periods and I find it really embarrassing being so small. Is this normal?

1995_8_A2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> my breasts are too small </title>

With so many changes happening to the body during puberty, most people feel embarrassed if they're too tall, short, big-busted or flat-chested and wonder if they're abnormal. But just because you aren't the same as your friends doesn't mean you're not normal. Breasts start to grow right at the start of puberty and may keep growing for several years. They're made up mainly of glandular tissue (which later produces

milk) and fat. The final size of your breasts depends partly on your genes and partly on body fat. They may change in size and shape under hormonal influences such as pregnancy. I'm sure you are very normal. Try to remember that you are unique and special no matter what your size and shape is.

1995_8_Q3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> I lost my baby </title>

Four months ago I had a miscarriage. The pregnancy was accidental and I didn't tell anyone. I was three months pregnant at the time and now I cry every time see a baby or baby things. I'm only 16 and I know I did something wrong but the pain of losing my baby is getting worse. What can I do?

1995_8_A3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> I lost my baby </title>

What you're feeling is a normal reaction to the loss of your baby. The fact that the pregnancy was accidental means you were probably still coming to terms with being pregnant when the miscarriage happened. It also sounds as though you feel guilty because it was somehow wrong in your eyes. It's important for you to sort through all these feelings and understand that they are normal. If you talk about it, with a parent or a friend, you'll have the benefit of their support, but you may also need to deal with their reaction first. That's why it might help to talk to a professional counsellor as well because they won't judge you. Your doctor, a Family Planning Clinic or a Youth Health Centre are the best places to start.

1995_8_Q4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> hair like straw </title>

I'm a 13-year-old girl with honey blonde, shoulder length hair. Most of the time it has a natural wave in it but it feels like straw, which is really annoying. I get my hair cut about two to three times a year and I've tried different shampoos and conditioners but nothing works.

1995_8_A4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> hair like straw </title>

The texture, thickness, colour and waviness of our hair depends mainly on the genes inherited from our parents. And the condition will depend on things like your overall health and hygiene. If your hair feels like straw, it's probably dry, which may be partly genetic, but partly because of overwashing or using shampoos that dry out your hair. Dryness can also be caused by dyes and perm solutions. Since hair is really a part of the skin, it would be useful to know the condition of your scalp as well. A good hairdresser can check your hair and scalp and recommend a shampoo and conditioner. If they feel there's a more serious problem, you should see a doctor. It's also a good idea to have your hair trimmed once every six weeks to help keep those split ends under control.

1995_8_Q5.txt

<section> sex and your body first-time facts </section>

<title> can sex cause periods? </title>

I'm in Year 6 and have had sex with my boyfriend. While we were doing it, my vagina bled. I hadn't had my periods before then, but now I do. Is it because of my age?

1995_8_A5.txt

<section> sex and your body first-time facts </section>

<title> can sex cause periods? </title>

When a girl has sex for the first time it is possible that a thin piece of skin at the top of the vagina - called the hymen - may be broken. When this occurs there may be a small amount of bleeding, but much less than during a period. It is likely that the bleeding you experienced at the time of intercourse came from the torn hymen, but this also coincided with the start of your periods. While most girls have their first period at about 12 to 13 years of age, there is a large amount of variation. Some start as early as 10 to 11 years while others need to reach 14 or 15.

1995_8_Q6.txt

<section> sex and your body first-time facts </section>

<title> I've had guys finger me </title>

I've heard how painful sex is for the first time. I don't think I'm big enough. I have had guys finger me but they only use one finger. Trying to find out for myself, I found two fingers won't fit. Is there a way to fix this?

1995_8_A6.txt

<section> sex and your body first-time facts </section>

<title> I've had guys finger me </title>

If you make the decision to have sex, there are several things you should do to make it enjoyable and not painful. First, of course, use a condom. This not only helps prevent pregnancy but also protects you from sexually transmitted diseases. Secondly, pain during intercourse is generally caused because the girl is not sufficiently aroused. So make sure you spend time being sexually stimulated before you have intercourse; take it slowly, don't hurry. Finally, using a water-based lubricant like K-Y Lubricating Jelly can also help. Don't use an oil-based lubricant like Vaseline as it might damage the condom. If you follow these guidelines you'll find that your vagina will be large enough to receive your boyfriend's penis and you will enjoy your first-time sex together.

1995_8_Q7.txt

<section> sex and your body first-time facts </section>

<title> when's the best time? </title>

My boyfriend and I would like to start having sex. But I don't know what time would be the best - three days before my period or after? What would be the best things to use - condoms or the Pill? What would happen if I got pregnant and people find out I'm under-age?

1995_8_A7.txt

<section> sex and your body first-time facts </section>

<title> when's the best time? </title>

You are able to have sex at any time, even during your period, if you want to. But it's not a good idea to use the timing of your period to prevent pregnancy. During the

early years of adolescence, the length of time between your periods may vary a lot and so the time at which you could become pregnant varies, too. The best way to prevent pregnancy is to avoid having sexual intercourse. The second best way is to use the Pill. Condoms are a less effective contraceptive method, but they are useful to protect against sexually transmitted diseases. If you want to avoid pregnancy and STDs, you should use both the Pill and a condom. You should also know that it's illegal to have sex before the age of 16. The authorities take the view that people under the age of 16 are not able to make the decision to have sex, so laws are designed to protect adolescents. Although the penalties for having sex before the age of 16 vary from state to state, they usually involve a child protection order. This means that the child welfare authorities supervise the person involved to protect their wellbeing.

1995_8_Q8.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> </title>

I used to like this guy so I asked him out, but he said no. I still think we'd make a perfect match but I'm not as crazy about him now. Although, if he asked me out, I'd say yes. Lately he's been flirting with me and I don't know if it's because he likes me. I'm too embarrassed to ask him out again.

1995_8_A8.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> </title>

You say you don't like this guy as much as you used to. Before you take any action, try to get your feelings clear in your head. If you still feel a strong attraction, ask what he's doing one afternoon - let him know how you feel. If you're not sure of your feelings, it's probably better to admire him from afar.

1995_8_Q9.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 14 and I'm crazy about this guy I've known for about a year. We've become really good friends and a lot of people think we go out - even though we don't. I'm scared that asking him out might ruin the special relationship we have. But I really like him. I don't want to wreck things.

1995_8_A9.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> </title>

It sounds like you two have an excellent friendship. Can you discuss anything with him? If so, let him know that everyone thinks the two of you are going out and see how he reacts to the news. If his reaction is positive, just tell him how you feel. But, if his response is slightly dubious or unsettling, maybe you're better off just staying friends.

1995_8_Q10.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 15 and I've never had a boyfriend. I really want one but I'm too scared to start a relationship. I've never been to a disco or a nightclub because I get too stressed about what might happen. Why am I like this?

1995_8_A10.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> </title>

Your feelings and worries are completely natural. And there's no need to stress about going to a disco or a nightclub. There are tons of underage venues around that have the same atmosphere, so if you go along with your friends and relax, you'll have heaps of fun.

1995_8_Q11.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> </title>

Why are boys so afraid to ask a girl out? Is it 'cause they're scared she'll say no?

1995_8_A11.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> </title>

Guys are just as afraid of rejection as girls are. Even though most guys want to look macho or tough, we have sensitive feelings and egos that are easily bruised, too. Asking a girl out is really hard - especially if you're not sure how she feels.

1995_8_Q12.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> </title>

I recently made eye contact with a guy I like. He licked his lips in a sexual way and I looked away feeling very embarrassed. Does this mean he likes me or that he wants to have sex with me?

1995_8_A12.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> </title>

I don't know if the guy wants to go so far as having sex, but it looks as though he has positive feelings about you. I would say this guy likes you, so if you like him back, go for it.

1995_8_Q13.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I'm too ugly to live </title>

I hate myself. I'm fat and ugly and stupid. My friends are beautiful so all the guys ignore me. Sometimes I get so down that I want to kill myself.

1995_8_A13.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I'm too ugly to live </title>

It sounds like you have a real self-confidence problem. Have you talked to anyone about how you feel? You have to learn to love and respect yourself and then you'll find those around you will love and respect you for who you are.

1995_8_Q14.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> my jokes suck </title>

None of my friends like me. I try to be funny and entertaining, but nobody likes my jokes. They think it's gross if I burp, they think it's mean if I trip someone over, and they think my sense of humour sucks. What can I do about it?

1995_8_A14.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> my jokes suck </title>

You need to stop trying so hard. Relax! If you are aware that your friends find your kind of mucking around annoying, either go easy on the jokes or find a new group of friends with the same sense of humour and fun as yours.

1995_8_Q15.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I really wish he'd notice me </title>

I'm in love with a guy at school and I want him to notice me. I try looking at him and sometimes he catches me doing it. What should I do next?

1995_8_A15.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I really wish he'd notice me </title>

I think you should find some way to make conversation with him. Talk to his friends and find out his hobbies and where he likes to spend his spare time. This way you can conveniently bump into him and talk about something you both have in common.

1995_8_Q16.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> banned from boys </title>

I'm 13 years old and all my friends have made out or kissed guys but I haven't even had a boyfriend and mum won't let me go out with guys until I'm 15. What can I do?

1995_8_A16.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> banned from boys </title>

You have to respect that your mum has her reasons. She's only trying to protect you. It seems like an eternity now, but it's only two years until you're 15 and then you can date with her blessing. I promise you there will always be plenty of boys around.

1995_9_Q1.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> </title>

There's a guy in my form that I love heaps. He's my friend but he acts immature and tough around his mates and I know he doesn't want to go out with me because his friends tell him not to. What can I do to get this cute guy?

1995_9_A1.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> </title>

You say this guy's your friend, which is a great place to start developing a relationship between you. Oh, and just because his friends tell him not to go out with you doesn't mean he's not interested. Be persistent with him. Make sure you're friendly and warm but not overbearing - if he's interested in more than a friendship, he'll soon forget what his friends might think.

1995_9_Q2.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> </title>

I've just found out my boyfriend two-timed me at a party. He says he still loves me. I love him, but I don't know if I can forgive him.

1995_9_A2.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> </title>

You need to decide whether you can trust your boyfriend. Do you think he'll do it again or is he genuinely sorry? If you decide you can't trust him, the relationship is unlikely to heal and you should get out before your friendship is destroyed.

1995_9_Q3.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> </title>

My friends and I were wondering, how do guys show that they really like you?

1995_9_A3.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> </title>

Guys can show they like you in all kinds of ways. Eye contact, body language, the way they talk to you, and the things they say will show you how they feel. Boys react to the opposite sex the same way girls do - they'll probably be a bit shy and scared of rejection, but if it's "right" it'll all work out. Boys probably find it a bit harder to express their feelings than girls - sometimes they can act tough and silly, just to get noticed. Don't let their dumb ways confuse you, because once they know you like them back they will (or should) become more sensible and easier to communicate with.

1995_9_Q4.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> </title>

I'm fat and ugly. All my friends have boyfriends but I've never had one. Do you think if I lost weight I'd get a guy?

1995_9_A4.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> </title>

Before anyone else can feel good about you, you have to feel good about yourself. If that means you feel you have to lose weight, then give it a go - exercise more and cut out junk food. At least you'll be healthier and feel better about yourself. Don't let the fact that you haven't had a boyfriend worry you. Just because your friends have

boyfriends doesn't mean that you won't find one. It's my guess you still have heaps of friends who are single and, like you, haven't found the right person or aren't interested in a relationship. Once you develop a positive attitude to yourself, you'll find others will be more positive too.

1995_9_Q5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> is my skin dirty? </title>

I've got really dark skin that looks like dirt under my arms and on my inner thighs just near my vagina. It means I can't wear singlets or micro-minis. What is this skin? I've tried to scrub it off for years but it won't come off.

1995_9_A5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> is my skin dirty? </title>

It's impossible for me to say whether there is a problem without more information. If you're dark or olive-skinned, the dark patches are quite probably normal. Some medical conditions can cause thickening and darkening of the skin folds as you've described, but at your age, most of these are harmless. Some medications can also cause darkening of skin pigment in these areas. Bite the bullet and see your doctor - he or she may decide to refer you to a skin specialist.

1995_9_Q6.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> I have a hairy face </title>

I'm 14, going through puberty and have some facial hair. Will it go away?

1995_9_A6.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> I have a hairy face </title>

The hormonal changes of puberty stimulate the growth of facial hair in both sexes - although in boys it tends to be much greater and grows in different places. The amount of facial hair you have depends on your genetic and ethnic background. This hair won't go away and is quite normal. Some girls are comfortable with this extra facial hair, while others prefer to bleach it or to remove it using a depilatory cream, waxing or electrolysis. Rarely are there medical causes for the growth of facial hair in girls, and when there are, they're usually linked with other symptoms, such as a deepening voice, irregular periods and hair growth on the body as well as on the face.

1995_9_Q7.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> problem pimples </title>

I'm 16 years old and although I try to maintain a fairly good health and beauty regime, acne is a persistent problem. Is this hormone-related? I started my periods five years ago but they have never been regular.

1995_9_A7.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> problem pimples </title>

Nearly every teenager gets acne which lasts for a few years, so the fact that you still have acne at 16 is pretty normal. It could be due to the changing hormones associated with puberty, which tend to cause increased oiliness of the skin. Like many conditions, acne can range from mild to severe and it nearly always makes sufferers feel self-conscious. Keeping your skin clean is the most important way to treat acne. It should be washed twice a day with an anti-bacterial soap or foam. There are also several reliable over-the-counter creams which you can apply to make the pimples dry out. If the acne is more severe, antibiotic lotions or tablets - or in some cases the Pill - can be prescribed by a doctor. Very severe acne with cysts is usually treated with medication that has to be prescribed by a skin specialist. There are certain medical conditions that may cause severe acne and irregular periods, but it's impossible for me to know your situation without more information.

1995_9_Q8.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> snotty vagina </title>

I'm getting something that's like snot coming out of my vagina. It comes out every day but the amount varies. It's not my period, so what is it?

1995_9_A8.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> snotty vagina </title>

You're noticing mucous coming out of your vagina. This is produced by glands in your cervix (the entrance to your uterus) and is a normal response to the hormones that also control your menstrual cycle. The mucous becomes thinner and runnier at the time of ovulation, around the middle of your cycle. After ovulation, it becomes thicker. Your vagina also produces a secretion throughout the menstrual cycle which is clear or whitish and dries yellow on your undies. These are all normal. If you've experienced pain, itching or discomfort or if the discharge is very smelly, you may have an infection. If you've also had sex before you noticed these symptoms, have a check-up for a sexually transmitted disease. Phone your local Family Planning Clinic for a free, confidential appointment.

1995_9_Q9.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> are wispy bits normal? </title>

I have some short, wispy hairs between my vagina and anus. Is this normal?

1995_9_A9.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> are wispy bits normal? </title>

Yes! Pubic hair begins to grow on the labia majora (the big outside lips of the vagina). It starts off thin and wispy then becomes coarse and curly as it spreads across the mons pubis (where the top of the two labia meet). At the bottom of the labia, it may also grow between the vagina and the anus. It can also spread above the mons pubis and up towards the belly button as well as across the inner parts of the thigh.

1995_9_Q10.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> he broke my heart </title>

My boyfriend and I recently broke up after going out for six months. He said it wasn't working anymore even though he loved me. The next day at school, I found out he was going out with another girl (I was still with him when he asked her out). Now I can't stop crying. What can I do?

1995_9_A10.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> he broke my heart </title>

Firstly, feel sorry for the poor girl who's going out with the slug now. I've had my heart broken heaps but I find someone better every time. Get together with the girls - shop, watch videos, pamper yourself, build back your confidence. Find a nice guy and soon you won't even remember the slug's name. And try to stop crying - your mascara will run!

1995_9_Q11.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I'm scared of him dying </title>

My grandpa is very, very sick. I've never lost anyone before and I don't know how I'm going to cope. I'm scared of him dying. How am I going to deal with it when he dies?

1995_9_A11.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I'm scared of him dying </title>

Sadly, at some time or another, we all lose someone close to us. It's a time when having family support is the most important thing. Try thinking of all the nice times and fun you've shared with your grandpa and don't deny how upset you'll feel if he dies. If, after a while, you feel you aren't coping, talk to family, friends or a counsellor. Remember, time will heal all wounds.

1995_9_Q12.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> they get annoyed </title>

I find it hard to understand why my friends get annoyed when I'm with my boyfriend. I try to give them all equal attention but it doesn't help. What should I do?

1995_9_A12.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> they get annoyed </title>

We've all done this! You're seeing a great guy and all you want to do is hang out with him. Try going out for dinner with a group. Or just tell your boy that you're spending a night with the girls sometimes. He'll understand and it'll probably do him good. As my mum used to say, "Treat 'em mean, keep 'em keen".

1995_9_Q13.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> strictly grounded </title>

My parents are so strict that I'm not allowed to do anything. I've tried talking to them but they ignore me. I hate lying to friends about why I'm not going out. I'm 14.

1995_9_A13.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> strictly grounded </title>

This is a tough one. Legally, your parents are still your guardians. But you're a young woman now and want to be involved in what's going on. It's hard for parents - they worry about drugs and drinking. Take a mature attitude and maybe you can break them in. Say "give me one chance: if I blow it, we'll play by your rules". They might say yes!

1995_10_Q1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> embarrassing moustache alert </title>

I'm 14 and from an ethnic background. I have light brown hair and blonde, fine facial hair, except on my upper lip which is covered with thick, black hair. It's very embarrassing but I bleach it. What causes this and is there any sort of medication I can take?

1995_10_A1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> embarrassing moustache alert </title>

Most girls have fine, fuzzy hair on their upper lip and chin. During puberty, the changing hormones can also stimulate darker and coarser hair to grow in these areas, and in some ethnic groups the amount of darker facial hair is much greater. This is completely normal but if you do feel uncomfortable about it, you can make it less noticeable by bleaching, as you've been doing, or you can remove it by waxing, using depilatory creams or electrolysis. As the skin on your face is quite sensitive, be careful not to irritate it. Medication is only recommended for very excessive amounts of facial or body hair, or in specific medical conditions.

1995_10_Q2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> will I be flat forever? </title>

I'm 14 and have had my periods for six months. The problem is that my bra size is only 12A and I don't want to be flat-chested forever. I also have small lumps that appear on my nipples - are they the reason my breasts won't grow?

1995_10_A2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> will I be flat forever? </title>

It can take a few years to get used to the physical changes that happen during puberty and to feel happy with who you are. Breast development begins at the start of puberty and takes an average of four years, but some girls' breasts will keep growing for up to nine years. As you've had your periods for six months already, your overall growth and breast development will probably have slowed down. The lumps around your nipples sound like "Montgomery's follicles" - the glands which produce a white, waxy substance to moisturise your nipples. These are quite normal and won't affect your breasts at all.

1995_10_Q3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> out-of-control periods </title>

I'm 18 and I can't control my periods. Every time I get them I can't go to school because I have to change my pad every half an hour. My pads are thick but the blood goes straight through. Sometimes they last for a whole month. Am I losing too much blood?

1995_10_A3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> out-of-control periods </title>

As the body adjusts to the hormonal changes that happen during puberty, very heavy periods can be quite common. In most cases, all that's needed is time for the menstrual cycle to settle down. Some girls have bleeding that's so heavy it causes anaemia, which can lead to an iron deficiency, resulting in tiredness, breathlessness and pale skin. In a few cases, there's a medical cause for the heavy bleeding which might be associated with other symptoms. To work out what's going on, I would need more information about how regular your periods are and your overall health. In most cases, there's no need to treat heavy periods but if the blood loss is very heavy or causing major inconvenience, hormone treatment can be prescribed by your doctor.

1995_10_Q4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> wart trouble </title>

I'm 13 and have a problem with warts. When one's about to go, a new one comes in another place. I'm scared of holding my boyfriend's hand in case he sees them and it turns him off. Can you help?

1995_10_A4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> wart trouble </title>

Warts are common and harmless and usually disappear eventually. They're caused by a virus which is contagious, so it's possible you got them from holding hands and that you spread them from one place on your hands to another. They don't cause any particular problems and won't make you sick at all, so explaining this to your boyfriend may help both of you feel better. There are several ways to treat warts if you don't want to wait for them to go away. You could try over-the-counter wart paint, or they can be frozen or burnt off by your doctor.

1995_10_Q5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> cancer crisis </title>

I have fair, freckled skin and my face always gets burnt. My nose is the worst - it always peels. What signs can I look for to prevent cancer?

1995_10_A5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> cancer crisis </title>

It's great you're looking after your skin now, to prevent sun damage and cancer in the future. Avoid the sun in the middle of the day, wear 15+ sunscreen, a hat and sunnies to protect your face. There are basically three types of skin cancer, the most serious of which is melanoma, which can affect young people. The other two types occur later in life after years of sun exposure. Look out for a mole that changes size or colour,

becomes itchy or bleeds. The other types of skin cancer may also start as a spot or a patch of rough skin that grows slowly, becomes itchy, or bleeds. If you have spots on your skin which you're not sure about, have them checked by a doctor.

1995_10_Q6.txt

<section> sex and your body when you're out of it </section>

<title> I slept with four guys </title>

I was at a party with my boyfriend and lots of other people and I got really drunk. I slept with my boyfriend and four other guys I don't even know. My boyfriend saw what happened and I haven't been able to talk to him since. I wouldn't normally behave like that and I really regret it.

1995_10_A6.txt

<section> sex and your body when you're out of it </section>

<title> I slept with four guys </title>

By having sex with guys you didn't know, you placed yourself in considerable danger (apart from the damage that's been done to the relationship with your boyfriend), and if you didn't insist that the guys use a condom, you may have become pregnant or contracted an STD. You need to make sure you're not pregnant, and have a test for STDs, including AIDS. The best place to go is a Family Planning Clinic where they'll treat you confidentially - they'll be able to give you advice, too. As for your boyfriend, it's up to you to apologise and see if he'll forgive you. If you do not patch up the relationship, DON'T have oral sex or sex without a condom until you know the result of your STD tests.

1995_10_Q7.txt

<section> sex and your body when you're out of it </section>

<title> I can't remember </title>

I went to a party and got really pissed. I was with this guy I really liked and we started getting on together. I think I passed out because I can't remember the rest of the night. But the guy is now telling everyone that we had sex.

1995_10_A7.txt

<section> sex and your body when you're out of it </section>

<title> I can't remember </title>

You really can't be sure whether you've had sex with this guy or not - that's the problem with being drunk. Just in case you did have sex, it's worth getting tested for pregnancy and STDs. You can have the tests done at a Family Planning Clinic or by your doctor. You could also talk to the guy and try for the truth - ask him to stop spreading stories, too. The rumours will die down, but make sure you don't have to go through the experience again.

1995_10_Q8.txt

<section> sex and your body when you're out of it </section>

<title> can I be a virgin again? </title>

I was always adamant that I'd be a virgin until I got married. But I went out last week and ended up getting really drunk with my girlfriends. We went to this guy's party and I ended up in bed with him. Now I can't believe that I did it. Is there some way I can be a virgin again?

1995_10_A8.txt

<section> sex and your body when you're out of it </section>

<title> can I be a virgin again? </title>

It's not possible to turn back time and there's no medical procedure that will turn you into a virgin again. But the good thing about this is that the next time you sleep with a guy, you'll probably do it for the right reasons. When you get drunk, you tend to lose control of your senses and you might do things that you wouldn't normally do and later regret. So this experience may stop you from getting out of it again. Only you can be responsible for your actions, whether you like it or not. Take this responsibility seriously and learn that you can shape your life the way you want.

1995_10_Q9.txt

<section> sex and your body when you're out of it </section>

<title> they call me a slut </title>

Lately I've been getting drunk every weekend. I usually end up with some guy but now I'm getting a reputation for being a slut. I always have heaps of fun but I don't think it's fair that I get a bad reputation while the guys don't have to worry.

1995_10_A9.txt

<section> sex and your body when you're out of it </section>

<title> they call me a slut </title>

The reason people are reacting to you this way is because of the double standard for sexual behaviour. Some people may think that it's OK for guys to have sex with heaps of girls, but it's not considered OK for girls. You really have two choices. You could change this pattern and restrict the number of guys you have sex with. Or, you can learn to live with the labels people give you. Just remember that the more partners you have, the higher the risk of contracting and spreading an STD. And always, always use a condom.

1995_10_Q10.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> has he just kissed and run? </title>

I kissed a guy at my school but now he won't have anything to do with me. Was he just using me?

1995_10_A10.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> has he just kissed and run? </title>

I don't think kissing can be counted as using someone. He probably decided against taking things further because he isn't a user and doesn't want to hurt you. Let him have his space - remember, guys aren't as good at expressing how they feel as girls. Try not to doubt yourself. His actions are probably more to do with his feelings about himself than anything to do with you.

1995_10_Q11.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> what am I gonna wear? </title>

I'm going on a date to the movies with a guy I really like. What sort of thing should I wear? I don't know if I should dress up or just go casual.

1995_10_A11.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> what am I gonna wear? </title>

Your first date with a new guy who you like, sounds exciting to me. Dress casually in something comfortable but most of all - dress to be yourself. Don't wear too much make-up (the cinema is dark anyway) because natural make-up is far more beautiful. Oh, and be careful not to put on too much perfume. Make sure you have fun!

1995_10_Q12.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> we're both crazy about him </title>

We're two 13-year-old girls who are crazy about a 17-year-old guy. We've written poems to him and rung him a few times and he's really friendly on the phone but doesn't seem to want to take things further. How should we approach him?

1995_10_A12.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> we're both crazy about him </title>

It sounds like you're approaching this guy in an immature and pretty tasteless way. By all means, admire the guy from afar, but respect his privacy. If you think he doesn't want to take things any further, then he probably doesn't. Anyway, what would you do if he did want to go further? I'm sure neither of you would want to share him and he probably wouldn't want two girlfriends.

1995_10_Q13.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> my zits are wrecking my life! </title>

Please tell me why guys don't like me. I've got a great personality but I've got heaps of pimples.

1995_10_A13.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> my zits are wrecking my life! </title>

Are you sure guys don't like you? It sounds as though your pimples make you feel insecure about yourself. Have you tried taking better care of your skin - do you eat a balanced diet, drink lots of water and cleanse your skin properly? With time, your skin will improve, but until then you have to stop putting yourself down. A great personality and brains will take you further with guys and life than a zit-free face.

1995_10_Q14.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> no boy in sight </title>

My best friend has told other girls at school that I've never had a boyfriend. I'm 15 and it's really embarrassing.

1995_10_A14.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> no boy in sight </title>

Lots of girls your age have never had a boyfriend and it's definitely not something to be ashamed of. But you should question how good a friend your best mate is, 'cos if she was a true friend she wouldn't really dis you like that.

1995_10_Q15.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> my folks are too tight </title>

My parents refuse to give me more than \$5 a week allowance. All my friends get at least \$10. I've tried reasoning but they just don't understand.

1995_10_A15.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> my folks are too tight </title>

If you need more dosh, why don't you apply for a part-time job. Or try doing some extra jobs around the house to show your parents that you'd be prepared to work for a raise in your allowance.

1995_10_Q16.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I love my friend's boy </title>

I'm falling in love with my friend's boyfriend. We kissed at a party once and I can't get him out of my mind. He still goes out with her so I don't know whether to tell him how I feel.

1995_10_A16.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I love my friend's boy </title>

I think you have to find out if that kiss meant something to him, too. You also have to decide what's more important to you - the guy or your friend. But remember, mates before dates.

1995_10_Q17.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> we're always fighting </title>

I can't stop fighting with my mum. She drives me up the wall - all she does is nag me. She doesn't care about me like she used to. Sometimes the fights are really bad. I don't know what to do.

1995_10_A17.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> we're always fighting </title>

Try to be tolerant of your mother as she might be under some kind of stress you don't know about. Explain to her how you feel and try to work out a compromise. Maybe see a school counsellor. But remember even if it doesn't always seem that way, she does love you very much.

1995_11_Q1.txt

<section> sex and your body I think I'm pregnant </section>

<title> I didn't even know </title>

I'm 18 and my doctor just told me I'm five months pregnant. I had no idea! I've always had irregular periods and even had one at the time I was supposedly pregnant. How can this happen and what am I going to do?

1995_11_A1.txt

<section> sex and your body I think I'm pregnant </section>

<title> I didn't even know </title>

Given your stage of pregnancy, it's not safe for you to have an abortion, so you'll have to continue with the pregnancy and have the baby. You could have the child adopted and continue on with your life and, although it may be a difficult decision at the time, given your circumstances and age, it could be worth considering. It's difficult for a young mother to lead a fulfilling life and provide enough emotional and financial support for a child. Children are demanding and totally dependent on you for a long time, and many of the goals you've set for yourself will be delayed or even unlikely to occur if you keep the baby. The process you're going through is extremely difficult and highlights the importance of using contraception.

1995_11_Q2.txt

<section> sex and your body I think I'm pregnant </section>

<title> could I be pregnant? </title>

A while ago some friends and I got into an orgy. My boyfriend's mate was a bit rough with me and now I'm feeling giddy and my period is late. I'm sure I'm pregnant and I'm sure it's with my boyfriend's friend. I can't face my boyfriend or my parents and I don't know what to do.

1995_11_A2.txt

<section> sex and your body I think I'm pregnant </section>

<title> could I be pregnant? </title>

There's every possibility that you are pregnant. The first thing you should do is obtain a pregnancy test from a chemist. Or, you can have a test at your local doctor's or a Family Planning Clinic. The signs of pregnancy include missed periods, frequent sickness and nausea, feeling bloated and having tender breasts. But remember that these symptoms can also occur with a late period. Until your hormones settle down it's not unusual for your periods to be irregular. If you do find you're pregnant, you need to decide whether to have the baby or get an abortion. Talking to a trusting adult may help you. It's a big decision to make, and remember that you can only have an abortion in the first few months of the pregnancy, so find out if you are pregnant as soon as possible.

1995_11_Q3.txt

<section> sex and your body I think I'm pregnant </section>

<title> should she keep it? </title>

My best friend is 14 and she's eight weeks pregnant. I'm the only person she can talk to about it and she wants to know if I think she should have an abortion. I don't believe in abortions but also think she's too young to have a baby. What do you think is best?

1995_11_A3.txt

<section> sex and your body I think I'm pregnant </section>

<title> should she keep it? </title>

If your friend decides to continue with her pregnancy, it will affect her whole life. Try to convince her to discuss the situation with a trained person. This type of service is available through Family Planning Clinics - you could even go with her for moral support. If she wants to have the baby, she can choose between adopting it out or keeping it (and she needs to understand the difficulties faced by single mothers). If she does decide to have an abortion then the Family Planning Clinic will be able to refer her to a doctor and help her with a payment plan if money is a problem.

1995_11_Q4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> mum won't let me wear a bra </title>

My mother is from India and she has been brought up to think that bras are bad for you, so she doesn't let me wear them. I'm 13 and have rather large breasts for my age. Is there anything I can do without getting a bra?

1995_11_A4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> mum won't let me wear a bra </title>

Puberty is awkward for most people and it can be difficult talking to parents about all sorts of things. It can be especially hard if your parents were brought up in another culture. There's no medical reason why most women should, or shouldn't, wear bras. In Western cultures they're a normal part of a woman's wardrobe, but in other cultures they're not worn at all. It might be more comfortable to wear a bra, especially during exercise, although any firm, supportive garment, such as a crop top or a tank top, would do. But it's really important that you try to communicate with your mother and explain how you feel.

1995_11_Q5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> is jogging bad for asthma? </title>

I'm trying to get fit by jogging every night. My doctor gave me a Ventolin inhaler to help with my asthma but every time I use it I get weird side effects. I'd like to control my breathing without using it - how can do it?

1995_11_A5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> is jogging bad for asthma? </title>

Jogging is a good form of exercise and exercise is a great way to improve asthma and get fit. It's really important to start slowly and don't overdo it, especially if exercise brings on asthma symptoms like wheezing, coughing or breathlessness. It's a good idea to have two or three puffs of your "reliever" medicine (like Ventolin) immediately before starting exercise. The things that trigger asthma may vary - anything from cigarette smoke, pollution, pollen, exercise and even certain foods. Your doctor would have given you an assessment to determine whether you have mild or severe asthma and a breathing test. That way they can monitor whether you're responding to treatment. Ventolin is a bronchodilator, which is effective in giving immediate relief of asthma symptoms but it can induce side effects like a faster heart rate, light-headedness and nausea. If you need Ventolin more than once or twice a day, you should speak to your doctor again for another assessment. Your doctor can

also advise you on preventative treatment to help your asthma - this has less side effects but needs to be taken regularly.

1995_11_Q6.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> tampons are just too scary </title>

I'm too scared to use a tampon. I have tried but I'm frightened to insert it all the way in case it hurts or something goes wrong. And I'm really self-conscious about wearing pads.

1995_11_A6.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> tampons are just too scary </title>

The fears you have about using tampons are quite normal. Tampons and pads serve the same purpose - to absorb menstrual flow during your period. There's no right or wrong about which you choose to use, it's a matter of personal choice. If you want to use tampons, take the time to practice learning how to insert them properly. Look at some books or diagrams that show how your vagina slopes up and back. Try inserting two fingers into your vagina so that you can feel the direction that the tampon needs to go. It's OK to practice inserting them when you don't have a period and you may want to use some lubricant to help it slide in. Remember that you should always change a tampon or pad about every four hours and it's best not to leave tampons in overnight.

1995_11_Q7.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> my vagina's bald </title>

I'm 19 and have no hairs under my arms or on my vagina. I have extremely sore breasts and don't have my period yet. I know have a problem but how serious is it?

1995_11_A7.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> my vagina's bald </title>

It's impossible to say whether you have a serious problem, or not, without more information. You might just be going through normal puberty a few years later than is average but on the other hand, there may be a hormonal or genetic problem that needs more attention. Puberty in girls usually begins with the development of breasts which can often be a little sensitive or uncomfortable. Soon after the breasts develop, pubic hair appears on the labia majora (the large flaps of skin outside the vagina) and under the arms. About two years after the beginning of breast development, the first period occurs. If your breasts only started to develop recently and you haven't had a major growth spurt, it might just be that puberty has been delayed. You should see your doctor for a thorough assessment - that way you can be reassured there's no problems, or you can receive treatment if anything is wrong.

1995_11_Q8.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> he's old enough for me </title>

I go out with a guy who's a year younger than me. My friends call me a cradle-snatcher and tease me. I tell them that it's the person, not the age, that matters, but they still give me heaps.

1995_11_A8.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> he's old enough for me </title>

I think you're exactly right - it is the person that matters, not the age. If you're happy in this relationship then stick with it, I'm sure your friends will soon come around.

1995_11_Q9.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I don't love my mum </title>

I like her, she's an OK person but I don't think I'd cry if she died. My dad has told my mum that he doesn't care for me or for mum. All my friends say I'm weird when I talk about these feelings. What do you think?

1995_11_A9.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I don't love my mum </title>

I don't think your feelings are weird but it sounds like you're going through a very emotional time and I really feel for you. It's obvious you need to talk about your feelings, but sometimes friends aren't the right people to do this with. Perhaps you can talk to your school counsellor - they might be able to help you sort out how you feel.

1995_11_Q10.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> my boyfriend snogged my mate </title>

I'm really upset. A few weeks ago I found out that my boyfriend pashed my best friend behind my back. He hasn't said anything to me and neither has my best friend. I don't know how to confront them.

1995_11_A10.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> my boyfriend snogged my mate </title>

I think the best thing to do is confront them both at the same time. That way you can find out what really happened and see how you feel about the whole situation.

1995_11_Q11.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> my ex wants me </title>

I'm going out with this great guy but my ex-boyfriend has told me that he wants me back. I'm still attracted to him but I don't know if he'll break my heart again.

1995_11_A11.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> my ex wants me </title>

Getting back with your ex seems like a big risk to take, especially after he's broken your heart once already. And he might just be keen because you're seeing someone

else (you always want what you can't have). You say this new guy is great, so if I were you, I'd stick with him.

1995_11_Q12.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> kissing really scares me </title>

I'm 15 and have never kissed a guy. I'm afraid that if a guy does kiss me, he'll think I'm bad and tell everyone what a bad kisser I am.

1995_11_A12.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> kissing really scares me </title>

Don't worry, your anxiety is totally natural. But kissing is something that comes fairly naturally so there's no need to feel uneasy. Just be gentle and do what feels right. It's not hard to get the hang of it.

1995_11_Q13.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> I really fancy his best mate </title>

I'm in love with my boyfriend's best friend. - I don't want to drop my boyfriend but I just can't stop myself liking his friend.

1995_11_A13.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> I really fancy his best mate </title>

Take a look at the situation you're in, be honest with yourself and try to understand exactly what it is you want. Don't lead your boyfriend on if you're not interested anymore. Before you make any advances on his best friend, think about the outcome of your actions. Imagine how you would feel if the same thing happened to you?

1995_11_Q14.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> teacher's pet? </title>

I love my teacher who is 26. He's good-looking and treats me like an adult. How can I let him know I like him without him laughing in my face?

1995_11_A14.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> teacher's pet? </title>

You need to understand the reality of what you've written. There's no point in pursuing this teacher. For one thing, it sounds as though the age gap is quite large. Secondly, he can lose his job or worse - get into trouble with the authorities for any action concerning a student at his school.

1995_11_Q15.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> I want him back </title>

My last boyfriend dropped me because he thought I was too clingy and demanding. I desperately want to get back with him as I don't think I can love anyone else. How can I let him know that I want to start again?

1995_11_A15.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> I want him back </title>

The situation you're in is common to almost anyone who's been through a relationship break-up. It is a really hard period to get through. But just try to remember what the relationship was like (and I don't mean only the good times). Do you really want all the anxiety and worry of your past relationship to be in your life again?

1995_12_Q1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> could I be pregnant? </title>

A couple of days ago I lost my virginity. My boyfriend and I thought you couldn't get pregnant the first time so we didn't use contraception. When I told my friends, they said I could, so what should I do now?

1995_12_A1.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> could I be pregnant? </title>

Pregnancy happens when sperm comes into contact with an egg so any unprotected intercourse (when the penis enters the vagina) can lead to pregnancy. The risk is higher if sex occurs in the days before and after ovulation - but it can, and does, happen at other times as well. An effective way to prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex is to take the morning after pill which is prescribed by a doctor and must be taken within 72 hours of sex. It'd be worth a visit to a doctor or a Family Planning Clinic to ask about your situation and to find out more about contraception. If more than 72 hours have passed then you should wait for your next period (meanwhile, make sure you and your boyfriend use condoms if you have sex). If your period comes on time and is quite normal then you can probably relax, but if not, wait for a few days then do a pregnancy test.

1995_12_Q2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> his penis got stuck inside me </title>

I was having sex when my boyfriend's penis got stuck in me. What causes this and how can we prevent it?

1995_12_A2.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> his penis got stuck inside me </title>

It's difficult to answer your question without more information. The feeling that your boyfriend's penis is stuck could be because it wasn't fully erect or because your vagina was dry, if you hadn't had sex before, it could be because your hymen is still intact. Or sometimes the muscles in the vaginal wall can go into a spasm if you tense up or feel uncomfortable during sex. There are some extremely rare medical conditions that affect the size and shape of the vagina and internal reproductive organs, but if you have periods and had a normal puberty, it's unlikely that this is the case. For sex to happen smoothly, both of you need to be comfortable with each other, the penis needs to be hard and the vagina well-lubricated. You should discuss preventing pregnancy

and STDs beforehand and feel comfortable with your decision. If you need extra lubrication, you can buy a water-based lubricant from the chemist or supermarket.

1995_12_Q3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> help - I'm going grey! </title>

I'm only 12 and I'm already getting lots of grey hairs. What's wrong with me?

1995_12_A3.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> help - I'm going grey! </title>

Our hair colour and the age at which we go grey is controlled by our genes. Most people go grey between 30 and 50, although if one of your parents went grey younger, you're more likely to go grey early, too. Some people grey prematurely for no apparent reason, while others may have underlying nutrition problems, a hormone imbalance or another medical condition. Sometimes exposure to certain chemicals used in bleaching, tinting or perming can affect the texture and colour of your hair. You're very young so it'd be worth a visit to your doctor and possibly a skin specialist.

1995_12_Q4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> is it all connected? </title>

Is it true that girls get their first period when they've grown to 90% of their total height and weigh around 47.5 kg?

1995_12_A4.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> is it all connected? </title>

It's true that most girls get their first period when they've almost reached their full height but the connection between the first period and weight isn't so clear because of the wide range of normal weights. Puberty in girls generally begins with the development of breasts, followed by the appearance of pubic hair and hair under the arms. Shortly after, girls will experience a growth spurt, usually between the ages of 11 and 14. The first period usually happens about two years after the breasts start to develop.

1995_12_Q5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> I just don't feel normal </title>

I feel depressed and lonely all the time. Sometimes it gets so bad that I think about hurting myself. I'm 13 and don't feel normal.

1995_12_A5.txt

<section> DD </section>

<title> I just don't feel normal </title>

It's normal and OK to go through minor emotional ups and downs and feeling a bit low can be related to the hormone changes in your body during puberty. It sounds like there could be a bit more going on for you though - probably at school or with your friends or family - and you're trying to keep up with the changes your body and mind are going through. It's important to try to talk to someone if you're feeling depressed

or have thought about hurting yourself. You may want to talk to someone you know first - a teacher, parent, school counsellor, or even doctor. You could also approach a youth health centre or call one of the help lines listed at the front of the White Pages. Anything you tell a health professional or counsellor will be treated respectfully and confidentially.

1995_12_Q6.txt

<section> sex and your body incest and you </section>

<title> my friend is being abused </title>

My best friend has just told me that her father rapes her. She doesn't like talking about it but I'm really worried about her. What should I do? How can I stop him doing it again?

1995_12_A6.txt

<section> sex and your body incest and you </section>

<title> my friend is being abused </title>

Your friend is probably very confused right now. She feels bad about what's happening but doesn't want to get her father into trouble. But what he's doing is very wrong and he must be stopped. He is abusing a very special position of trust. You need to speak with your friend and encourage her to talk to an adult about what's happening. Perhaps she can talk to her mother, a teacher, a school counsellor or her family doctor. Your friend's not responsible for what he is doing to her but she must find help. The sooner she reports what's happening, the sooner it will stop.

1995_12_Q7.txt

<section> sex and your body incest and you </section>

<title> am I a lesbian? </title>

I am a 13-year-old girl and my aunty makes me sleep with her. I used to really hate it but now I'm starting to like it. Am I a lesbian? Am I doing the wrong thing?

1995_12_A7.txt

<section> sex and your body incest and you </section>

<title> am I a lesbian? </title>

It's illegal for an adult to have a sexual experience with anyone of your age. If you feel you can stop the relationship with your aunt, then do it straight away. If you can't manage this by yourself then seek the help of an adult you can trust. It would be best if the situation can be managed within your family, by telling your parents or one of your adult relations. If possible, you should try to get help in a way that is least destructive to your family as a whole. If this isn't possible, you'll find a list of contacts under "Personal Emergency and Help Services" in the Yellow Pages. And the fact that you're starting to enjoy sleeping with your aunt does not mean you are a lesbian. Sometimes girls are attracted to other girls before they develop an attraction to boys. But you should never allow anyone to impose their sexual needs on you.

1995_12_Q8.txt

<section> sex and your body incest and you </section>

<title> my dad raped me </title>

I'm turning 11 and the other night my mum went out with her friends. My dad and I watched videos together but he got really weird. He made me sit on his lap and then

he started feeling my private bits. He ended up raping me and I didn't know what to do. Mum ended up walking in on us but she won't talk to me about it.

1995_12_A8.txt

<section> sex and your body incest and you </section>

<title> my dad raped me </title>

It's highly likely that your father will rape you again unless you act to stop him. And you clearly need assistance from outside your family to do this. If you have an adult relative you can turn to, this is the time to ask for their help. If you feel there's no-one you can talk to, you can get professional help. You'll find various services listed in the Yellow Pages such as the Rape Crisis Centre, Youthline, or Domestic Violence Crisis Service. If you ring one of these, your identity can remain confidential while you talk to a trained counsellor. This person will discuss your situation and help you to contact the most appropriate source of professional help in your city. Act now to stop this situation occurring again.

1995_12_Q9.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> he flirts with me </title>

I'm attracted to best my friend's 17-year-old brother. I really like him but I'm too scared to tell my friend. I think he likes me because he flirts with me whenever I see him. What should I do?

1995_12_A9.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> he flirts with me </title>

You're in a tricky situation. If you're close to your best friend you should explain the situation. Who knows? Maybe she'll encourage you while giving you the inside information on her brother. Try not to get too excited as you could end up losing a good friend in the process.

1995_12_Q10.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I hate my family </title>

I can't stand my stepfamily. My mum's new husband is arrogant and his children go out of their way to annoy me. I don't want to live with my dad (even though my two brothers already have) but I don't want to stay where I am. What can I do?

1995_12_A10.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I hate my family </title>

Hold your breath and count to 10! Families can stress you out at the best of times. Try to discuss the situation with your mum and if that's no use, enlist the help of your father and brothers. Perhaps the stepkids are jealous of you. Either way, tell someone your problem and try to sort it out.

1995_12_Q11.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> sneering peers </title>

All my friends smoke cigarettes and drink but I don't want to. When I tell them they're ruining their health they laugh at me. What can I do to stop them laughing?

1995_12_A11.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> sneering peers </title>

What a bunch of losers! They think they're so cool but they're not. Find some new friends who won't pressure you into doing stupid things like poisoning your body.

1995_12_Q12.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I want to be an actor </title>

I'm 13 and I really want to be an actor. For the last two years I've been studying acting and dancing. How can I make my dream come true?

1995_12_A12.txt

<section> what should I do </section>

<title> I want to be an actor </title>

Whatever you do, don't give up. Get involved in school plays and try to sign with an agent so you can go to auditions. Stay focused on your dream and make it happen!

1995_12_Q13.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> do guys just shag and run? </title>

I'm 13 and in a relationship. My boyfriend's asked me about sex and my ex-boyfriends pressured me a bit about sex as well. My mum says guys only want sex and when they get it, they leave you. Is this true?

1995_12_A13.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> do guys just shag and run? </title>

Having sex isn't something to be taken lightly. When two people feel strongly towards each other and are comfortable in each other's company, then there may be a place for sex. But at 13, sex is not only illegal, you still have heaps to learn about feelings, relationships and your own sexuality. Although, I think your mum's comment is a bit unfair. Most guys involved in a relationship will only sleep with their girlfriend if they care about each other strongly and wouldn't even consider having a relationship where sex was the main item on the menu.

1995_12_Q14.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> why don't guys fess up? </title>

Why don't guys ever show their true feelings?

1995_12_A14.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> why don't guys fess up? </title>

Guys are a peculiar species. There seems to be a preconceived idea that they need to project a macho image to survive in the competitive male world. Unfortunately, projecting this macho image leaves most guys thinking they need to hide their

emotions or not show their true feelings. They feel threatened by what others might find out or that they might be ridiculed or called a sissy.

1995_12_Q15.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> sweet 15 and never been kissed </title>

I'm 15 and never kissed a boy or been asked out and I'm scared to start a relationship. Why am I like this?

1995_12_A15.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> sweet 15 and never been kissed </title>

Your worries are totally natural but don't let them make you feel insecure about yourself. Many 15-year-old girls - and guys - have never been asked out or kissed anyone. There's absolutely nothing wrong with you. What I would suggest is, if you want to get to know a guy, take the initiative yourself.

1995_12_Q16.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> would it wreck our friendship? </title>

I really like this boy and I asked him out but he said no. He said he didn't want to wreck our friendship but I still really like him.

1995_12_A16.txt

<section> ask daniel </section>

<title> would it wreck our friendship? </title>

You need to consider your friend's feelings. Respect what he thinks and try to understand where he's coming from. He obviously values your friendship and doesn't want to lose that, so let him come to you about his feelings and maybe it all work out the way you want. Don't try to force the situation as you'll more than likely push him away.

2014_2_Q1.txt

<section> DD for her </section>

<title> thin skin </title>

I'm a very skinny girl for my age (16), yet I eat more than a lot of other girls. It gets on my nerves as it's not just girls with a bit of weight on them who get bullied and feel insecure. Do you have healthy ways to put on weight?

2014_2_A1.txt

<section> DD for her </section>

<title> thin skin </title>

It sounds as though you have a naturally fast metabolism, which is something you might appreciate later in life. If you're concerned about being underweight though, it's good to check. It will depend on your height, puberty development, genetics, diet, exercise habits and your general health as to whether your current weight is healthy or not. If you're unsure, your doctor can assess this with you. There are a variety of medical conditions that could make you underweight and could be affecting your health, including a thyroid problem or an issue with your digestive system. At 16, you are continuing to grow and develop. It's important to eat a healthy diet and get regular

exercise. Then, nature will do its work to make you gain weight in a healthy way. You're absolutely right though, "skinny" people can feel just as self-conscious as those who are overweight. Bullies often pick on those who stand out somehow, be they taller, shorter, heavier or lighter than average or have some unique characteristic. Bullies aren't very smart, but they can still hurt. If you're getting bullied for any reason, let a parent and also a teacher know. It's OK to be naturally thin but it's not OK to be bullied.

2014_2_Q2.txt

<section> DD for her </section>

<title> help I'm late </title>

I'm 16 and have had my period for nearly three years now. I feel like I'm not ready for sex but I do let my boyfriend finger me. The first time we did it, everything was fine. But a week later he fingered me again and I started bleeding. I know this is normal, but now (a week later) I'm due for my period and I'm five days late. I have never been late. What's wrong with me? Did we perhaps damage something down there?

2014_2_A2.txt

<section> DD for her </section>

<title> help I'm late </title>

Fingering, or putting fingers inside the vagina for sexual pleasure, is a type of sexual activity. Like any sexual activity between two or more people, everyone needs to agree to it and be able to change their mind at any time. It sounds as though you're comfortable with what you and your boyfriend are doing, which is great. It's quite possible that nothing's wrong, but it's important to check a few facts. If there is bleeding from the vagina after penetration for the first or second time (by a finger, penis or any other object) it could mean that the hymen has been stretched and torn. The hymen is a skin-like tissue near the opening of the vagina. Many women won't bleed after the first penetration but some will. If fingering did cause your hymen to bleed, it will be bright red blood and will ease off, become darker and stop after a few days at most. Another possible cause of bright bleeding after fingering is if the wall of the vagina has been scratched, usually by a fingernail - it might not have hurt or been felt at the time. This might heal easily, but there is a slight risk of an infection developing, which will lead to pain or a different discharge and would need medical attention. It's likely there wasn't any "damage" done, as it sounds as though what you did felt fine at the time. It's best to avoid any more fingering, or tampon use, until the bleeding goes away and you are sure there are no other symptoms, such as pain. If there is, or if bleeding lasts several days, get it checked confidentially by your doctor. If the blood was not bright, but more like darker period blood, then it's possible you had a light period, which is why it didn't come when you expected it. Or, it could just be that this period is late - that happens from time to time. Since you have never had intercourse, pregnancy is not a worry. Try not to stress too much, but do see your doctor even if just for peace of mind if things still don't seem right.

2014_2_Q3.txt

<section> DD for her </section>

<title> all flushed </title>

I'm not sure if I have sensitive cheeks or not, but my cheeks go pink every day, even if it's not hot or cold. It really annoys me and I can't communicate with boys around me. Is there any possible way I can lessen the pinkness on my face?

2014_2_A3.txt

<section> DD for her </section>

<title> all flushed </title>

Pink cheeks can be due to increased blood flow and this can be more obvious in fair-skinned people. It can sometimes affect the whole face, ears and neck, as well as the cheeks. Blushing can be natural, and often considered beautiful - that's why they invented "blush" for people to put on their cheeks! It can also be a reaction to heat, exercise, stress, emotion or certain foods and drinks. Sometimes being self-conscious about blushing sets up a vicious cycle, the more you think about it and try to stop it, the more you blush. Breaking the cycle can help - if you know that talking to boys makes you blush, then practise at home by picturing yourself in that situation and try to relax. Take deep breaths and imagine having a conversation with the boys easily and feeling fine. There's also a chance that your rosy cheeks are due to a skin condition such as eczema. If you notice other symptoms such as dryness or itch, or if your skin looks or feel rough or has a rash, go see your doctor.

2014_2_Q4.txt

<section> DD for her </section>

<title> itchy hair down there </title>

My vaginal hairs have been really agitating me lately. When I last checked, my hairs were actually inside my vagina. So I was wondering if that is normal? Is there a way of stopping the itching or should I shave or wax them?

2014_2_A4.txt

<section> DD for her </section>

<title> itchy hair down there </title>

Hair is a normal part of most of the skin covering our bodies. In the pubic area, it is thicker and tends to be wavy or curly. Pubic hair grows on the outer lips (labia majora) of the vagina, which can extend all the way down near the opening of the vagina and anus. Inside the vagina, the "skin" is darker, pinkish and looks or feels like it has small ridges in it. This type of "skin" or lining does NOT have hair. However, long pubic hairs from the labia could look as though they are reaching into the vagina. Pubic hair should not be itchy, nor should the vagina or labia. If you remove your pubic hair by shaving, waxing or creams, you could get an itch from a rash or when the hairs grow back. If you have an itch in the genital area and do NOT shave or wax your pubic hair, then get it checked for another cause. If you do remove your pubic hairs and are finding irritation, stop for a while of just trim the bikini line. If you're still concerned, get it checked by a doctor.

2014_2_Q5.txt

<section> DD for her </section>

<title> tampon timing </title>

My younger sister is 14, she always uses tampons and is making me worried because she sleeps with them in. When I try to tell her it's not healthy she doesn't listen and when I tell her it's dangerous she gets upset. What can I do to help her and not hurt her feelings?

2014_2_A5.txt

<section> DD for her </section>

<title> tampon timing </title>

What a caring big sister you are. Sometimes, the most effective way to get people to do things differently is to provide them with information and let them think about it. There's some really good information on the internet, such as on the Family Planning websites or at likeitis.org.au. Tampons should ideally be changed three to six times a day and it's important to use a tampon with the right absorbency for your daily menstrual flow. The reason why tampons should not be left in for too many hours is because of the TINY risk of a condition called toxic shock syndrome (TSS). This is caused by a particular type of bacterial infection and is not just related to tampons - it can happen at other times for other reasons to women, men or children. In reality, TSS is extremely rare and leaving a tampon in for eight hours is likely to be quite safe. There is more about TSS at toxicshock.org.au. Maybe you could show this page in DOLLY Doctor to your sister and together you could discuss what you think are the healthy and safe ways to manage periods. Every girl has different preferences and you could discuss that too.

2014_2_Q6.txt

<section> DD for him </section>

<title> scalp help </title>

I have a really itchy head. It's been like this for more than a month and I've tried a number of things: not putting any shampoo or conditioner in my hair, lying in a bath filled with oatmeal for 15 minutes (apparently it helps) and not scratching my head, but nothing has worked. Can you give me some advice?

2014_2_A6.txt

<section> DD for him </section>

<title> scalp help </title>

As common as itching is, it is never actually "normal". It means something is going on with the skin that can be stopped. Itching on the scalp can be caused by a skin condition (such as psoriasis, eczema or the type of dermatitis that causes dandruff). It can also stem from irritants to the skin (for example, hair dyes). Shampoo often dries or irritates the scalp further, causing a vicious cycle. Another common cause for itchy heads is head lice. All these things can be diagnosed and treated. I suggest that you first try to find out what's causing your itchy head, but in the meantime it could be soothing to moisturise your scalp. You can ask a hairdresser for advice or simply rub some Sorbolene cream into your scalp and leave it in for a few hours.

2014_2_Q7.txt

<section> DD for him </section>

<title> blood noses </title>

I'm 13 and get blood noses all the time. I get bullied about it because when the blood gets on my shirt, people at school call me a blood monster. Any advice?

2014_2_A7.txt

<section> DD for him </section>

<title> blood noses </title>

A blood nose is one thing, and usually not serious. Being bullied, whatever the cause, is another and that is serious. Blood noses are very common. The lining of the inside of the nose has tiny blood vessels. These blood vessels can break and bleed when the nose lining gets dry, rubbed, picked or swollen from a cold or hay fever. These are the

most common reasons and sometimes it's impossible to avoid dry air or getting a cold. If you get a nosebleed, sit down and lean forward a little. Pinch the soft part of your nose above your nostrils and breathe through your mouth. This puts pressure on the bleeding to stop it. Keep pinching for 10 minutes to make sure the bleeding stops. You might need medical attention if the bleeding has not stopped after 30 minutes. Because you're getting frequent blood noses, it would be good to see your doctor. That's because a medical cause (such a high blood pressure or a blood clotting problem) needs to be ruled out and you might need a simple procedure to prevent them from recurring. Bullying is another thing altogether. Let a teacher you trust know about it or at least talk to one of your parents. The kids who are bullying you are not interested in blood noses, just in expressing their own insecurities in a childish and unacceptable way. You might also find it helpful to read about bullying or talk about it online at reachout.com.au.

2014_2_Q8.txt

<section> DD love </section>

<title> BF not himself </title>

My boyfriend hasn't been acting himself recently and I'm getting really upset. He posted a pic on Facebook of this shirt a girl bought him four months ago, and put a heart at the end. Should I say anything? I over-think a lot and make small things into big things, but I'm always upset and my friends don't know what to do anymore. It's really ruining my life. Please help me.

2014_2_A8.txt

<section> DD love </section>

<title> BF not himself </title>

A happy, healthy relationship should add something positive to your life rather than "ruin" it. Trust and open, honest communication are essential. If you're sensing something's up with your boyfriend and you're aware that you tend to over-think things, talk to him. Rather than stewing by keeping your feelings to yourself, try to clear the air. Avoid outright accusing him of anything as he'll only feel attacked. Instead, pick a time when you're alone and raise your concerns. Stick to the facts initially (e.g. "Over the weekend we hardly spoke"). Next, discuss your thoughts using "I" statements (e.g. "I'm really confused as you don't seem yourself. I also felt a bit jealous when I saw the heart on your post"). Also, ask for his perspective (e.g. "How are you feeling about things? What's on your mind?"). Hopefully, delving deeper will clarify what's happening and may even identify issues you can both work on. However, if uncertainty remains and being with this guy is making you unhappy, then maybe this isn't the relationship for you.

2014_2_Q9.txt

<section> DD love </section>

<title> mixed messages </title>

I really like this guy. He lends me his jumper when I'm cold and asks me what's wrong when I'm down. There are days where we talk all the time, but at school he makes me feel like he doesn't like me. Today I was showing him some messages from a guy friend and he said, "I'm gonna have to punch him, he used an x". Another time as a joke I said, "Did you know I'm an alien?" He said, "Yeah you look like one". I said, "So I look funny?" He was like, "No, you're a good looking alien". I'm so confused. Does he like me or is he being friendly?

2014_2_A9.txt

<section> DD love </section>

<title> mixed messages </title>

Trying to read exactly how someone feels via their words and actions is often tricky. Without getting inside another person's head, it's so hard to know for sure what's going on. This guy shows signs of liking you (e.g. being sympathetic when you're down). His reaction to the 'x' could be his way of conveying he's feeling protective and jealous of another guy expressing affection towards you (although saying he'll have to punch him is not ideal!). It's possible his alien comment was an attempt to be funny or just a bit of awkwardness. If you're into this guy but are unsure if he feels the same, there are some different tactics you could consider. If you're confident enough, a direct approach (e.g. saying you like him and seeing how he reacts) may solve your dilemma. Or you may prefer a more subtle strategy, such as upping your flirting a notch (e.g. touching his arm, making longer eye contact) and gauging his response. Finally, you can take the "wait and see" route and hope all will be revealed.

2014_2_Q10.txt

<section> DD love </section>

<title> low sex drive </title>

I'm 18 and my boyfriend and I have been going out for over two years now. I have a really low sex drive and it gets to him and makes him angry. It's the only issue in our relationship and I feel bad that I don't enjoy pleasuring him. Is there something wrong with me? Is there a way I can fix it?

2014_2_A10.txt

<section> DD love </section>

<title> low sex drive </title>

Everyone is unique, has their own likes and dislikes, and own levels of desire. There is nothing "wrong" with you and you don't need to be "fixed". If you're clashing over your sex life, address the issue in a calm and respectful way together. Remember he shouldn't be "angry" at you because of this. Never do anything you're uncomfortable with sexually, like pleasuring your partner, just because you feel you have to or because the other person is demanding it. Talk with your guy openly. Sex drive can be affected by physical factors, such as medication and health, but often also has a lot to do with psychological and emotional factors, such as stress, past experiences, and how safe and connected you feel with a partner. Remove pressure by creating intimacy in ways other than sex (e.g. massage, affection, kissing).

2014_2_Q11.txt

<section> DD love </section>

<title> fair game? </title>

When I told my crush I liked him, he thought it was a joke. Then, he and my best friend went out for about two months, but he broke up with her because he said he likes someone else. Now, my other friend thinks he likes me. Is there a rule that I'm not allowed to date my friends ex?

2014_2_A11.txt

<section> DD love </section>

<title> fair game? </title>

There's no absolute rule. Before launching, however, really think through any possible consequences of going down this track. Have you asked your friend how she'd feel if you and this guy got involved? If so, what was her reaction? If you haven't raised the subject, bring it up before taking action. If you go behind her back, she may feel disrespected. Also think about whether there's real evidence this guy's "like" is directed at you. Given his "joke" reaction to your feelings, it's possible there's someone else on his radar. Given the question marks, it may be wise to hold off now.

2014_2_Q12.txt

<section> DD life </section>

<title> trouble breathing </title>

Three of my closest friends keep suggesting I may have a mild anxiety disorder. During exams, I have breakdowns and I don't sleep well during the school term. I constantly worry about my math marks even though I have the top marks in my year, and just sitting a normal math test can leave me gasping for breath. I don't want to talk to my mum as she doesn't care about this type of thing and thinks I'm a drama queen, and I can't tell my dad as I don't live with him and only see him once a month. Are my friends right, do I have an anxiety disorder? If so, what should I do?

2014_2_A12.txt

<section> DD life </section>

<title> trouble breathing </title>

From the symptoms you're describing, it seems you're prone to anxiety. When a person experiences anxiety, typically there's a physical component. Worrying and catastrophic thoughts (e.g. "I'm going to fail") trigger a release of chemicals and hormones in the body, producing a "fight or flight" response. This reaction is often characterised by fast, shallow breathing, increased heart rate, dizziness, nausea, butterflies and tensing of muscles. To counteract these symptoms, take calm, deep breaths. Inhale slowly through your nose, then slowly exhale through your mouth. As you breath out, say the word "relax" and consciously release any tension in your muscles. Repeat this often through the day and, if you're restless, at night. Identify any anxiety-provoking self-talk (e.g. "I'll never get through this") and counteract it with helpful coping statements (e.g. "Just take it one step at a time"). A healthy lifestyle including exercise, a balanced diet and less caffeine can help reduce overall stress. Relaxation techniques such as yoga and meditation are also beneficial. For more anxiety advice, check out reachout.com or see your counsellor or GP.

2014_2_Q13.txt

<section> DD life </section>

<title> bad behaviour </title>

I have a friend who has recently started having sex with random guys she's meeting on some website. We're worried about her safety and don't know how to approach her about it. She is 18 and just lost her virginity to one of the guys. In the past two days she has met up with three different guys. Should we tell her mum? Help!

2014_2_A13.txt

<section> DD life </section>

<title> bad behaviour </title>

Talk to her. Approach it from the perspective of concerned friends who care about her, but don't be judgmental as this may result in her shutting you out completely.

Rather than attempting to stage an intervention or telling her what to do, concentrate on expressing your worries. For example. "We're scared you may be putting yourself in danger when you hook up with guys you've only met online. We worry when no one knows where you are and who you're with." Encourage her to think through possible consequences and safe sex behaviours (e.g. "What if one of the guys becomes violent or tries to get you to do something you don't want to? Are you insisting on using condoms?"). Discuss what she's getting out of it (e.g. is she just enjoying the attention from these guys?). Hopefully with your support she'll re-evaluate her actions. If her risk-taking behaviour is out of character or you remain concerned that she's genuinely in harm's way, perhaps tell her parents.

2014_2_Q14.txt

<section> DD life </section>

<title> feeling blue </title>

I think I might have depression. I even tested myself on beyondblue.org.au and got a score of 35 (high). I don't know how to see a doctor or counsellor without my mum and dad knowing, and my teacher tells them everything. I really can't tell my parents because they'll limit my life just so I don't get depressed again, and I don't want them to see me as a failure. They already always ask, "Why are you depressed?" If I tell my friends, it's not like they can help in any way. I don't know what to do. Help!

2014_2_A14.txt

<section> DD life </section>

<title> feeling blue </title>

If you're consistently down and experiencing other symptoms of depression (e.g. feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, sleep problems, appetite changes, lack of motivation, low energy or difficulties concentrating), reach out for help. You can see your GP or school counsellor without having to tell anyone. There are other options, too. For example, Kids Helpline (1800 55 1800, kidshelp.com.au) or Lifeline (13 11 14, lifeline.org.au) offer phone and web-based counselling which is free and confidential. Even though you're reluctant to involve your parents, don't dismiss them as a possible source of support. You could try letting them know what you've been going through, then give them some information about depression (e.g. fact sheets from youthbeyondblue.com or reachout.com). Explain that you don't want to be seen as a failure, but you just want help.

2014_2_Q15.txt

<section> DD life </section>

<title> here or there? </title>

My mum wants to move, but my dad's here and I want to stay. What should I do?

2014_2_A15.txt

<section> DD life </section>

<title> here or there? </title>

When major family decisions are being made that impact you, it's important to feel your wants and needs have been considered. Make a list of any concerns you have about moving away, then calmly talk to your parents separately about the issue.

Together, try to create some compromises. For example, is living with your dad a possibility, or moving somewhere not so far away so you can still spend time with

him? If there are legal custody issues, then generally the older you are and more maturity you demonstrate, the more of a say you have about where you live.

2014_3_Q1.txt

<section> DD Q&A </section>

<title> </title>

I'm always nervous when I go to out-of-school activities. I get shy and don't talk much. I feel insecure and fat! I don't like being social and try to get out of things. I don't know what's wrong. Help!

2014_3_A1.txt

<section> DD Q&A </section>

<title> </title>

We all feel nervous and insecure occasionally, so don't be too hard on yourself. But if you want to feel more confident, talk back to yourself about the negative thoughts you're having. If your friends put themselves down, what would you say to them? Say that to yourself. However, if you feel panicky often and can't bring these feelings under control easily, you might be experiencing anxiety. Anxiety is very common and something we all experience. If these feelings cause you to avoid situations and stop you from participating in activities, there are things you can do to help stop it. Talk to a trusted adult or contact Beyondblue on 1300 224 636.

2014_3_Q2.txt

<section> DD Q&A </section>

<title> </title>

This guy broke up with me because his friends told him to. We still see each other, but when I'm not with him he tries to get with my friends. What do I do?

2014_3_A2.txt

<section> DD Q&A </section>

<title> </title>

It sounds as though this guy doesn't know what he wants. Did he break up with you because he's too swayed by his friends' opinions, or is he using that as an excuse to break up because he isn't brave enough to tell you he doesn't want to be your boyfriend anymore? I'm wondering why it's OK with you for him to treat you this way - seeing people behind your back. I'm thinking there's probably a part of you that's not OK with this and a part that doesn't want to let go of him. This is hard. Maybe think about what you want and ask him for what you want. You deserve to be treated with honesty and care. It's time for you to decide to keep doing things the same way or change something. This won't be easy, but if you don't do something it will keep on hurting.

2014_3_Q3.txt

<section> DD Q&A </section>

<title> </title>

I'm worried about one of my friends. At lunch she hardly eats. She won't sleep and says she does laps of her room at night. She's really skinny and I think she's hurting herself. How can I help?

2014_3_A3.txt

<section> DD Q&A </section>

<title> </title>

She's so fortunate to have a supportive best friend, and reminding her how much you care is important. It sounds like she's struggling with unhealthy thoughts and possibly dangerous actions that could be quite serious. Her thoughts seem to be focused on food, weight and her body shape, and you're right to be concerned about her. I recommend that you try to help her see that she may need to get some help. Be careful to let her know you aren't judging her, just that you care. Choose an adult friend, parents, school counsellor or teacher you both trust and ask them for help - this will be the best way to help. She could also try calling the Butterfly support line. It's free and she can call anytime on 1800 334 673.

2014_3_Q4.txt

<section> DD Q&A </section>

<title> </title>

I really like a boy in my class but he's going out with another girl. I would back off, but he keeps telling me he likes me and wants to kiss me, but he can't break up with his girlfriend because she's having a hard time at home. Should I kiss him and keep it secret?

2014_3_A4.txt

<section> DD Q&A </section>

<title> </title>

There are a lot of mixed messages here, so it's not surprising you're having a hard time. Here are some things you might want to think about to help you decide what to do: "Do I want to be with the kind of boy who tells his girlfriend that he wants to be with her and also tells another girl that he likes her and wants to kiss her?", "Could I trust someone who does this? If I kiss him and keep it a secret, would I be OK with that?" Secrets often come out into the open. If this were to happen, what would it be like if everyone found out your secret? Maybe you could tell him you really like him but would only be with him if he didn't have a girlfriend, even if that means waiting.

2014_3_Q5.txt

<section> DD Q&A </section>

<title> </title>

One of my sister's guy friends cornered me at a party and he put his hand between my legs. I didn't like it and I don't want him to do it again, but my sister thinks I'm overreacting and tells me to grow up. Am I being too sensitive?

2014_3_A5.txt

<section> DD Q&A </section>

<title> </title>

What a scary and uncomfortable situation for you. It's important you know you're not being too sensitive at all! It's never OK for another person to touch you without your permission. If you feel uncomfortable with anyone touching you in any way, you have every right to express your thoughts and tell the person "No" and to walk away or get help or support, if needed. This might seem like a difficult thing to do at the time, but the more direct and clear you are, the more this message might get heard. It sounds like you're questioning yourself because of your sister telling you to "grow up". Only you are in control of your own body and regardless of anyone else's opinions, you

have the right to only do things with your body that you decide are OK for you - no-one else.

2014_3_Q6.txt

<section> DD Q&A </section>

<title> </title>

I've only just turned 15 and I haven't got my period. All of my friends have theirs and they tease me about it so I lied and told them I've had it. I have all the signs of getting it but I still haven't. Is there anything I can do to speed up the process of getting my period?

2014_3_A6.txt

<section> DD Q&A </section>

<title> </title>

It's hard when your friends have started developing and you haven't. And it's really hard to keep it a secret from your mates. There are many reasons why some girls start their periods early, and some a lot later. There is no 'magic' starting age for periods, however it might be a good idea to see a doctor for a general check-up if you haven't had a single period by the time you turn 16, just to be sure everything's OK. Sometimes delayed menarche (the start of menstruation) is due to lots of physical activities and not having enough body fat to kick-start your periods. It's sometimes due to stress, illness, developmental problems and other hormonal issues. You can help by having a healthy diet, getting enough sleep at night, getting a moderate amount of exercise and avoiding cigarettes, alcohol and drugs.

2014_3_Q7.txt

<section> DD Q&A </section>

<title> </title>

My parents got divorced when I was really young and my mum's new boyfriend doesn't treat her well. He cancels on her all the time. She deserves better but she says she really likes him. What should I do?

2014_3_A7.txt

<section> DD Q&A </section>

<title> </title>

What an empathetic and caring person you are to be so concerned about your mum. This can be a great quality but it can also be tough for you. It would be really upsetting thinking your mum is being treated badly, especially by another adult who she really likes! I wonder if you have talked with your mum about this? One of the hardest things to go through is seeing someone you love not being treated in a way you think they either deserve or enjoy. In this situation, it's important you look after your own feelings as well. Maybe in talking with your mum you can let her know how you feel when you see her boyfriend do something specific which you don't think is right. Taking it issue by issue and expressing your feelings can make a bigger issue easier to chat about and also make it easier for your mum to understand your concerns.

2014_4_Q1.txt

<section> DD Q&A </section>

<title> </title>

My mum was recently diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS) and I haven't been dealing well with it. I need some ideas to help me cope with this better and to stop being upset all the time... Can you help?

2014_4_A1.txt

<section> DD Q&A </section>

<title> </title>

It must be difficult absorbing this news, but know that it's OK to feel upset now. You're no doubt experiencing a whirlwind of thoughts and feelings, and it will take time to adjust and figure things out. Try taking time out for yourself, and keep doing things you enjoy (even if you have to force it at first). It might help to talk things through with your mum or a friend. Talking helps you work through your feelings, and feel less overwhelmed. If it's too hard to talk, try writing things down. For extra support for you and your family, call MS Australia for more info and advice on 1800 042 138 or visit msaustralia.org.au.

2014_4_Q2.txt

<section> DD Q&A </section>

<title> </title>

I had a BF and I was so happy, then we broke up and I can't stop thinking about him and feeling down. When I do have an OK day, my fam's arguing makes me feel like crap again. What can I do to stop feeling so down?

2014_4_A2.txt

<section> DD Q&A </section>

<title> </title>

It's normal to be sad when a relationship ends, and we often find ourselves more easily upset by other things that are going on around us. It's almost like we lose our protective layer. Feeling sad about your break-up won't go away quickly but you should start to notice that you're not thinking of it as often or for as long as time goes on. It's important to look after yourself: make a list of the things you enjoy doing (like walking the dog or painting your nails) and try to do one of these things each day. Good sleep, exercise and eating healthy are also important - even though you might feel most like eating a block of chocolate and not moving off the couch. Finally, if you find that your sadness isn't shifting, it might help to talk to a counsellor. Visit relationships.org.au for more advice.

2014_4_Q3.txt

<section> DD Q&A </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 14 and I don't like my body. I eat healthily and go on walks. I'm not old enough to go to the gym so I try other things, but my weight isn't budging. How do I learn to like my body?

2014_4_A3.txt

<section> DD Q&A </section>

<title> </title>

Your body is unique and it will have its own natural weight. Don't try too hard to change it, rather celebrate it for its own special beauty. Respecting your body means looking after it, giving it nourishment, listening to its needs and moving it in a way

that is energising and fun. One thing you could do that makes a real difference is to choose a different part of your body each day that you're grateful for and write down why you like it, why it's unique and how it helps you live your life. For example, "I love my eyes because they are a beautiful shade of green and allow me to see the world around me" or "I love my thighs because they are reliable and strong and carry me to exciting new places". Listen to your own body and learn about what makes you smile.

2014_4_Q4.txt

<section> DD Q&A </section>

<title> </title>

My parents are really religious so they won't let me watch anything that has themes like 'mature' or 'supernatural' in it. I've tried talking to them about it and explaining that I'm old enough to handle shows like that (I'm 15) but nothing works. They just get angry and yell at me. Please help!

2014_4_A4.txt

<section> DD Q&A </section>

<title> </title>

It's fantastic you've talked with your parents, as this could be tricky. Arguments and anger can be difficult for all of you and are often a negative side-effect of trying to resolve issues. On the other hand, working through these issues can help to strengthen relationships as you'll have a better understanding of each other's perspectives. Having said that, I wonder if there are some new ways of looking at the situation? For example, it might not be that they think you can't handle it, but more they're concerned for your wellbeing due to their religious beliefs. Maybe approaching the situation from a different perspective might open up everyone's minds to consider different ways of working together, so you can come up with solutions. Try having a discussion with them about what it was like when they were 15 and wanting to explore different ideas.

2014_4_Q5.txt

<section> DD Q&A </section>

<title> </title>

I was really angry at my best friend and on Saturday night I went to a party and her boyfriend was there. We spent the night flirting and ended up sleeping together. I feel absolutely terrible. It was really stupid. Do I have to tell her?

2014_4_A5.txt

<section> DD Q&A </section>

<title> </title>

There's no law stating you must confess all. It's a personal choice, which should be based on your conscience and thinking through the possible consequences of remaining silent versus coming clean. Learn from this mistake that you need to find healthier ways to deal with conflict in your friendships. If you say nothing, will guilt consume you? Would you feel comfortable knowing your friend is dating a cheat? Will you be constantly on edge about whether she might find out? If she hears it from another source, she'll feel totally betrayed by you and her guy. If you choose to reveal all, make it clear you're absolutely aware you did the wrong thing and how much you

regret it. Be prepared to cop a backlash and to work hard at building back trust by demonstrating loyalty.

2014_4_Q6.txt

<section> DD Q&A </section>

<title> </title>

I shaved my bikini line a few days ago, and now it's really itchy. I don't normally talk to people about this stuff but can you help me? Why is it so itchy?

2014_4_A6.txt

<section> DD Q&A </section>

<title> </title>

Shaving causes minor physical trauma to the skin, leading to irritation and itch. Sometimes a shaving rash appears as well - these are usually little red or pink dots. These symptoms appear very soon after shaving. Rubbing tea tree moisturiser or cream into the freshly shaved skin reduces the irritation. Some people experience problems with ingrown hairs too. This happens when the hair (that has been cut through shaving) regrows and curls back in under the skin. It can cause a red lump on the skin, which might trap some skin bacteria and become painful or ooze some yellow pus (a bit like a pimple). Using a loofah to exfoliate will help prevent ingrown hairs. Finally, if you already have sensitive or dry skin, or a condition such as eczema, shaving can be particularly irritating. If that sounds like your skin type, get some advice from your doctor.

2014_5_Q1.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

One of my really close friends was asking me about why I liked this guy I'd been crushing on for ages. I told her it was his eyes and then she complimented them too, saying they really were nice. Now she likes him too, for the same reasons as me! The problem is she's always talking about him and is becoming possessive of him, even though he doesn't really even know who she is. And I'm really uncomfortable around her now because she's always talking about him and is being a real bitch towards me. What do I do?

2014_5_A1.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

Firstly, I'm wondering if your friend knows what you're thinking and feeling. It's so easy in upsetting situations for us to imagine that the other person knows why we're upset, and should change their behaviour to fix things. Maybe she does know why you're down, but there's also a chance she doesn't realise that she's stepping on your toes. If her friendship is valuable to you, be honest with her and see if she understands. Sometimes this is enough to change a situation. However, it might be that she is really interested in this boy and you'll end up competing for him. This awkward dilemma will force you to make a tough choice. If it's not possible for one of you to have the boy and remain friends, you may need to decide who's more valuable to you - him or her.

2014_5_Q2.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

I sent a dirty Snapchat to my boyfriend and he showed it to his friends. He told me he hasn't but I got a notification he'd taken a screenshot of it and his friends keep clapping when I walk in the room. I wanted it to be a special pic just for him. I am so angry and feel like I can't tell anyone.

2014_5_A2.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

If you've done your research and are sure the photo is the culprit, be upfront with your BF. Express how angry and let down you feel about him sharing something that was meant to be private. Ensure he's deleted the pic from his phone and check that it hasn't been sent or posted elsewhere. If it has, seek help from a trusted adult. Also reconsider your relationship with this guy. His actions here have been disrespectful and undermining. Although sexting may seem like a bit of fun, the reality is once an image is 'out there' in the cyber world (even via Snapchat) it's difficult to control who may end up seeing it. Think twice in future, even if you trust the recipient.

2014_5_Q3.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

I broke up with a guy last November and he got a new girlfriend just days after we broke up. Recently he's started being flirty and touching my leg. Then he broke it off with his GF and told everyone he liked a girl called Ruby. I felt cheated but he told me it was a 'cover up' because he liked me and didn't want any trouble. After a few days he invited me to a secluded place where he kissed me. It was amazing. I get excited just thinking about it. Then he didn't talk to me for ages and said we shouldn't be together. Why is it so hard?

2014_5_A3.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

I'm not surprised this is hard for you. You have really strong feelings for this boy and he hasn't been trustworthy with your emotions. It sounds like he knows how much you like him and seems to be picking you up when it suits him and dropping you when it doesn't. At some point you need to think about how you want to be treated in all of this. Do you want him so badly that you'll take whatever he'll give you - no matter what his terms are? If you choose this path then it's likely to be a rollercoaster of emotions - excitement and pain. If you continue to accept his behaviour, you might also send a message that what he's doing is OK with you. In some ways we train other people how to treat us, so be careful. There are lots of things to think about here. I hope you have someone trustworthy that you can confide in about how you're hurting right now.

2014_5_Q4.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

I have a group of seven friends, but one friend isn't very popular and I've heard people talking about her behind her back. It weighs on me every time I see this friend. I don't

know whether or not to tell her that everyone's bitching about her, because I went through the same thing in primary school. What should I do?

2014_5_A4.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

Discovering you've been backstabbed can cause a person to feel a deep sense of betrayal, leading to insecurity and battered self-esteem. If you're unsure whether to reveal all to your friend, perhaps consider a different approach and address the issue at the source. When you hear others bitching, why not call them on it? Encourage them to think about how they'd feel if people spoke about them in this way. If they're having problems with this girl, urge them to raise them with her in a direct but non-confrontational way. Suggest having an 'above-board' policy: aiming for open communication and working through concerns together without nastiness. Hopefully this approach will get everyone re-thinking their behaviour and attempting to resolve issues rather than just talking about her behind her back. However, if this unkind bitchiness continues, consider letting her know her 'friends' aren't the real deal.

2014_5_Q5.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

It upsets me that my mum drinks a lot. She always says she has a bad back and has to go to bed but I can smell the alcohol. How can I help her?

2014_5_A5.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

I can tell how much you love your mum and how worried you are for her in this situation. Sometimes, when we start to worry too much it can stop us from doing anything for lots of reasons: like feeling scared of being wrong, feeling scared of hurting the other person or even feeling like you have a million different thoughts all at once and don't know what the 'right' thing to do is anymore. This 'stuck' feeling just makes us feel more helpless! How's your relationship with your mum outside of this concern? Maybe try organising a day out together and if the time's right, and you feel comfortable, you can bring up what you've been noticing. This open discussion might not only help your mum but also help you, too. It may help as well to talk to another relative or friend about how you're coping with this.

2014_5_Q6.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

Can I get a sexual disease through fingering and what's the likelihood of contracting one?

2014_5_A6.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

As a general rule, I'd say no to your question about contracting a sexually transmitted infection (STI). But infection is a risk, especially if you don't know where those fingers have been beforehand! By that I mean, germs can be passed on from one

person to another, given the right environment. If your partner has germs on their hands and it comes into contact with your delicate skin (whether it's your vagina or mouth), it's possible to spread the germ, particularly if fingering causes the skin to break. Just like you wouldn't make and eat a sandwich without washing your hands, you don't want to be touched down there with unclean mitts. This activity should only be done if you feel comfortable with it. Also remember, if you and your partner are having or are even considering having intercourse then make sure you're protected against pregnancy as well as STIs. It might be worth getting clued up on contraception options and how to use them.

2014_5_Q7.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

What's the white discharge I have in my undies? Does it mean I have an STI?

2014_5_A7.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

Just like the tears we make to keep our eyes from drying out, this is normal and is just how the vagina cleans itself. It's also normal for your vaginal secretions to change during the menstrual cycle, so it's a good idea to be aware of how it varies, that way you'll know if there's any changes. If the discharge changes colour (green, pink or brown), develops frothy or yoghurt blobs, an unpleasant (fishy) odour, or becomes itchy or painful, this could be a sign of an STI. Also remember, as the vagina is self-cleaning, it's not a good idea to wash inside it with soaps or chemical douches. The same goes for the vulva (outside area).

2014_5_Q8.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

My boyfriend calls me fat all the time and now I'm starting to think that I am. So how can I lose weight safely?

2014_5_A8.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

It can be embarrassing and sad when another person comments on your weight in a negative way. It can affect your self-esteem and the way you view yourself. Sometimes there are other reasons why a person says mean things, like to compensate for their own problems by making you feel bad about yourself. Our bodies are very clever, so as long as you eat regular meals that are nutritionally balanced and do regular exercise, your weight will settle wherever it's best for your health and wellbeing. The most important thing is to eat a healthy, nutritious diet and to enjoy being active, not the numbers on the scale! Don't let anyone dictate how you should look or make you feel less valued because of how much you weigh.

2014_5_Q9.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 15 years old and have something that's really bothering me. I have two bits of quite long saggy skin hanging down from the flaps of my vagina. I don't know what to do about it. I know it's not normal, so is there anything I can do to make it go away or make it look like I have a normal vagina?

2014_5_A9.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

Reality check - your vagina IS normal! The inner and outer lips (labia) of the vagina come in all shapes and sizes and colours. The outer labia have pubic hair on them and can be thin, fat, saggy or compact but they mostly have a soft spongy consistency. The inner labia are usually darker in colour, shiny and have no pubic hair on them. They can hang down and stick out below the outer labia and some can look wrinkly. Before you decide things aren't 'normal' check out labialibrary.org.au and take a look at lots of labia! Feeling self-conscious is a normal part of going through puberty and that feeling does settle down as you get older and get more used to your body's changes. As awkward as it might seem, it can also really help to talk to an older female relative, like your mum, aunt or a big sister.

2014_5_Q10.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I have to get a blood test. Will STIs show up in general health check-ups, even if you're not searching for them?

2014_5_A10.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

No, STIs don't show up in general health check-ups so it's important to talk to your GP about adding tests or asking specifically for an STI check-up. Your GP might recommend a combination of tests, such as a blood test to screen for things like hepatitis, HIV or syphilis; a urine test to check for things like urinary tract infection (UTI) or pregnancy, or even a vaginal swab to check for infections like chlamydia. No-one can force you to have an STI test but it's wise to get checked out if you're worried. Better to be safe than sorry! If you're about to start a new relationship and either partner has experienced intercourse, it's a good idea for both of you to get tested before having sex. If you're not comfortable seeing your family GP, visit a sexual health clinic instead.

2014_5_Q11.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

For a long time now, I've had tiny pus-filled lumps all over the inside lips of my vagina. At times they turn into large painful pimples that I have to pop 'cos there is just too much pain there. They're everywhere and when I shave I get a case of ingrown hair. I won't have any sexual contact with my partner now 'cos I'm too embarrassed and scared that he won't want to ever have sex with me if he finds out.

2014_5_A11.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

If you had these lumps and pain on your hands, knees or legs, would you put up with them? No! Your vagina (both inside and out) is just as much a part of your body and deserves attention. When you go through puberty, the skin of your vulva (external genital organs) develops active glands that produce an oily substance, which can get blocked and infected. Ingrown hairs can lead to irritation or infection in the hair follicle, so avoid shaving, using soaps or perfume and just wash the area with warm water. Removing pubic hair is OPTIONAL. If you're OK with it, your partner will be too - otherwise don't share it with him! However, if you itch, have pain, or another skin condition, or have had any sexual contact, including oral sex, it's worth ruling out an STI. A healthy vagina is important, so get it looked at by a GP.

2014_6_Q1.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

My best friend's mum has recently gone to hospital. I have been talking to my friend seeing if she's OK, but she has been putting up on Facebook how she has no friends and hates everyone. When I invite her over, she never wants to come. Please help - I'm losing my best friend!

2014_6_A1.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

It must be awful feeling like you're losing your best friend, but it sounds like you're doing all the right things in trying to be there for her. What a great friend you are! You clearly understand that this is a really tough time for her. We all deal with tough times differently, and your friend probably has a lot of emotions going on at the moment that she's trying to work through. It's best to handle this privately (not in a Facebook status or comment). Let your friend know that it seems like she's wanting space at the moment, and if that's the case, if she changes her mind, you're available to hang out whenever she wants. Express to her that you hope she's getting the support that she needs to deal with what's going on in her family - even if it's not from you. And maybe send her a text occasionally so she knows she's still on your mind and that you care about her. It might take some time, but at least you'll know that you're doing all you can.

2014_6_Q2.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 14 and there's this guy I know from school. He's 16 turning 17 soon. I'm turning 15 two weeks after his birthday. I really, REALLY like him. So is it illegal to go out with him? Or is it illegal to have sex with him? In other words, do I have to wait until I'm 16 for us to be together? Can you please say something to de-confuse me about this?

2014_6_A2.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

It's great you're asking these questions and important for you to explore what's right for you. One of the most important aspects of romantic relationships is that you feel

comfortable and that you have the right to choose what you want and DON'T want to do. It's important that you don't feel pressured because that's not OK. There are no laws about what age you can go out with someone and no laws that would stop you and your partner kissing and touching. There ARE laws about having sex, though. There's this thing called the age of consent, a law that says what age young people are allowed to have sex. Basically, because you're 14 going on 15 soon - the law says you're too young to consent (agree) to have sex. When you're under the age of consent, if you have sex with your partner, they can be arrested. Sex can be defined in lots of ways and you can get more info about the age of consent at lawstuff.org.au.

2014_6_Q3.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

Every time I hang out with my boyfriend, he wants to go on Chatroulette and talk to other couples. But it's disgusting, people just take their clothes off. I don't want him to think I'm frigid but how can I stop this?!

2014_6_A3.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

To have a happy, healthy relationship, honest and open communication is key. It's also essential you don't do anything you feel uncomfortable about to please your boyfriend. Talk to your guy about how you're feeling. Explain that what you're being exposed to on Chatroulette disgusts you and you don't want to be part of it. Ask what he likes about it and hear him out. Be clear about what your boundaries are and respect yourself enough to accept how you feel is perfectly OK. Hopefully your boyfriend is willing to listen, respect your point of view and change his behaviour. If he pressures you to put yourself in a situation you're not comfortable with or labels you 'frigid', he's not the guy for you. In a successful relationship it's important to feel able to be true to your own values and know that your needs and wants matter.

2014_6_Q4.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

I have a problem. My friend has been really down lately and I'm seriously worried about her. She thinks if she ends her own life no-one will miss her and she'll go "without a fuss". I want to tell someone about it, but what if she finds out I told someone and hates me? I have no idea what to do.

2014_6_A4.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

It's totally natural to feel overwhelmed and worried hearing your friend talk about taking their own life - but this is too much and too serious for you to take on by yourself. Your friend needs help. There are three things I'd like to suggest you do: 1. Tell a trusted adult. I know this is hard because you don't want to betray your friend but their safety is the most important thing right now and they'll appreciate later that you did it because you cared about them. 2. Keep being the friend you've always been - let them know you're in this together, they are not alone and there is hope that things will get better. 3. Look after yourself. Supporting a friend can be really draining (even

reading about suicide in a magazine can make people upset) and you'll definitely need to take breaks so you can be there with lots of energy when needed.

2014_6_Q5.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

I've had a crush on my best friend (he's a guy) for years. Recently, I got a boyfriend and when I told him, he passed the phone to his buddy and I heard him start screaming in the background. So I told him I had a crush on him and he stopped talking to me. Now he's acting as though I never said anything! I'm so confused.

2014_6_A5.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

Having a crush on a best friend happens to lots of people, usually because friendships provide an opportunity to be yourself with another person. This isn't the case when 'hooking up' or 'dating', as in this relationship there is some pressure to be attractive to the other person. This is what makes the situation a REALLY tough one. As you've been friends for a long time, you've probably found lots of ways to talk together about all sorts of things in the past. His not talking about what's most important to you must be really tough, especially since you've been open about your crush on him. If being honest is important to you, I wonder what it would be like for you to ask him about what happened. Perhaps this doesn't feel OK, and if not, consider what would stop you asking. On the other hand, the confusion you're feeling might be about whether or not you can go on with your friendship. If so, ask yourself, "Can I go on when he's acting like nothing's happened, when telling him about my crush on him was so important to me?" Think about it.

2014_6_Q6.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

My left breast is smaller than my right. They have been growing and recently my nipples are enlarged, but my left one is still smaller. It fills out three-quarters of my bra but my right one does fill it out. What does this mean? Is it normal?

2014_6_A6.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

Don't panic - this is normal in developing breasts! Different sized breasts or 'breast asymmetry' is really common, especially during puberty. When your breasts are developing, they grow at different rates so one breast may grow faster and be bigger than the other. Usually this difference in size evens out when your breasts stop developing around 18. However, it's also perfectly normal for women's breasts to remain different sizes even when they are fully developed. Some girls become self-conscious about their unevenly sized breasts, however most of the time, the size difference is not noticed by anyone except you! If you are worried, you can wear a padded bra, or a bra that is padded on the smaller side to make breasts look more even. If you are really concerned, visit your GP, who should be able to reassure you everything is normal.

2014_6_Q7.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I have these red spots under my arm from my armpit down to my boob. It isn't chicken pox and it isn't pimples. I have never had sex. What is it?

2014_6_A7.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I wish I could help but it's a bit difficult without more information. Red spots usually mean irritation or inflammation or a reaction to something. If they were only in your armpit, I wonder whether it's to do with shaving or hair removal (if you remove underarm hair). Because it extends down, I wonder whether it's a skin reaction to a deodorant or perfume. Something might have happened you didn't notice at the time, such as an insect bite that your skin has reacted to. The diagnosis will also be helped by knowing how long the rash has been there, whether the spots are itchy or painful, and whether you have any other skin conditions. While it's there, take a photo of the rash, then see your doctor for a proper assessment and advice.

2014_6_Q8.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 13 turning 14 and am starting to go through puberty. It's making me very moody. I've been really stressed about school, friend dramas and other family stuff. Then, one night my dad yelled at me. I cracked and went into my room and hurt myself. After what I did, I've been depressed, constantly crying and I just don't know how to feel better. Is there any way that I can feel better?

2014_6_A8.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

It sounds like you're really giving yourself a hard time about what's happened. But you've had a lot of stress in your life recently, so it makes sense you've been a lot more emotional than usual. Recognising this and being kind to yourself might help. Sometimes people do hurt themselves as a way of trying to deal with strong emotions during tough times, but it's really important to get help to try to find other ways to cope, and to feel better about life as it changes. Putting all your energy into this, instead of beating yourself up and feeling guilty, is the best thing you can do for yourself right now. A health professional will be able to work with you on the many changes that are going on and help you feel much better about yourself.

2014_6_Q9.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I've had my period for two years now but for the last six months they have been really irregular. Sometimes I miss a whole month, and the usual is about three weeks late. What is wrong with me? (I have never had sex.)

2014_6_A9.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

What you're describing is a little unusual because periods often start off irregular and develop into a regular pattern. It can help to know what defines 'regular' because it doesn't mean they have to come exactly a month apart. A period 'cycle' is measured from the first day of a period to the first day of the next period. This can be anywhere from 21 days (three weeks) to five or six weeks apart and vary each cycle. However, if they come more than six weeks apart or less than three weeks apart, and if this pattern continued for more than six months, then it's worth having yourself checked out. Periods can become irregular due to hormone fluctuations, if you're on the pill, due to weight loss, weight gain, a change in eating patterns or stress. Your doctor can see you and help work out if it's anything that needs more attention.

2014_6_Q10.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I have got these pimple-like things around my nipples that have a white discharge when I squeeze them. I'm only 16. I have Googled it and think it might be a condition called Montgomery Tubercles. Please help me - they are making my life a misery with me and my boyfriend. I seriously want them gone.

2014_6_A10.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

As we develop, our breasts develop and start to change. The coloured area around the nipple is called the areola and what you are describing are Montgomery Tubercles - a normal part of your breast tissue. They are a kind of gland that produces an oily substance, which is harmless when you're not pregnant and we think they can even help lubricate and prevent skin infections in the area during breastfeeding. The best way to treat them is to leave them alone. I'm not sure why they would be making your or your boyfriend's lives a misery unless you've been squeezing the glands and hurting yourself! If the area has become inflamed and sore, you might need to see your GP for some antibiotics.

2014_6_Q11.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 15 and I've been experiencing pain while going to the bathroom. I've checked the colour of my urine and it seems to be reddish-brown and I need to go every 10 minutes or so. I don't have a mum and I feel uncomfortable talking to my dad or a doctor about it, but it hurts! What do you think I should do?

2014_6_A11.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

This could be serious so you do need to see a doctor or visit a health clinic. The colour of your urine, the pain and the number of times you have to pee makes me suspicious that you have a bladder infection, and the longer you leave it, the higher the chances it could develop into something more serious. If it's an infection, it can be cured by completing a course of antibiotics. The GP can also check you out for other sexually transmitted infections and discuss contraception if you are sexually active

too. If it's so hard to talk to your dad, can you think of someone else who might be able to take you to see a GP? An auntie, a friend's mum, or school nurse? Here are a few rules that you need to know to try to prevent infections: Always pee after sexual intercourse, wipe yourself from front to back, drink plenty of water every day, and don't 'hold on' for hours if you have to pee. I hope that helps.

2014_7_Q1.txt

<section> DD boys & love </section>

<title> </title>

My boyfriend and I have been dating for a really long time now and lately he's been wanting to hold my boobs and bum and make out with me - it gets annoying. How can I ask him to tone it down a bit without making him feel bad? He also asked me to send him a nude photo but I'm not sure if I should.

2014_7_A1.txt

<section> DD boys & love </section>

<title> </title>

It is very important that you feel safe and comfortable in your relationship and that you remember that you have the right to choose. If you have been dating for a long time, you have a brilliant foundation and your relationship will be able to handle a serious conversation like this one. Start by telling your boyfriend the things you love about him and how you enjoy being physical with him. A boy's desire for sexual touch is often higher than a girl's. It is a balancing act that may require a compromise, but you should also only do what you feel comfortable doing. Regarding the 'asking for nudes', have a think about whether the photo you are sending is one you would be happy to have anyone see. Once a picture is sent, you are no longer able to control who can see it. Not being able to get pictures back is often a big regret experienced by people if the relationship changes.

2014_7_Q2.txt

<section> DD boys & love </section>

<title> </title>

I am 15 and have a boyfriend. He is really nice and smart and funny and, you get the drift. But lately I have heard all these stories about him being really mean and horrible to his friends. He has been calling girls names like 'fat', 'ugly' and 'pimple face'. Really, he's been a bully! He hasn't done anything to me, but does this mean he will one day turn on me? I don't want him to be like that to anyone.

2014_7_A2.txt

<section> DD boys & love </section>

<title> </title>

Firstly, before acting on something 'someone' said, it's a good idea to check that it's not just a rumour. The only way you can really do that is by asking your boyfriend directly or someone who has no agendas and is very trustworthy. If you discover this is true, and if he has also so far been wonderful to you, you now need to decide what to do. You have the advantage of time - time to think, to listen, to notice. If he is capable of the things he has been accused of, no doubt his true colours will soon begin to show. No-one can fake it forever and now that you have been warned, you can decide how you will handle a situation should it ever present itself. What will your

response be? If he ever says anything mean to someone in front of you, stand up for what is right. Be careful not to compromise your values just for his approval.

2014_7_Q3.txt

<section> DD boys & love </section>

<title> </title>

My mum cheated on my dad and they split up. There are five kids but I seem to be the only one really affected by it (I'm 15 and the second oldest). I feel betrayed by my mum and this man. I am always thinking about it and it just gets me down. I'm seeing a counsellor but it doesn't seem to help.

2014_7_A3.txt

<section> DD boys & love </section>

<title> </title>

When the people we trust the most hurt us, it can be devastating. So it makes sense that this is getting you down. As awful as it feels, give yourself time to be sad. It's natural to think about it constantly, but try to get out of your head by writing your thoughts down, or talking it through with someone, as these are good ways to calm your mind. Find someone you can offload on to get support - a friend, relative or teacher. Don't be afraid to tell your counsellor you're concerned it isn't working; they will be keen to talk about it. As hard as it seems right now, you're not alone. Lots of young people go through this and learn to deal with it over time.

2014_7_Q4.txt

<section> DD boys & love </section>

<title> </title>

My boyfriend just dumped me because he said he only loves me as a friend now and he has lost the 'spark'. I'm really upset because I loved him so much. I have no idea how to get the 'spark' back and how to get him back. The worst part is that he and I also had sex (it was both our first times). Now I just want him back.

2014_7_A4.txt

<section> DD boys & love </section>

<title> </title>

It's heartbreaking when the one you love deeply no longer feels the same way. For most couples, the nature of their relationship changes over time. The initial excitement of the 'honeymoon phase' moves into something more settled. For some people, once this 'period of passion' has passed, a true connection is just not there. While it is hard to hear, your boyfriend has been honest about where he's coming from. By choosing to break up rather than working at taking things between you to a deeper level, it seems clear in his mind it's over. Unfortunately, you can't force the 'spark' to return, especially when your boyfriend has already mentally and emotionally left the relationship. Challenging as it is, accept that you two have broken up. Expect to experience a period of grief as you come to terms with the loss. Focus on moving forward. Remember, time is a great healer.

2014_7_Q5.txt

<section> DD boys & love </section>

<title> </title>

One of my close friends touches my boobs and butt a lot. It doesn't bother me much because he isn't doing it for the 'wrong' thing - he's more joking around. I don't know what it means or if it means he likes me?

2014_7_A5.txt

<section> DD boys & love </section>

<title> </title>

I think it is so important to understand what it means for your close friend when he touches you, and you definitely have the right to know this. No-one should be touching your body without your consent. If it doesn't bother you right now, that's fine, but you need to make sure you don't put yourself in a position where, if it starts to bother you, you are afraid to say so. Some questions you might like to think about are: What would happen if you got a boyfriend? Does your close friend do it to other girls? Finally, if you need to discuss something a little heavier with someone, it's often best to give them the heads up beforehand that you'd like to talk about something serious.

2014_7_Q6.txt

<section> DD body & life </section>

<title> </title>

For a while I have been getting red lumps or pimples on my butt as well as the backs of my thighs and under my arms. I know this is probably sweat-related, but is there any way to stop it? It's so embarrassing and I'm always feeling self-conscious in singlets and shorts or skirts. Help!

2014_7_A6.txt

<section> DD body & life </section>

<title> </title>

First of all, you're probably right about this problem being sweat-related. Secondly, the good news is that we might be able to control it, even if we can't yet stop it from happening altogether. Now, there are a few things you can do to reduce these spots from popping up on your skin. First of all, avoid harsh chemicals when washing the areas where they occur, and also avoid wearing tight or synthetic clothing. It's also worth making a visit to your GP in order to make sure that other things such as infections of the hair follicles, or possible diabetes, aren't causing problems either. Make sure that you're drinking plenty of water each day, getting a little bit of sunlight (but not too much) and eating a well-balanced diet. Remember that your body is like a growing plant; so water it regularly and have some sunshine as well.

2014_7_Q7.txt

<section> DD body & life </section>

<title> </title>

I feel a lot of pressure from my school friends to look a certain way. They call me the 'big girl' or the 'chicken lady' and even though they are laughing and joking around it really hurts my feelings. How can I tell them to stop?

2014_7_A7.txt

<section> DD body & life </section>

<title> </title>

Being in a situation where your friends are singling you out, making jokes about you or calling you names can be incredibly hurtful. These comments are extremely upsetting and unkind, particularly when they are made in front of others. Quite often when people themselves don't have a positive body image, they respond to this by criticising and teasing others. This takes the focus off themselves. Developing the strength within yourself to be able to stand up to these friends, and really letting them know what it feels like for you to be told these unkind words is so important. Let them know how it affects you. You should never be judged by others based on what your body shape and size is. It is so important that you don't take these comments to heart or start believing what they are saying.

2014_7_Q8.txt

<section> DD body & life </section>

<title> </title>

I don't really know when it started, but my friends talk over me all the time. I feel invisible around them. I don't want to say something because that's just lame.

2014_7_A8.txt

<section> DD body & life </section>

<title> </title>

It's frustrating to be talked over. Continual interruptions can make you feel disrespected and insignificant. Take action. Send the message: 'I have something worthwhile to say and I deserve to be heard'. Begin breaking the cycle of interruption by focusing on how you present yourself. Make sure your body language communicates confidence, e.g. head up, shoulders back and standing tall. When you go to speak, grab the listener's attention by making eye contact. Speak clearly and ensure your voice is not too soft. If someone butts in, look at them and say, 'Just a sec,' or, 'I've nearly finished'. Hopefully this will stop them in their tracks. If over time the behaviour continues, bring it up with your friends. They may not even be aware of what they're doing and the impact on you.

2014_7_Q9.txt

<section> DD body & life </section>

<title> </title>

I have hairs on my stomach going in a line from my belly button down, however there are some above my belly button. I'm very self-conscious about it and am often embarrassed to wear bikinis around friends. It isn't very dark, however, it is visible to me. Would shaving help?

2014_7_A9.txt

<section> DD body & life </section>

<title> </title>

The hairline between your belly button and the top of your pubes is very natural and becomes thicker and darker during puberty. Visible hair above the belly button in girls is less common. Shaving would only remove hair for a few days and it will grow back quickly. Waxing also only temporarily removes the hair. So, either way is not really a permanent solution. Girls with visible hair above the belly button, on the chest or very noticeable facial could be experiencing a hormone imbalance, so maybe you could ask your mum or another family member what they know about that. That could be a way to have her suggest a doctor's visit if you feel you can't talk to her

directly. Other symptoms of a hormone imbalance include severe acne and very irregular periods.

2014_7_Q10.txt

<section> DD body & life </section>

<title> </title>

Two of my really close friends have been fighting with each other - they won't stop! I thought it would have died down but it's getting worse. Both of them think I'm on their side but I don't want to choose. Is it bad when I'm with one of them that I bitch about the other?

2014_7_A10.txt

<section> DD body & life </section>

<title> </title>

This is an awful position to be in, a real loyalty divide. It is not reasonable for a friend to expect that to be a good friend is to always agree and align with their criticism. I would be concerned about what effect this is going to have on your own reputation as a trustworthy friend. I'm guessing that because you're asking this question, there is something about criticising your friends behind their backs that is uncomfortable for you. This is a good thing. It suggests that loyalty and honesty are probably really important to you. It is possible to be loyal and supportive to both of your friends without necessarily agreeing or adding to their criticisms. It might help to say to each of your pals that you do really value your friendship with each other them but find it difficult to be in conversations about the other. While initially they might react to this and think you're not on their side, in time, you will be known as a trustworthy person who has integrity.

2014_8_Q1.txt

<section> DD love & sex </section>

<title> </title>

I really like this guy and I always catch him looking at me in class. He, his friend, my friend and I often talk all together, but whenever he talks, he only talks to them, not me. When I do try to talk to him through social media he never tries to continue the conversation. I don't know if I should keep trying to talk to him or stay away.

2014_8_A1.txt

<section> DD love & sex </section>

<title> </title>

It sounds like you're getting mixed messages. Without checking with people what their actions mean, we're often at risk of interpreting them with our own meaning. Sometimes we're right and other times we are way off. While it is possible that the guy you refer to is a little shy, it's also possible that he isn't interested enough to make a move. It's important to stay true to yourself in the choices you make about how to act. If it's very important to you to be friendly and treat people with respect, then keep doing this. If he really is interested, eventually he'll make a move. Another option is for you to make a move - scary, maybe risky, maybe disappointing, but it's another option. Waiting for him to make a move could lead to feelings of powerlessness. Some people prefer to put themselves out there and risk being hurt, knowing they'll survive through the pain. This is preferable to them than feeling powerless. There's quite a lot for you to think about here.

2014_8_Q2.txt

<section> DD love & sex </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 16 and just recently became sexually active with my first boyfriend. I had sex for the first time and afterwards I bled. The second time we had sex, I also bled again. We used a condom and nothing went wrong. I'm so scared and not sure if I should tell him as I don't know if it's normal? Please help!

2014_8_A2.txt

<section> DD love & sex </section>

<title> </title>

This is most probably a normal part of experiencing sexual activity for the first time. Sometimes, you can bleed as the skin tissue called the hymen (which covers the entrance to the vagina) can tear and bleed when you first start having sex. People can also experience some bleeding during sex. But if this continues happening frequently or every time you have sex, it's important for you to see your GP so that she can take a look to see if there are other reasons for the bleeding. On a side note, remember: just because you're bleeding doesn't mean it's your period or that you won't get pregnant. Always use condoms and if you're able to have sex with your boyfriend, then you ought to be able to talk to him about it, so please do.

2014_8_Q3.txt

<section> DD love & sex </section>

<title> </title>

What are the consequences when two under-aged people have sex?

2014_8_A3.txt

<section> DD love & sex </section>

<title> </title>

From a legal point of view, the different states and territories in Australia have different laws regarding underage sex. If you have questions about it from a legal perspective, contact your local youth legal service for more advice. From a more personal angle, some of the concerns that can arise from underage people having sex may include: Are they really emotionally and physically ready? Can they really think through what it means for them and how they may feel about it in the future? Does sex now fit with their values and personal beliefs? Do they totally understand the potential risks of having sex (eg. pregnancy, STIs) and are they able and willing to practise safe sex? Can they communicate openly and honestly with each other? Are they both choosing to sleep together because that's what they truly want rather than because they feel pressured to or don't know how to say no? These types of factors will also have a large bearing on any possible consequences of underage sex.

2014_8_Q4.txt

<section> DD love & sex </section>

<title> </title>

I think I'm in love with my best friend. He's amazing and I love everything about him, but I don't want to say anything because love ruins friendships and I don't think he

could ever love me. How can I stop loving him without hurting him? His pain is my pain and I just want to stop feeling like this 'cos he's such a great friend.

2014_8_A4.txt

<section> DD love & sex </section>

<title> </title>

Sharing feelings that are close to your heart with someone often gives rise to feelings of love and a desire for greater intimacy. This can be a useful thing to remember for people at any age and stage. If you're single, then it can be a really lovely thing. If you have a boyfriend, it can make things more complicated. I'm not surprised that the closeness you and your friend experience through sharing has given rise to other feelings. These feelings may decrease if your conversation becomes a bit more superficial. However, you are likely to miss this. An option might be to check out if the feelings are mutual. A solid friendship like you have described is a great foundation for a romantic relationship. However, this is quite risky. If he doesn't feel the same way, and things get awkward, you may lose what you currently have. Although it may sound harsh to say, you are also likely to lose this closeness one day if either of you starts to date someone else.

2014_8_Q5.txt

<section> DD love & sex </section>

<title> </title>

Why am I attracted to my teacher?

2014_8_A5.txt

<section> DD love & sex </section>

<title> </title>

then having a really strong emotional attachment to them is understandable. At this stage of life it's common to experience romantic or sexual feelings that weren't there before, especially towards people you admire. They might be your age or even older, the same or opposite sex (or both), as well as people you don't know, such as celebrities. These feelings can range from having a 'crush' to even having sexual thoughts or fantasies.

Signs that things are not healthy include becoming 'obsessed,' or if the teacher is doing anything to encourage inappropriate intimacy. Trust your gut instinct and if you know that something isn't quite right, then make sure you talk to someone, such as a parent, relative or adult friend. You can also talk confidentially to a counsellor or doctor.

2014_8_Q6.txt

<section> DD health & life </section>

<title> </title>

My mum is so over-protective. She never lets me out anywhere - if I want to go to my friend's house or to go for a walk, she won't let me. She would make up some stupid excuse for me not to go. I've tried talking to her about it, but she doesn't listen. It's just really embarrassing when I have to tell my friends that I can't go out with them because my mum is crazy. Is there anything I can try so Mum will let me go out places?

2014_8_A6.txt

<section> DD health & life </section>

<title> </title>

Try to dig beneath the surface and get a bit of a better understanding of why your mum is being so protective. Without becoming aggressive, explain that you'd like to discuss her concerns about you going out. Ask her what she's worried about. Listen without being judgemental. Is she anxious that you may find yourself in a situation you can't handle? Try to address her concerns. Describe measures you could take to reassure her if you went out (e.g. sending regular texts). Ask her if she'd be willing to allow you to trial taking one small independent step (e.g. go for a short walk with friends). Hopefully with time, if you demonstrate you can be safe and reliable, she'll gradually give you more freedom.

2014_8_Q7.txt

<section> DD health & life </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 14 and I don't really like my friendship group. It's not that people are teasing me or bullying me, I just don't have fun around them. Recently I have wanted to be in a group of friends that are a mix of boys and girls, and am extremely jealous of the others that are in one. I'm not shy, I just get really nervous when I try to make new friends.

2014_8_A7.txt

<section> DD health & life </section>

<title> </title>

Firstly, this is completely normal. As you grow up and change, the types of friends you surround yourself with will change. It's a very delicate situation. It will be hard for your current friends to not take it personally when they see you hanging around with other people. You need to prepare yourself that they may react badly. It is important that you are honest with your current friends, rather than being sneaky. It is also essential that you only speak kindly of your old friends to your new friends, no matter how they respond. Making friends and putting yourself out there is always scary but normally it pays off.

2014_8_Q8.txt

<section> DD health & life </section>

<title> </title>

I've starting swimming in PE class at school and so I shaved my bikini line. But now I've started to notice little red bumps all over my bikini line and they are really irritating. I've never had sex. What's wrong and how can I get rid of them?

2014_8_A8.txt

<section> DD health & life </section>

<title> </title>

It sounds like you have developed ingrown hairs. You see, when you shave, the new hair growth coming up can get trapped under the skin and cause an itch while the hair is trying to break through. It usually settles down in a few days. Some girls pick the bumps or flick the visible hairs trapped in the red bumps with a needle, or use a coarse brush, but you run the risk of introducing an infection so I wouldn't recommend that. The best thing to do is to leave it alone for a few days; it should settle down. However, if it spreads to areas beyond where you've been shaving, please

get help from your doctor. Also, the bathroom basin isn't always the best place to keep your razor - it has to be cleaned and DRIED after use, and kept in a dry place to prevent water-loving bugs infecting you the next time you shave. And if the blade is blunt, it'll irritate your skin even more, so make sure you replace it regularly.

2014_8_Q9.txt

<section> DD health & life </section>

<title> </title>

I currently live with my mum and stepdad. I really hate my stepdad and I can't stand being around him. He constantly says things that are hurtful to both my mum and to me but he either doesn't realise what he says is hurtful or he just doesn't care. How do I stop myself from being so mad at him all the time?

2014_8_A9.txt

<section> DD health & life </section>

<title> </title>

It's not OK for anyone to be hurtful to someone else. I wonder if you've been able to talk with your mum about how you are feeling and what you've been experiencing with your stepdad? That can be really difficult, I know. It can also be quite difficult to live with someone who you are mad at all the time. Sometimes, families have meetings where they discuss issues and come up with solutions like agreeing on rules about how to behave with each other. Would you feel comfortable doing this? Maybe talk with your mum about setting this up? It can also be helpful to talk things over with someone you trust, either within or outside your family.

2014_8_Q10.txt

<section> DD health & life </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 16 years old and I have been wetting the bed all my life. It's so embarrassing and annoying, and I don't know why it happens! I'm still peeing at least five nights a month. It usually happens in patterns too. I can last 20 days, and then one night I'll pee, and for the next two or three weeks I'll pee the bed every night - or second, third, or fifth! What is wrong?

2014_8_A10.txt

<section> DD health & life </section>

<title> </title>

Bedwetting affects many teenagers - up to one in 100. As you've noticed, it reduces in frequency gradually and will eventually stop. I'm guessing you've tried various techniques, such as a 'pad and bell' alarm system, bladder training exercises and possibly even medication. These things can all be tried again, as what didn't work in the past could work now. Reduce the amount of fluid you drink in the evening, find out whether any medications or substances (including alcohol) you take are contributing and whether something easy to treat such as a urine infection is responsible - this might be more of an issue if you are in a sexual relationship. If you haven't heard of some or all of these things, then head on down to your local GP for a confidential chat. If it's been a few years since you got any medical advice, then it's definitely worth having your bedwetting issue re-assessed.

2014_8_Q11.txt

<section> DD health & life </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 15 years old and my parents have been divorced since I was four. Recently they have been fighting a lot and I've been caught in the middle. They always use me as a pawn in their arguments and if I have ever told any of them anything about the other one, they use it against each other when they fight. Please help me, I don't know what to do!

2014_8_A11.txt

<section> DD health & life </section>

<title> </title>

This is difficult stuff. You sound like you've tried to talk to each of them about how you're feeling, which is very brave, but sometimes parents are experiencing their own pain and may not be able to see what you're experiencing. Choosing the right time to talk with each of your parents can be crucial - when they have the time to sit with you and they aren't stressed or angry or preoccupied with something else. If it's too difficult to find the right time to speak with your parents, have you thought about who else you could talk with? Someone you trust and feel comfortable with like a friend, teacher or grandparent? Remember, you are not alone. Many families are also affected by separation and divorce. If you open up to friends, you may find that some of the people you talk to might be experiencing similar situations and they may be able to offer some support or helpful suggestions. Kids Helpline is also available to talk to.

2014_8_Q12.txt

<section> DD special get to know your boobs </section>

<title> </title>

I felt a lump, is it cancer?

2014_8_A12.txt

<section> DD special get to know your boobs </section>

<title> </title>

There are lumpy breasts and there are breast lumps. Breast tissue is made up of fat, glands (the milk-makers of the future) and fibres that hold it all together. Some women have more 'fibrous' breast tissue that feels lumpier or harder. A defined lump could be something hormonal like a cyst (swollen gland). Sometimes these go away as the hormones fluctuate and sometimes they persist and can be felt as lumps.

2014_8_Q13.txt

<section> DD special get to know your boobs </section>

<title> </title>

My nipples are really big.

2014_8_A13.txt

<section> DD special get to know your boobs </section>

<title> </title>

Nipples grow at a slightly faster rate than the breast in the middle part of puberty, so for a while the areolae (circles around the nipples) are quite big and the nipples are relatively pointy.

2014_8_Q14.txt

<section> DD special get to know your boobs </section>
<title> </title>

I've got an innie nipple, is this normal?

2014_8_A14.txt

<section> DD special get to know your boobs </section>
<title> </title>

An inverted nipple is where it sinks in rather than sticking out of the middle of the areola. These are normal. If girls have them before puberty, they might stay inverted or they might start to protrude. So nothing needs to be done about it at all.

2014_8_Q15.txt

<section> DD special get to know your boobs </section>
<title> </title>

I want to get breast surgery. Am I too young?

2014_8_A15.txt

<section> DD special get to know your boobs </section>
<title> </title>

Breasts can keep growing throughout the teenage years, depending on when they start developing, which is why any cosmetic surgery on breasts is best delayed until you are fully grown. Another reason for waiting a little while is that self-consciousness about body image is at its peak during this time, and it does settle down. What is it about your breasts that you are unhappy with? Do you feel they are too big, too small, asymmetrical or something else? A good place to start might be to talk to your mum, an older sister or aunty (or any adult you trust), or even have a confidential chat with your doctor. Sometimes knowing what to expect from the body changes you're going through can change your outlook.

2014_8_Q16.txt

<section> DD special get to know your boobs </section>
<title> </title>

Mine aren't the same size or shape.

2014_8_A16.txt

<section> DD special get to know your boobs </section>
<title> </title>

Uneven boobs are nothing to worry about and are often more noticeable while they're growing. One might hang lower than the other, and shapes between women vary a lot too. A whole cup-size difference in an adult woman is normal.

2014_8_Q17.txt

<section> DD special get to know your boobs </section>
<title> </title>

Why do I have stretch marks and my friends don't?

2014_8_A17.txt

<section> DD special get to know your boobs </section>
<title> </title>

Some people have a genetic predisposition to stretch marks and they can be visible with very fair skin. There's no cure, but keeping the skin away from the sun will help them fade with time.

2014_8_Q18.txt

<section> DD special get to know your boobs </section>

<title> </title>

My boobs have become really sore over the past month. What's going on?

2014_8_A18.txt

<section> DD special get to know your boobs </section>

<title> </title>

Generally speaking, breasts aren't painful. However, due to hormones that lead to breast-tissue growth, or fluctuations associated with the menstrual cycle (one or two weeks before), girls might experience discomfort or tenderness at certain times.

During early development (when the breast tissue start to expand beyond the 'breast bud') it's OK to feel sore. If necessary, painkillers will help it settle.

2014_8_Q19.txt

<section> DD special get to know your boobs </section>

<title> </title>

I've got large breasts and my back hurts. What can I do?

2014_8_A19.txt

<section> DD special get to know your boobs </section>

<title> </title>

Research into breast size and back pain has shown contradictory results, with some studies saying there's no relationship and others showing a greater likelihood of neck, shoulder or upper-back pain for women whose cup-size is a D or above. Part of the problem could be poor posture, and if your back pain is lower down (below your shoulder blades) then it's not due to breasts. Either way, back health is really important, so try to have a look online for some back exercises. Or, if it's really bad, your movement or exercise is restricted, or you have other symptoms such as pain shooting down your leg or arm, then make sure you go and get a full back check-up by your doctor. Women with large breasts find wearing sports bras or firm supportive bras more comfortable when they are exercising, so you could try this too.

2014_9_Q1.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

I cry over the simplest thing. Even if it's just talking to teachers, doing a speech at school, when I get in trouble or even just when I'm a little frustrated. I'm 15 and most other girls are mature and can handle worse situations. I can't control it and it annoys me because I'm scared people will think I'm a 'baby'. Is this normal for other girls my age and is there a way I can control it?

2014_9_A1.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

All of us react differently to situations and that's OK. Many girls we have talked with at Kids Helpline have also said they can find it difficult to control their reactions to different events or situations. You talk about crying easily over the simplest things and I'm wondering how things are for you at school and at home? Are there other things going on that are putting pressure on you and making it difficult for you? Sometimes when we feel like things are too much, it can affect how we then cope with other situations in our life. However, rather than trying to control how you are feeling in the moment, it can be helpful to look after yourself leading up to the times when you think you might feel upset. For example, some people find it relaxing to breathe deeply and focus on when they felt happy before entering a possibly stressful situation. Other people make sure they're spending plenty of time outside of school doing things they enjoy. Finally, while being upset can feel frustrating, it's not a reflection on your maturity. It can take a very mature person to recognise something is happening for them that they don't like and to start the process of seeking answers, which is exactly what you're doing now.

2014_9_Q2.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

I've just started at an all-girls private school. It's so strict and most of the girls aren't like me. I talked to my mum about it, but she said my sister went through being miserable there like me. I asked, 'what if I get depression'. She said, 'just go to the school counsellor'. I'm worried I'm depressed. I feel like I don't fit in.

2014_9_A2.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

Starting at a new school can be daunting, especially if we feel that we don't fit in or that others are different from us. But it's common for it to take a while to adjust to a new situation like this. Try to think about other situations that were hard at first, but became easier to deal with over time. The school counsellor may be a good person to talk to, as he/she would have spoken to lots of girls who have felt the same way. With time, you may find other girls in your year who are into the same things as you. But for the next little while, make sure you hang out with girls outside of school who you get along with so you're still having some fun in your day. If you think depression might be an issue for you, check out youthbeyondblue.com to find out more and learn where you can go for help.

2014_9_Q3.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 17 and my dad still kisses me on the lips. I think it's weird but I don't want to hurt his feelings. It's not sexual in any way, I just don't think it's appropriate anymore and I don't know how to tell him. Please help!

2014_9_A3.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

If your dad is doing something which makes you feel uncomfortable, you need to let him know. When a person's actions cross your personal boundaries, it's important to

respect yourself enough and have the confidence to express this and take a stand. If you're sure there's nothing sexual about the way he's kissing you (and it's more like a quick 'peck' which he has always done), then just a comment like, "I'm getting too old for this" should draw the line. When your dad goes to kiss you, point to your cheek and say something like, "Can you put it here?" Explain that you feel you're too old for lip kisses now. Expect it may create a bit of awkwardness, but reassure your dad you still love him. If he tries to challenge you on it, stay firm and tell him, "It's how I feel and I need you to respect that."

2014_9_Q4.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

My boyfriend and I have thought about having sex, but I don't think I'm ready. We've set a date but I don't know if I want to. My mum says that I should just do what my heart says, not my hormones, but my hormones seem louder than my heart in certain times when I'm with him. What should I do?

2014_9_A4.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

If you don't think that you're ready, you may already have your answer. Sex is a really significant decision, especially your first time. You will never have your first time again so you want to be really sure before you make that commitment to someone. Having sexual intercourse is so much more than acting on hormones or just experiencing a physical act - and that's something that many people find out the hard way. Sexual intercourse is also an emotional experience that can have a lasting impact on you. If you have sexual intercourse and there's a part of you that doesn't quite feel ready, you might feel hurt for quite a while. If you are in a loving relationship, your boyfriend will be prepared to wait for you to feel 100 per cent certain - and if not, then he is definitely not the right person to be giving your virginity to.

2014_9_Q5.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

Lately I've been feeling really down. I feel like I'm always getting left out of stuff at school and I try to hold back my tears throughout the day. I've thought about cutting myself, as well as suicide, but I get past it all because I don't want to ruin my body and I want to grow up and have kids.

2014_9_A5.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

You are going through a difficult time at the moment. Feeling alone and misunderstood, even maybe like you're invisible, must be very painful for you. It is normal to want others to notice when we are not acting like our usual selves, but unfortunately other people aren't always able to pick up on this. It doesn't mean they don't care. They might actually be surprised and also willing to help when they understand what you are going through. Even though you wish you didn't have to talk to anyone about it, it's worth taking the lead and telling someone you trust about how you're feeling. It's important that you seek help for your symptoms of depression -

especially to discuss your thoughts of self-harm and suicide. Always remember that you are never alone because there are people who can help you.

2014_9_Q6.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

Whenever I laugh when I'm with friends or just watching a funny video, I wet myself a little. I get embarrassed; I want to be able to muck around with my friends without wetting myself. It's been going on for months and I don't know what to do.

2014_9_A6.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

What you're describing here could be what is known as 'laugh incontinence' or 'giggle incontinence' - it usually causes you to really wet yourself a whole lot. This usually occurs in children and teenagers, but fortunately it stops by the time you're in your late teens. No-one really knows why it happens, but you can do some things to help the situation, such as going to the toilet before you meet up with your friends, wear a pad if you know you're going out, and practise tightening your pelvic floor muscles as much as you can (they're the muscles you use when you try and stop yourself from peeing), and sucking in your bellybutton towards your back and tailbone. Talk to your GP to make sure you don't have a bladder infection because that can cause you to wet yourself too.

2014_9_Q7.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 16 and I've been getting light blood stains or spotting between each period. The bleeding is light and lasts a few days, and my periods are normal. I had sex for the first time a few months ago but we used protection so it can't be anything to do with that can it? I can't go to a doctor without Mum knowing!

2014_9_A7.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

Caring for your sexual health is a sign of maturity and sometimes, like now, this means you need to see a doctor. Spotting in between periods can be a sign of ovulation (a natural process) but can signify an infection like chlamydia. It could also be a symptom of pregnancy, even if you have periods. If you're on the pill, it could be a side effect, and would make pregnancy unlikely, but it's still important to rule out chlamydia. You have the right to see a doctor confidentially wherever you live. When the doctor does tests, ask for bulk-billing and that no results are sent home. It might be reassuring to have your mum's support, so think about talking to her. Condoms help prevent pregnancy and STIs, so keep them handy at all times!

2014_9_Q8.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 17 and I have massive ears that stick out the side of my head. I don't remember the last time I tied my hair back. I spend hundreds of dollars on hair extensions to

cover them. It's come to the point where I can't look at myself without feeling upset about the way I look. I feel uncomfortable talking to people because I think they're starting at my Dumbo ears!

2014_9_A8.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

It can be really tough to come to terms with and accept parts of ourselves that we wish were different. Sometimes it is easy to feel like, 'If I just had better XYZ then I would be happy and confident.' The problem with this way of thinking is that the best sort of confidence, the sort that is actually sustaining and enriching, comes from within us, not from what's on the outside. What do you think makes a good friend? Yep, that's right! It's all of the personality qualities such as kindness or being fun and quirky, not the stuff on the outside. If you accept yourself the way you are, then you are much more likely to be perceived as confident and someone others want to be around.

2014_9_Q9.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

All of my friends say I am too tough on myself, but my skin is too pale and I don't like exercise. I have been toying with anorexia - I don't eat that much anymore and it concerns me and my friends. My parents say I should be happy the way I am but I can't; I'm not skinny enough. I'm skipping my meals and people are concerned about my health. What should I do?

2014_9_A9.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

It sounds like you're feeling a lot of anxiety around not being good enough. You've said that you feel like losing weight will help these feelings, but the reality is it won't stop these feelings; it will make these feelings become more intense. Anorexia nervosa is a very serious and often life-threatening illness that can imprison a sufferer for many years, and some don't ever recover. It's an illness that tricks people into thinking they need to lose weight, even if they're severely underweight, and can cause people to engage in eating-disordered behaviours that prevents them from living a full and happy life. If you're struggling to eat because you worry about weight gain, reach out to your parents, teachers or friends as this illness can be prevented.

2014_9_Q10.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I have had a condition called Dermatillomania (compulsive skin-picking) for as long as I can remember. I spend hours in the bathroom looking for anything I can pick at and it has really brought my self-esteem down. I always feel angry and depressed, and I never really want to leave the house anymore. Only my mum knows about the whole thing. I'm too ashamed and embarrassed to talk about it to anyone and it's not like my mum can actually keep an eye on me 24/7. I just really want to overcome this condition.

2014_9_A10.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

Some doctors think that picking on your skin is one way to 'self soothe' - sort of like sucking your thumb, chewing on your fingernails or picking the skin on your feet; at first it makes you feel better, but then you end up doing it so much that it can cause infections and scarring and it ends up restricting your life. Wanting to overcome the problem is a positive step, and getting in touch with a counsellor who can help you deal with it is the next step. With time, patience and new skills, you can make gradual improvements. Talk to your mum about how you always feel angry and depressed and maybe she can go with you to see your doctor.

2014_10_Q1.txt

<section> DD love & body </section>

<title> </title>

I am a relatively happy person, but every now and then I experience symptoms of depression. Nothing bad is going on in my life at the moment. But sometimes I wake up and feel unhappy, and other times I only have to think one negative thought before I start to feel bad again. I'm a bit worried because sometimes I go as far as self-harm. This has been going on for two years now, but I haven't told anyone because I don't think I have a real reason to feel like this. What's wrong with me?

2014_10_A1.txt

<section> DD love & body </section>

<title> </title>

It sounds like you've had some hard times over the past two years. It's not uncommon for people to feel really down and not be able to figure out why, or believe they don't have 'good enough' reasons to feel that way. But it's what you're feeling that matters most. It sounds like you hurting yourself is your way of trying to cope with strong feelings. Your first step is to decide that you want to handle these down moments differently. There are effective strategies for getting through these moments - check out youthbeyondblue.com. But it's important you don't deal with this by yourself - the people who care about you will want to help out. If you aren't ready to talk to an adult, you could try calling a helpline. Finding the right support will help you turn your negative thoughts around and get excited about life again.

2014_10_Q2.txt

<section> DD love & body </section>

<title> </title>

All my life I've liked guys. I've never been into girls, but recently I've had a fuzzy feeling towards my bestie. I don't know if it's love or just friendship. I still like guys, I just don't know if I'm into girls as well. Please help.

2014_10_A2.txt

<section> DD love & body </section>

<title> </title>

During the teen years it is a normal part of development to have generalised feelings of attraction - for males AND females. Physical attraction often grows out of emotional intimacy. Many girls experience intimate emotional relationships with their girlfriends. These feelings neither indicate nor eliminate the possibility you're more attracted to girls than guys. Sexuality can be a complex thing to work out and it's

important to give yourself some time. If you are gay, the feelings will continue. You will not be able to ignore them.

2014_10_Q3.txt

<section> DD love & body </section>

<title> </title>

I've just found out an old friend from gymnastics smokes and drinks (underage). I'm getting worried about her and don't see her enough to tell her. She's quite negative about herself on Instagram and Qooh.me. What should I do?

2014_10_A3.txt

<section> DD love & body </section>

<title> </title>

First up, it's important to check your sources. How did you find out your friend was drinking and smoking? Could it be a rumour that someone is spreading or do you know for a fact that it's true? If you are unsure, think about ways you might find out, like talking to whoever is saying these things about your friend. It seems from what you can see on Instagram and Qooh.me that she's having a tough time. Would you be able to invite her to do something with you so you can ask her how she's going and let her know that you are there for her? If you can't see her in person, could you make contact with her on Facebook or Qooh.me to let her know you're thinking of her and are happy to talk about anything she wants? Having a friend to talk to - who isn't judging you - can make a difference in how people feel about themselves and what's happening in their lives.

2014_10_Q4.txt

<section> DD love & body </section>

<title> </title>

My boobs are growing differently and it's worrying me. I think my right breast's bigger than my left. Is this normal?

2014_10_A4.txt

<section> DD love & body </section>

<title> </title>

It's very normal to have one breast larger than the other, especially during breast development, which is gradual and takes years. Muscles under the breast tissue can grow unevenly (for example, if you're right-handed, your right breast can look a bit bigger). Once they've finished growing, it's common to see one breast slightly smaller, higher, fuller, lumpier or softer than the other. Nipples and the tissue around them can be different shapes and sizes too. If you're worried about the size difference or anything else you've noticed, see your GP or health advisor to have them checked out.

2014_10_Q5.txt

<section> DD love & body </section>

<title> </title>

All of the girls in my year have bigger breasts than me and it makes me feel insecure. I also have wider hips than them. What affects breast growth during puberty? Does exercising affect breast growth? Please help!

2014_10_A5.txt

<section> DD love & body </section>

<title> </title>

Feeling self-conscious is due to the rapid changes of puberty. The brain - including your thoughts and emotions - is also changing and naturally makes teens compare themselves to others. Your physical development is absolutely on track, your breasts will continue to grow and your hips and body shape will keep changing over the next few years. Exercising only affects breast growth if you are underweight. It can be affected by nutrition and being healthy, the rest is up to nature and genetics. Breast shape and size can change throughout life, with hormonal influences such as pregnancy, contraception and breastfeeding as well as being over or underweight. Feeling insecure is more concerning. Talk to your mum or sister for some reassurance, but try to look for things that make you feel confident. Try to focus on the things you like about your changing body. The rest will just fall into place naturally.

2014_10_Q6.txt

<section> DD love & body </section>

<title> </title>

I've developed lots of dark hair all over my body, like on my stomach, chest and back. I don't understand why I have this very noticeable hair when others who have darker hair than me have no belly or chest hair at all! I'm self-conscious about it and I never wear crop tops or singlets. I've tried things like hair removal cream but it only works for a couple of days before the hair starts appearing again. I'm scared this will make it come back, way worse over time. I'm so alone with this problem! Is there something wrong with me?

2014_10_A6.txt

<section> DD love & body </section>

<title> </title>

What you describe sounds like a possible hormone imbalance that has led to increased body hair. If this is the case, you might have noticed acne, irregular periods and possible problems with your weight. If this sounds like you, definitely pop into your GP for a check-up. Even if you don't have all of these symptoms, you could still get assessed. Puberty leads to girls having a bit more facial hair, as well as hairier arms, thighs and occasionally a line of hair from the middle of the pubic bone straight up to the belly button. There should not be dark hair (whatever your racial background) on the back, chest or other parts of the stomach. Removing hair with creams, waxing or shaving is only temporary - whereas if you can get an accurate assessment you might be able to do something more permanent.

2014_10_Q7.txt

<section> DD love & body </section>

<title> </title>

I am confused about the whole circumcision thing. Why do guys get a circumcision? Are non-circumcised penises unclean?

2014_10_A7.txt

<section> DD love & body </section>

<title> </title>

You are not alone when it comes to being confused and curious! There are many reasons for male circumcisions: cultural, religious and medical, to name just a few. And it's usually performed when the guys are infants or toddlers, so it's often not their choice by the time they're 'exposing' themselves to their sexual partners. Non-circumcised penises are NOT unclean - guys who don't wash themselves are, whether circumcised or not. Maintaining good hygiene is important for both guys and gals, so regular washing down under and changing underwear daily is the go, OK? And while we're still (down) there, remember that everyone looks a bit different, so no teasing or making fun of what your partner's genitals look like - there is no perfect shape or size!

2014_11_Q1.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

I'm having some trouble at home. My mum and brother are always fighting and I don't know if he's just going through a phase, or if it's a lasting thing. Help!

2014_11_A1.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

It sounds like things are tough for you with your mum and brother fighting. All families face challenging situations at times and this can include arguments and fights. It can be scary and confusing for everyone involved. Relationships can be good one minute and not so good the next, for different reasons. Communication issues can sometimes play a big part because family members may find it difficult to say what they're thinking and/or feeling and this could also be misunderstood. I'm wondering if you've had the opportunity to talk with your mum about how you're feeling? She may not know that this is having such an effect on you and this might help. You can also get in contact with a professional - try calling Kids Helpline and having a confidential chat about what is happening to you.

2014_11_Q2.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

How do you know if you are ready to have sex with someone? I have been with my boyfriend for ages. He lives pretty far away so we mostly talk on the internet but when I see him I just want to be close to him. I am scared of having sex with him in case I do it wrong. I am 17 so it is legal, I looked it up.

2014_11_A2.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

Knowing when it is right to have sex is a decision that differs from person to person, and is influenced by a variety of factors. We usually base this decision on beliefs and values as well as attraction and impulse. When to start having sex is a very important question to consider before doing it. Sometimes people forget to think about whether they are even emotionally ready to make this step. Sex is a both physical and emotional experience and that sometimes surprises people. It's important to give yourself time to come to a decision that is based on thinking as well as feeling. Feelings come and go, and can even trick us into making decisions that in the long

term we regret. Our way of thinking is a lot more reliable, especially when we explore our thinking with someone mature and trusted.

2014_11_Q3.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

Hello. This seems like a really weird question but when I'm around my family and friends, I'm so shy that I can't act 'normal'. I have a younger sister and she is the most confident person I know and I feel completely horrible because I'm the opposite to her.

2014_11_A3.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

A lot of young people who call Kids Helpline say they experience similar feelings. I'm wondering what it was like when you felt you had confidence? What has changed from then to now? I'm also wondering what you mean when you say that you can't act 'normal' around your family and friends? 'Normal' can mean lots of different things. Try to accept yourself for who you are. This also applies to how you feel about your weight and body. It's important to accept that there are some things about appearance you have control over while other things you don't. A person's shape is largely determined by genetic make-up, stage of development, diet and lifestyle. Try and be your own cheer squad, and give yourself a break.

2014_11_Q4.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

My best friend is really spontaneous and always lashes out at me for doing nothing. She embarrasses me when we're talking to my crush and is mean to me when we're just talking normally to our friendship group. She's changed completely since we were little. I always just go along with it, but I really want to get away from it all. Whenever I try to confront her, she says it's my fault. Please help!

2014_11_A4.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

What you are describing is bullying or abusive behaviour. What I can't tell from your story is how long this has been happening. Maybe in the beginning you didn't have a strong sense of how wrong this kind of behaviour was, but I can hear that this has now changed for you. You sound very clear about how inappropriate her pushing and put-downs are. It's not unusual for bullies to respond by blaming the person who takes a stand against their behaviour, so try not to be put off by this. It's really important for you to have a strong support system around you, whether that may be through friends, family, teachers or a counsellor when facing this kind of challenge. Without this support, you may be in danger of believing the lies that this person would like you to believe. It's also important to have this support because there's a possibility that when we take a stand in a relationship for what is right, the other person is unable to accept it and the relationship ends. I'm guessing this relationship is not all bad and so there may be some things that you might be scared about losing or you'll sadly miss. Please

know that this treatment by your friend is wrong and you taking a stand against this kind of behaviour is right.

2014_11_Q5.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

I am in love with my boss. I think that he's smart and friendly and really nice. I know we can't be together and that makes me sad, but I just think I am so in love with him I will never feel the same about any other guy. Why do I like him so much?

2014_11_A5.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

Having strong feelings of attraction toward someone who is kind, nice and in a position that holds some power or authority is not unusual. It is recognised that power and position are very attractive when that is coupled with kindness, it can be confusing. For example, a nurse or a doctor can leave us feeling 'loved' because of their compassionate nature. There is another part of this story that is significant. When we know we will not be able to act on our feelings and they remain untested by real experience, they often grow in intensity. I know many people who, like you, have been attracted strongly to someone who is not realistically accessible to them but have gone on to experience real, significant, passionate and very meaningful relationships with other people.

2014_11_Q6.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

Wearing stockings for my uniform through winter means I get really itchy down there and sometimes when I stand up after a class the chair is wet, like sweaty. Is this normal? It's embarrassing!

2014_11_A6.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

If your stockings are made from synthetic fibres (they're usually nylon) then they can trap sweat, which can irritate your skin and make it itchy. On the other hand, having air trapped around a sweaty genital area for many hours can sometimes increase the likelihood of a yeast overgrowth, called thrush, which causes an itchy vaginal discharge. Both problems can be helped by changing to cotton tights. Make sure that stockings or tights have a cotton gusset to help the genital area breathe. If the itch is severe, doesn't settle after you change clothes or if you have other symptoms, such as stinging when you urinate, go for a check-up for thrush - it's easy to treat. Having your period doesn't make you sweat more, but if your flow is heavy, change your pad more frequently to keep the moisture down.

2014_11_Q7.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I recently noticed that after P.E. class I've been getting this white/blue goo in my undies. I think it has to do with sweat. It's like I'm now an Avatar!!!

2014_11_A7.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

White 'goo' is what doctors call vaginal secretion. It's something that all girls get as they go through puberty. As your oestrogen (one of the sex hormones) level increases, the vagina grows and the lining inside it changes, therefore, there is more blood flow and more fluid. The cervix (opening of the uterus) also starts to produce mucus which adds to the amount of fluid in your undies. This vaginal fluid could be runny, or thicker and 'gooey'. It may be clear or white but does not smell offensive and does not cause any discomfort. Blue 'goo' on the other hand is quite unusual, but I suspect it's normal secretion or sweat from exercise, or both getting mixed, that is becoming stained from clothing, underwear or something you are putting on your skin. See what happens if you wear white or skin coloured underwear and clothing, and if the mystery remains, head to your doctor to check it out!

2014_11_Q8.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

It's getting near summer now and I have a really bad hair problem. There's some on my stomach, back, breast area and bottom. I was just wondering if there is any way of getting rid of it without waxing, trimming or laser treatment? Is there anything I can eat to reduce it?

2014_11_A8.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

Body hair can be light, dark, sparse or abundant, depending on your genes and racial background. It's all part of puberty and the incredible changing body that can take a while to get used to (often with a fair bit of angst along the way). Removing body hair goes in and out of fashion, and is a personal choice. Shaving, waxing and depilatory creams are all temporary options, whereas electrolysis and laser are permanent (and expensive). What you've noticed, however is body hair growing beyond the usual places in females (it should not grow on the back, bottom, chest area or across the stomach - except in the line from your pubic bone to your belly button). So if you want to find a solution, I'd recommend going to see your doctor to look at your hormone levels (and she will ask a few other questions) because reducing it might need a little bit of medical help.

2014_11_Q9.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 14 and I've had my period for three years now. This would have been my fourth but I haven't had my period for seven months. I have no idea why it's happened because I haven't had sex. I did change my diet a lot and I exercise on a daily basis, but I don't know if that's the reason as to why I'm not getting my period any more. Please help me out!

2014_11_A9.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

It's entirely possible that a change in diet and exercise regime has caused your periods to change or stop temporarily. Weight gain or weight loss, or sometimes stress, can cause this to happen. Periods are regulated by sensitive hormones that work in your brain and ovaries. As it has been seven months since your last period, it's a good idea to be checked out by your GP because there could be something important that can be managed early. Long gaps between periods or not having periods at all might be troublesome later on in life, so it's best to be proactive as early as possible.

2014_11_Q10.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

About two weeks ago, my nipples became incredibly itchy and very uncomfortable. I had no other symptoms until about a week later, where instead of just my nipples, the entire area around them became red, dry and even itchier. I am 14 and have never engaged in any sort of sexual activity. I checked online (although it's not always reliable!) as I'm too scared to ask someone. The internet said that it could be a change in soap or laundry detergent? It's getting out of hand and I desperately want it to stop. Any ideas?

2014_11_A10.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

You're right about the internet! Not everything you read online is correct - although it's a good start. Because it's delicate, the nipple and the skin around it can get red, itchy and generally 'angry-looking' for all sorts of reasons, including eczema, dermatitis or infection. And because it's itchy, you scratch it which then becomes a vicious cycle of itch, scratch, irritation and more scratching, etc. If simple moisturisers aren't enough (you have to be patient and put quite a bit on, regularly), and you're avoiding soaps and antiseptics, you might need to think about your bra. I'd suggest cotton-lined bras. Sometimes you need special creams; your GP will advise you on what's best. It's a common problem that's easily fixed. It's also very unlikely that what you're describing is breast cancer because it's happening to both breasts at the same time, but it's probably another good reason to have them checked out by your GP. See if your mum or a friend can come with you if you're a bit nervous about seeing your GP alone.

2014_12_Q1.txt

<section> DD love & body </section>

<title> </title>

I am 17 and have become close friends with two girls recently. One of the girls has a brother who is a year older than me. When I go over to her house, he'll spend some time on his own and then will come over and talk with us. I feel like he's flirting with me, especially when we are talking and we lock eyes. He can be sarcastic and joke around or he touches my waist playfully. I think I like him, but I don't want to give my feelings away or put my feelings right out there and then become embarrassed because he might not like me. What do I do?

2014_12_A1.txt

<section> DD love & body </section>

<title> </title>

This can be a tricky situation for girlfriends. If you are interested in exploring a relationship with the brother, you may be placing your mateship with your friend in jeopardy. If you think you can trust your friends, maybe start by saying "I think I might be developing some interest/feelings for 'x'". If you say nothing and end up going out with him, his sister may think you have used your relationship with her to get to him. If it doesn't work out with him you may lose a lot in the process. The other advantage in putting your feelings out there is that maybe you will get some feedback. If he is only flirting then it is likely that it won't become more than it is now. If it's more than flirting, then one of you will need to take a risk, put yourself out there and arrange to meet outside of this setting. It's usually scary to show your feelings for someone when you don't know if they'll be reciprocated. Take small steps to get more of his attention.

2014_12_Q2.txt

<section> DD love & body </section>

<title> </title>

My friendship group is falling apart. We used to be so close, but now everyone has split off into mini groups. Can I save our group?

2014_12_A2.txt

<section> DD love & body </section>

<title> </title>

I don't think anyone can 'save' a group; I don't even think it's a good idea to take on that challenge. While it is really understandable that you may want to save what was once very special, people do change. When we try to hang on to relationships and want them to stay the same way, we are trying to control something that is ultimately uncontrollable. This usually gives rise to feelings of anxiety. It's as though our logical brain understands that we are trying to achieve the impossible. Maybe the challenge is to start to think about what a different future could look like. As you think about this and navigate the tricky space that you are in, maybe think about what kind of friend you want to be in the new relationships. Is it important to you not to take sides, not to criticise your friends, to respect people? While it might be a real challenge to hang on to these values going through this, it will be worth it in the long run.

2014_12_Q3.txt

<section> DD love & body </section>

<title> </title>

I went over to my best friend's house and caught her giving my boyfriend a blow job! I was shocked and upset. I don't know what to do when I see them now.

2014_12_A3.txt

<section> DD love & body </section>

<title> </title>

I think the important thing to be clear about is that you haven't done anything wrong or anything to be embarrassed about. You still have your dignity and can maintain your self-respect. This is a significant betrayal - both from your friend and your boyfriend. You are likely to feel extremely angry and hurt. Two significant relationships have been damaged. It is good to allow some of the emotion to settle before engaging in communication - this may be a tall order. It might help to have a

loyal friend or support person with you when you confront both your boyfriend and/or friend. A good start is to say, "When I saw X, I felt Y. I would like Z." If you launch into calling them names, it's unlikely to give you lasting satisfaction. It may take some time before you even know what you feel or want to say. Give yourself plenty of time and surround yourself with people who love and support you, or maybe talk about your feelings to a counsellor or trusted adult.

2014_12_Q4.txt

<section> DD love & body </section>

<title> </title>

I'm falling out of love with my girlfriend, but I don't want to hurt her. What do I do?

2014_12_A4.txt

<section> DD love & body </section>

<title> </title>

First, I'm wondering how long you have been together? It is normal after six to 18 months to experience a significant decrease in 'feelings'. During the honeymoon period people appear more perfect, the chemistry is more extreme so the physical relationship can seem extremely exciting. After this period, you generally notice your feelings quieten down, you notice differences and incompatibilities, and there are compromises and confrontations. If there is a lot of good in the relationship, it's worth making the effort to get through this transition. If there isn't, this is usually when relationships end. Most people agree more hurt is caused by not telling the truth. To gently tell someone the truth is a very respectful thing to do. If she still has feelings for you, it will hurt - there is no avoiding this. However, being honest is a way of respecting the value you place on her and the relationship you have had.

2014_12_Q5.txt

<section> DD love & body </section>

<title> </title>

My new boyfriend is a terrible kisser. All he does is push his tongue in my mouth. I recently found out that I am his first kiss. What should I do?

2014_12_A5.txt

<section> DD love & body </section>

<title> </title>

Giving feedback about what you like and what you don't dig can be a very sensitive conversation to have. Sometimes it's helpful to ask yourself, 'how would I like to be told these things?' It often helps to give positive feedback for what you do like, even if it requires honing in on one very small example of your preference. You've mentioned that you are his first kiss; it might be worth hanging in there in case practise makes a difference... that is, if you enjoy the rest of the package.

2014_12_Q6.txt

<section> DD love & body </section>

<title> </title>

I'm sure I'm schizophrenic. I've been experiencing a lot of paranoia and can wake up in the middle of the night crying, which can really stop my focus with school! The worst part is, I've tried telling my parents but they just won't listen to me. Who do you think I should talk to?

2014_12_A6.txt

<section> DD love & body </section>

<title> </title>

This must be a scary time for you but try to take things one step at a time. It's hard to know what's going on without seeing a health professional. If your parents won't listen to you, try talking to the school counsellor and ask for their help to bring it up again with your parents. It's important you see a doctor as soon as possible.

Schizophrenia is a condition which interferes with the way you experience reality. It can cause your thinking to become confused, make you believe or sense things that aren't true and impacts on your mood and behaviour in a range of ways. There are treatments that work, and the earlier people seek help the better (check out Headspace for more information - headspace.org.au). But trying to stay calm and getting to a doctor to find out what's going on is the most important thing you need to do at the moment. Most of all, try not to worry.

2014_12_Q7.txt

<section> DD life </section>

<title> </title>

I recently had a HUGE fight with my (now) ex-best friends over absolutely nothing! I ended up ringing one of them and apologising for the tiny thing I did wrong but she just wouldn't listen to me. Instead, she acted like I was the only one in the wrong. We're in every class together at school and all of my friends are her friends. It seems like she's trying to take over them so I can't hang out with my pals and I've had to hang out with different people. It's so bad that I don't want to go to school knowing that they'll be there but I have to because I've already had too much time off. What do I do?

2014_12_A7.txt

<section> DD life </section>

<title> </title>

It sounds like it's been tough for you. Firstly, I want to say well done for trying to be open and honest with your friend about how you are feeling. It was a very brave thing to do, as those conversations can be really difficult. Many young people who call us at Kids Helpline talk about falling out with their friends and feeling left out from the group. It sounds like you've tried to make new friends, but would prefer to hang out with your old ones. Have you tried talking to some of your mutual friends about how you are feeling? It's important to have someone to talk to about what's happening to you.

2014_12_Q8.txt

<section> DD life </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 14 and I've been having a lot of issues at home. My parents fight with my brother a lot, who may have Asperger's (it hasn't been diagnosed yet). On more than one occasion he has hit me and left me with bruises on my arm. About a month ago I decided I had had enough and wanted to self-harm but I stopped in time. I said I would never do this again. How can I handle my anger so that this doesn't ever reoccur for me?

2014_12_A8.txt

<section> DD life </section>

<title> </title>

Your family is facing a lot of stress, so it makes sense that you're feeling really strong emotions. People hide it but every family has its challenges, so you're not alone. It's good you've decided harming yourself isn't the way to try to cope with your anger, but it's important you don't try to manage this on your own. If you feel you can't talk to your parents, try the school counsellor or call beyondblue (1300 224 636). Your family is facing issues you need to work through together, which may take time. At the moment you need a safe outlet for your anger. Talking, exercise, writing a journal or anything that gives you a release are ways to cope. Learn what your triggers are, so you can do something before the anger becomes overwhelming.

2014_12_Q9.txt

<section> DD life </section>

<title> </title>

All my life I have dreamed about being an actress so I took classes, but recently I felt like I didn't want to be that any more and now I feel lost. I don't know what to do with my life. I am now 13 and I feel like I'm growing up way too fast and I need some career to aim for. All my friends say I'm pretty and that I should be a model but I feel that I would be rejected because of my height (pretty short). Please help, I feel depressed not knowing where to go in life.

2014_12_A9.txt

<section> DD life </section>

<title> </title>

I know it feels like there's a lot of pressure to know what career you'll aim for but did you know that most people change careers five to seven times in their life? So learning how to embrace change and bounce from one interest to another is a good skill to learn. There are so many activities you can try to help figure out what you like, and you'll learn gradually what type of work suits you best. By the time you start working, there will be new jobs that don't even exist now - and one of them might be perfect for you. So there's hope you'll find a job you really enjoy - and then, you might stumble into a different kind of work you enjoy. And this might keep happening for the rest of your life - and wouldn't that make for a really amazing and interesting career?

2014_12_Q10.txt

<section> DD life </section>

<title> </title>

I have been having trouble with one of my friends. She has been really nasty to me lately and is turning everyone against me. The other day she stayed home because of me and her mum came over to talk to my mum about it. Everyone says I haven't done anything and she's just making all of this stuff up. Can you please help me?

2014_12_A10.txt

<section> DD life </section>

<title> </title>

Having trouble with your friends can be really common in your teenage years. I'm wondering what prompted this change in your friendship. It must be hard to hear that

she is turning other friends against you. But have you tried to talk to your friend about why things have changed? And have you had a chance to talk to your mum about the conversation she had with your friend's mum? It may be helpful if your mum, as well as your friend and her mum get together to talk about what's been happening.

Sometimes it can be helpful to have an open discussion with adults, who can ensure that everyone is heard in the discussion and people feel safe when raising their concerns.

2015_1_Q1.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 17 years old, I don't go to school and I don't have a job. This means that I rarely have anything to do and so I stay up after 2am most nights and sleep past 12pm every day. I don't like myself for it, and I've tried to alter the pattern but I don't know how to. Help!

2015_1_A1.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

Every teenager's body clock is different from that of a child, and it makes you want to go to sleep and wake up later. But what you are experiencing now is a more disrupted sleeping pattern. It's certainly possible to retrain your brain back to its natural pattern. Not having a regular, daily routine is a common cause of any sleeping problem, but it's good to also rule out: stress, depression, anxiety, too much caffeine, or other substances including alcohol, and a general lack of fitness and an imbalanced diet. Avoid consuming caffeine after lunch, as well as engaging with 'blue light' (computers and other devices) late at night; they can stop you from getting to sleep. Make yourself get up at the same time each morning and give yourself a routine, such as walking, jogging or doing housework. There might also be volunteering options - just do anything that will give you a reason to get going. If you need help with looking for work or study options, look up youth services in your local area and start talking to people for advice. You can definitely get through this, so hang in there!

2015_1_Q2.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

Everyone always gives my friend compliments about how she looks, saying she is lucky because she is skinny. But even though she smiles and nods, I can tell it puts pressure on her to look a certain way. Is it possible to feel bad about your body even if you are skinny? How can I help her out?

2015_1_A2.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

Yes, you absolutely can. You should never judge a book by its cover. The girl who everyone admires for being skinny can actually be struggling with anorexia or another eating disorder. This kind of talk is just as damaging for that person. If your friend is feeling this way, it is important that you encourage her to use positive strategies to counteract these thoughts. She can listen to upbeat music and remind herself what her

body can do. Be sure to let her know that you value her as a friend regardless of the way she looks.

2015_1_Q3.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

My breasts are really sore all the time. Sometimes they hurt to touch, which can make sleeping difficult. I also have lumps under my breast. I have been told it's just hard tissue that hasn't fully softened yet but it has been like that for four years or so. Do you think I should be worried?

2015_1_A3.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

Four years or lumpy of sore breasts is worth looking into. Although, that doesn't mean you have to be worried about anything sinister because that's extremely unlikely, but you shouldn't be suffering. It's possible that you have fibrocystic breasts. This means your breast tissue is sensitive to hormonal changes in the menstrual cycle and each month you may develop very tender or painful cysts (fluid-filled swellings). Sometimes these cysts don't go away and remain like firm or hard lumps. It's good to have your breasts checked out by a doctor first. They're used to examining breasts and giving advice about swellings, any lumps and tenderness, so even if you think it feels a bit awkward, you will feel reassured afterwards knowing that everything is OK and the soreness can go away.

2015_1_Q4.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

How do you learn to love your body?

2015_1_A4.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

When it comes to learning how to love your body, it's about understanding how your body works, the power of your mind and feeling good in your own skin. It's important to do this rather than trying to conform to an unrealistic idealised body image. It might not be easy, but being aware of your attitude towards your body will help you be conscious of the way you talk to yourself about it. This process is called self-talk. Here are some tips to help you out: avoid looking in the mirror and making any negative comments about the way you look. Stop comparing yourself to other people; remember, everyone is different so comparing yourself to others is pointless. Instead, celebrate all of your differences and learn to love the things that make you unique. Last but not least, you must ALWAYS practise self-acceptance because we are worth so much more than what we look like. It's important to train our minds to focus on all of the positive attributes of our body and health.

2015_1_Q5.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I am 13 and I got my period at the beginning of this year. I really hate having it - it makes me feel too grown up. I feel like I'm not ready for all of this! I know that dancers don't get their period until later on because they have no body fat on them, so does that mean if I get really fit, or something like that, my period might stop?

2015_1_A5.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

Sometimes the changes of puberty can feel a bit overwhelming. Remind yourself that getting periods is natural, and a sign that your body is fit and healthy, but also part of a longer process of maturing. There's plenty of time before you're all grown up. Most girls will get their first period between the age of 10 and 16 years old, and they need to be a certain body weight and have enough body fat for this to happen. From an evolutionary point of view, this is because women need to have a basic nutritional level to have babies. Many dancers and elite athletes do not maintain sufficient body fat to have regular periods but this is actually reversible. Weight loss, erratic eating patterns and illness can also impact on periods. Getting really fit is good for your health, however trying to put a stop to your periods deliberately by losing weight is definitely not. Would it help if you could have a chat with your mum or trusted adult about how you're feeling? You could also talk to your doctor.

2015_1_Q6.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

My mum has an eating disorder. I didn't realise until PE class and then it just clicked; she has all of the symptoms. Am I supposed to be the parent here and talk to her? How do I even do that?

2015_1_A6.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

If your mum has an eating disorder, you might want to encourage her to speak to a close friend or perhaps a family member. Remember that there might be a possibility that your mum may be embarrassed, anxious or might not recognise there's anything wrong. She could respond with anger or denial, which doesn't mean that she doesn't have a problem. Make sure that you do this in a place where you can have an open conversation. Don't approach her around food. Let her know you care about her and you will support her through every stage of the process. Give your mum some time to talk about how she's feeling before you encourage her to seek help.

2015_1_Q7.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

Lately I've been pretty confused about my sexuality. I'm 17 and up until recently I've considered myself bisexual, and I came out to my friends and family. But recently I just don't know. I have always felt that I was equally into girls as well as boys, but now that I have to think hard about it, I feel that I'm interested in girls in a romantic AND sexual way, whereas I'm only interested in boys in a romantic way. Is this kind of thinking normal? How does this affect my sexuality? If you could give me any tips on how to deal with this, I'd be so grateful!

2015_1_A7.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

Many young people call us at Kids Helpline to try and understand their sexuality. Trying to work out who you are and who you are attracted to can be very confusing - especially when you're going through this as a teenager. Have you been able to have a chat about how you're feeling with anyone? Many young people are curious about their sexuality and they say that they feel frustrated because they are not sure how to work it all out. There is no big rush to define who you are and to find out who you are attracted to. Being attracted to someone of the same sex is only one part of what makes you who you are, because being who you are as a person is what's most important.

2015_1_Q8.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

I have had this boyfriend I've been on and off with. I am so obsessed with him and he told me he loved me on the same day I gave him head for the first time. But the next day, he went to a party that I wasn't invited to and cheated on me. After that, he dumped me and made me feel horrible. He made me beg for him to be mine again. Right now, we have been dating for a month and on my 16th birthday we made love (both our first times). He said he loves me and tells me he loves me every day but I am scared that he might just be using me for sex. I just need to know if he is using me. Help, please!

2015_1_A8.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

It sounds like it has been a bit confusing for you, Amber. You have known your boyfriend now for a long time and you have strong feelings for him. I am wondering what makes you think that he might be using you for sex. I am also thinking about how you feel regarding the decision to have sex with him in the first place. Having sex can be a huge decision for a lot of young people. Some of our young people give us a call to talk this through and to determine whether they are really ready to engage in sex. Communication in intimate relationships is important - have you been able to talk to your boyfriend about how all of this makes you feel? There are also other things that are very important when you're in a relationship: respect, trust and honesty. I encourage you to go to the Kids Helpline website and look at our hot topic on dating and/or give us a call if you need to talk.

2015_2_Q1.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 13 and have been shaving my pubic hair for the last three months because it sticks out when I'm wearing swimwear. It grows back with two or three hairs in one follicle and the area is extremely itchy. I have tried plucking but it gave me a nasty rash which I treated with antibacterial body wash. I just can't tell anyone because it's too embarrassing, but I want to know how to remove it without getting a rash or becoming itchy. Please help!

2015_2_A1.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

Shaving itches and rashes are definitely a pain! You have a few options: Firstly, don't worry about removing your pubic hair. There's no rule that says girls have to have pube-free skin or can't wear bathers with a bit of hair showing. If that feels particularly impossible for you, then you could try trimming the pubes in the bikini area without shaving them completely. They won't stick out of your bathers but you will avoid the other problems. If you do want to remove your bikini line completely, any method can cause a rash. If you want to shave, use a very clean and sharp razor, lather up the skin with hypoallergenic soap or shaving foam and shave as clean and close as possible. Apply a soothing moisturiser immediately (tea tree oil is great, too). You could also speak to your mum or a good beautician, who could advise you of different alternatives.

2015_2_Q2.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 16 years old and have recently started masturbating. I noticed that there is a large lump (about twice the size of a marble) about 3cm inside my vagina. I have never heard of anyone else having this type of thing. I'm really worried it might be something serious. Can you please help me out?

2015_2_A2.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

Try not to worry. The lump could be your cervix. The cervix is the opening of the uterus, and it protrudes down into the top of your vagina. It's firm, having a consistency a bit like the firm tip of your nose. It's also possible you're feeling the texture of your vagina wall, which has 'ridges' of tissue, but sometimes these are mistaken for lumps. Just inside the vagina are some glands which can get swollen and might feel lumpy as well. Sexually transmitted lumps are often due to warts, but the cervical cancer vaccine given in school will also prevent most genital warts. However, if you're worried, be sure to ask your doctor for some advice.

2015_2_Q3.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I'm almost 14 and I have a really hairy chest and stomach. I also have red and purple stretch marks on my stomach and white stretch marks under my arms. All of this makes me really self-conscious at home and when I have to get changed at school. Should I be worried?

2015_2_A3.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

Stretchmarks are a common occurrence during puberty, especially for girls. Some people are more prone to stretchmarks than others - it depends on your genetics and your individual skin type. People with fair skin often have more visible stretchmarks.

You can help this by keeping yourself out of the full heat of the sun, applying moisturisers with vitamin E or aloe vera, drinking lots of water and eating fresh vegetables. On the other hand, girls usually do not get hair on their chest or on their stomach, except for the straight line from their belly button down to their pubic bone. Hair in the areola (the dark circle around the nipple) is normal, too. If you are worried about your body hair, ask your doctor to check it out for you to rule out a hormone imbalance or to offer advice.

2015_2_Q4.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I think I'm allergic to bras. Whenever I put one on, my boobs get really itchy and irritated. But my boobs are quite big so if I don't wear a bra, I get teased and talked about at school. What do I do?

2015_2_A4.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

If you notice an itch or skin irritation from contact with bras, then it's pretty suggestive that the skin on your breasts and nipples is sensitive to one or more components of the bra material or the detergent you use to wash your bra. Bras are sometimes made of a synthetic fabric like latex in the elastic or nickel in the underwires or clips. Find out whether you're sensitive or allergic to these materials, and then find bras that don't use these. It may be that you have a skin condition and only notice it when a bra is rubbing against the skin, so you might need to have your skin checked by your doctor. Wearing a bra is a personal choice, not a medical necessity. Girls with big breasts often find support bras more comfortable, so it's important to find out what's causing your symptoms - and your doctor can help.

2015_2_Q5.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 15 and have had my period since I was 12, but I haven't had one for two and a half months. I'm a virgin, so I'm definitely not pregnant. I am really worried something is wrong down there. I've been eating healthy and exercising but it still won't come. I'm too scared to tell my mum and I don't know what to do.

2015_2_A5.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

If you're fit and healthy and know you couldn't possibly be pregnant, then don't panic! Periods just do funny things sometimes, especially in those first two or three years. Irregular or less frequent periods can happen occasionally for no reason, or can signal a hormone imbalance somewhere. Changes in eating patterns, weight and stress can also affect your periods. Lots of girls feel awkward talking to their mothers about it, but your mum is probably the best person to start with, not only because she's been through the teenage years herself but because she'll know of any medical conditions in her family that could affect periods. She might have even had a similar issue herself. Is there something else that makes you scared of telling your mum, or is it just you feeling self-conscious about it? If you really don't want to talk to her, you can see

a doctor confidentially and the sooner you go, the more reassured you'll be. If your period still hasn't come after another three months, then definitely get it checked out.

2015_2_Q6.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

My boyfriend recently broke up with me. Our relationship was always up and down and he often flirted a lot with other girls right in front of my face. He even did it at my birthday party! At school he gave me a birthday card, but not the ring I knew he had bought me before we broke up. Then I saw my best friend wearing the ring later that same day. She has sent me abusive text messages since then. I don't understand what I have done wrong?

2015_2_A6.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

Relationships and friendships can be confusing, particularly in your teenage years, and it sounds like there is still some confusion with your best friend and your ex. Trust and communication are extremely important in every relationship and friendship, and it sounds as if there have been some challenges here. If you feel isolated, look at the 'Coping with Break-ups' section at kidshelp.com.au.

2015_2_Q7.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

I have liked a guy for quite a while and catch him looking at me in class all the time. We sometimes talk on Facebook messenger for a while about school, family and common interests, and he's always so nice and is really sweet. Although, after we have these conversations, it's sometimes weeks before we speak again. We rarely talk in person because he's a pretty shy person, and I'm really confused about whether he likes me. Help!

2015_2_A7.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

It's hard to tell from your description if this guy is just enjoying your friendship or if he is interested in something more. Building a relationship with a 'shy guy' requires a lot of patience; a big move could scare him off. If you decide that you're prepared to risk losing the friendship for the sake of 'maybe' progressing the relationship, think of taking a small step. Suggest a catch-up around one of your shared interests. If he keeps accepting, this is when you might want to think about telling him that you're starting to develop feelings but aren't sure whether it's just pure friendship.

2015_2_Q8.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

I am 15 and in my first real relationship. We had been good friends for quite a while and then at a party we just clicked on another level and decided to start dating. I don't want to end the relationship, but sometimes I start to think that I only really like him as a friend and don't always like kissing him. And it gets even weirder because on

other occasions, I feel like I really like him again. I don't want to hurt him, what should I do?

2015_2_A8.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

Many teenagers are unsure about how and what they are feeling in their very first relationship and that's completely fine. It's a good opportunity to think about what it is that is truly important to you. Whether you call it dating or going out or being in a relationship, there are some important things to think about: open communication, respect, honesty and to not feel pressured into anything you don't feel comfortable with. Have you had a chance to talk with your boyfriend about how you're feeling? And have you spoken to anyone else about this? I would suggest maybe discussing this with a close friend.

2015_2_Q9.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

My parents have been trying to break up my boyfriend and I since we've been together and they recently succeeded. We aren't together anymore and I'm devastated. I've tried talking to them, but nothing works. My family is also constantly at war, either yelling at or ignoring each other. I've nearly been hit a number of times and I'm constantly worried I'll be kicked out. My boyfriend and I truly love each other and he has always helped me to get through the really hard times. I can't even see or talk to my friends about anything because I've been grounded. What can I do to make things better?

2015_2_A9.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

It sounds like there is so much going on for you. I'm wondering what you think is the reason for your parents not wanting you and your boyfriend to be together? It's important for all young people to feel safe and it sounds like your boyfriend has been really supportive and a safe person for you. It's really concerning to hear that there is a lot of yelling and ignoring going on at home and that you have nearly been hit a few times. That is not OK for anyone to be in that situation. Is there anyone else who knows what's happening to you? I really encourage you to talk with a school counsellor or call the Kids Helpline about what is happening.

2015_2_Q10.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

I spend a lot of time crying at home and at school in the bathrooms and I often feel lonely, no matter how many people are around me. I think I might be depressed but I'm just too scared to tell anyone how I'm really feeling deep down. How can I get the strength to talk about it with someone?

2015_2_A10.txt

<section> DD love & life </section>

<title> </title>

It's hard to reach out when you're depressed because you feel like there's no hope things can get better. It feels like there's nothing anyone could say or do that would change how badly you feel. But there is hope, and you're not alone. Many young people have made it through depression, and you can too. It seems strange but sometimes strength comes from taking the first step and then grows gradually. Find the right adult in your life - someone who won't judge and will understand - and tell them what you're going through. It takes courage, but the journey to getting better starts with this exact conversation. Treatment is available and it really works.

2015_3_Q1.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 17 and have been with my boyfriend for a little over a year. We've been having sex but have only used a condom a couple of times. We tend to use the 'pull out' method instead. I get my period regularly, so I know I'm not pregnant. But I'm worried that by not using a condom now we may be at risk of getting diseases. Can I have an STI without knowing it and give it to someone else late in life?

2015_3_A1.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

I would encourage you to look into other ways of preventing pregnancy because the withdrawal method (pulling out before ejaculation) is really unreliable and you can still get pregnant! Condoms are the only method that protect you from STIs. So, if you or your boyfriend have had previous sexual partners or you're both heterosexual, the main STI of concern is chlamydia. You might also like to find out about genital herpes. Chlamydia can be tested confidentially with a urine test and is easy to cure.

2015_3_Q2.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

I am sick of being teased at school about how I look. I find it hard because my family doesn't have a lot of money and on mufti days I am the ONLY one without expensive clothes. I get so nervous that I actually don't want to go to school and have even pretended to be sick. Does everyone secretly feel this way?

2015_3_A2.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

It is natural to feel this way, but you need to remind yourself of what is really important. Value and appreciate yourself for who you are and not what you look like. How we look, what we wear and what size or shape we are does not determine how special, unique and worthwhile we are as people. Focus on your positive qualities, skills and talents; this can help you learn to accept and appreciate your whole self. A person is much more than just a physical being. Say positive things to yourself every day; when you say something often enough, you start to believe it. Also, try to avoid negative self-talk. Appreciating and respecting all the things your body can do will help you feel more positively about it.

2015_3_Q3.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

I was at the same school for 11 years but left because of Mum's work. When I moved, my friends ditched me. We were so close - it was the eight of us against the world. Now only four speak to me and the rest seem to hate me. I know this proves who my real friends are but it hurts because I have known them most of my life. I love them so much and I cry myself to sleep every night. Please help.

2015_3_A3.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

I am sorry to hear that things have been really difficult for you. It sounds like you were really close to your friends and now things have changed. This is certainly a big loss for you. Have you tried to talk to your friends about how you're feeling? Have you tried to talk to your mum or a school counsellor? Friendships at any age can be stressful, but in teen years it can be even more difficult as friendships are incredibly important. Check out our Making Friends Hot Topic at kidshelp.com.au/teens/get-info/hot-topics for help with what you're experiencing right now.

2015_3_Q4.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

What do you do when you think a friend has an eating disorder?

2015_3_A4.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

It is important that you discuss your concerns with your friend in an open and honest way, aiming to be non-judgmental, respectful and kind. Show them you are genuinely concerned and avoid blaming anyone (your friend or their family) for the problem. Try to avoid making assumptions about the reasons why. Be supportive and caring, and encourage your friend to seek professional help. Also, be aware that you might find it hard to listen to what they have to say, especially if you don't agree with what they are actually revealing about themselves. Check in with them regularly to see how they are going, and offer ongoing support. You can read more on support programs and direct your friend to the info page at thebutterflyfoundation.org.au/support-programs.

2015_3_Q5.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 15 and I have really obvious bags under my eyes. They only appear when I smile and they make me feel pretty self-conscious. I try not to smile much and always avoid photos. I've tried pressing a cold face washer on to my eyes (and even tea bags!), but they only minimise them slightly. Is there anything I can do to remove them or make them any smaller?

2015_3_A5.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

Sometimes, the things we don't like about ourselves can hide the things people love about us. People are likely looking at your smile, not the bags under your eyes. However, if you're really worried about them, use a light-coloured concealer to minimise the darkness - go to a make-up counter and ask them for help. Also, get plenty of sleep and NO smoking (that makes your under-eye area saggy and dark). When you smile, people tend to smile back so spread it around. Smiling is wonderful!

2015_3_Q6.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I am wondering if shaving down there is a good idea? Heaps of my friends say they do it, but I don't. They say I should because guys don't like hair. Is that true?

2015_3_A6.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

Do you know for sure your friends shave down there? And if they do, does that make it a better choice for you? It's not necessary to shave for health reasons, and some women do get problems with ingrown hairs later on when they shave. However, it's a personal choice and I can't object. Just ask someone older than your friends like your mum or older relatives to see what they think. They're likely to know from experience and this will also stop you from hurting yourself - razors are sharp! As for guys, each one of them is different. I would say that it's best to base your decision on your personal preferences rather than on what anyone else likes or does.

2015_3_Q7.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I am 17 and I sweat a lot. I can't wear tops that are colourful or tight on my underarms. My wardrobe consists of black and white singlet tops or loose jumpers. I am keen to express myself through fashion but just can't due to my clothing limitations. I have to say, this really affects my self-esteem, especially when I know the sweat patches are so visible. I have already tried sweat-resistant deodorant, talcum powder and even hairspray to stop it but it won't stop. What do I do?!

2015_3_A7.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

Don't despair, you're not alone in experiencing this. Along with other weaker clinical-strength antiperspirants, there is one called Driclor, which you can pick up from the chemist. There is also a thing called an iontophoresis machine you can use when you're at home to help excessive sweating. It uses mild electrical currents to run over your skin's surface to thicken the skin layer and then block excess sweat. Also, try talking to your local GP and have your general health checked out. Ask them for a referral to a dermatologist and then you will be on track to expressing yourself through fun fashion in next to no time!

2015_3_Q8.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I'm a bit concerned... I'm 16 and have had my period for two and a half years, but I haven't even reached an AA bra size! When will my boobs start growing? Have they stopped growing already? Also, I can't find any bras in my size - do you know any places that supply bras for smaller girls?

2015_3_A8.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

It sounds like puberty has been proceeding naturally for you, with your periods starting at the average age and your breasts still growing. Breasts can grow for several years, but their growth slows once your periods start. You might just have naturally small breasts, which could be genetic. It could also be related to being a healthy weight and not having much fat in them. If you have any concerns that your development is not OK, then see your GP for an assessment. You could try wearing sports bras, which don't tend to have cup sizes. You could also ask your mum about her own development and for some help in finding an appropriate store with bra fitting.

2015_4_Q1.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

I've been going out with my boyfriend for four months now and I'm beginning to feel really unhappy in our relationship. My good friend (a boy) is comforting me and I'm becoming attracted to him. I don't know if I seriously like him or if he is just a source of comfort that I'm missing with my boyfriend. What should I do? Should I talk to my boyfriend about it? How do I do it without hurting his feelings?

2015_4_A1.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

This is a difficult situation but it could become much more complex depending on the decisions you make from now on. To remain respectful to yourself, your boyfriend as well as your friend, you need to be clear with your boundaries. It's completely OK to lose feelings for your boyfriend, this is quite normal. Your choices are to end the relationship or to try and improve it. If you think that the relationship is too meaningful to lose, you may want to invest in it. Try doing some things differently to see if the relationship can be more enjoyable. If you think it is beyond repair, then ending it will be much less complicated for everyone concerned. With your growing attraction to someone else, this is not free of risk - you could end the relationship with your boyfriend to find that your friend is not interested in you or not interesting to you, after all. It might be helpful if you seek advice from someone outside the situation that you know and trust (like your best friend) to explore your thoughts and feelings.

2015_4_Q2.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 15 and dating a guy in Year 12 and he's trying to pressure me into having sex with him. I really like him and I want to be with him, but I'm not really sure if I want to go the whole way right now. How do I know if I'm ready to have sex with him?

2015_4_A2.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

It's completely normal to have the desire to please and struggle to say no to things moving too fast, particularly when there is an age difference. But the fact you're feeling pressured is a guide to how ready, or not ready, you are. Some of the thoughts running through your head might be, 'What will happen if I actually express what I think and feel?' 'Will he still like me or will he want to break up with me if I don't have sex with him?' and 'Do I need to pretend to be OK?'. These are all important questions, and once you get clear about what you are comfortable with and figure out when you want to take the next step, the rest will become easier. Talk to your boyfriend. If he respects you and you are important to him, he will want to listen carefully to this conversation. If he ignores you, you may need to ask yourself if this is the right relationship for you.

2015_4_Q3.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

Recently, while in bed, I had a feeling of numbness over my whole body, kind of like pins and needles. It wasn't painful, but I couldn't move my hands properly. I was also breathing really heavy and crying. It lasted for about an hour. When I woke in the morning, I felt fine. I had eaten less than usual in the couple of days beforehand and I also had sex earlier the same night. What happened? Did I have a seizure? Should I be worried about anything?

2015_4_A3.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

What a frightening experience you've had. It's hard to know what happened without knowing more, so it's important you see your doctor. However, it's possible that you had a panic attack. In a panic attack, the sensations you have described can happen seemingly for no reason and make you feel really uncomfortable. Other symptoms include sweating, a pounding heart, a dry mouth, and fearing you are losing control or are about to collapse. Panic attacks are really common - about 40 per cent of people have one in their life. Some people only ever have one, while others have attacks far more often. If this happens, effective treatment is available. As scary as a panic attack feels, it can't actually harm you. Stay calm, and see your doctor to find out more.

2015_4_Q4.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

I'm having a hard time staying overnight at other people's houses, including close friends' houses and even my dad's place (my parents are divorced). This has been going on for a few years but after year seven camp last year it has gotten a lot worse. I'm just really uneasy about staying anywhere but my own home. Please help me work out how to overcome problem.

2015_4_A4.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

Not feeling like you're able to stay overnight with your dad or friends must be hard. Everyone has something that can make them anxious, though, so don't think this makes you weird. But if overcoming this is important to you, there are things you can do. Anxiety can make you want to avoid situations, but it could make things worse. More often than not, what you fear will happen never actually ends up happening. If you avoid situations, you won't learn this for yourself. Start by thinking of a scenario you can handle at the moment. Maybe you begin by going to a close friend's house for a few hours, then try to stay a little longer each time you visit. If your anxiety starts to build up, just use a strategy to help you stay calm, like deep breathing (breathe in for a count of six and then breathe out for a count of eight), or holding a small item from home to connect to something familiar. Over time, you'll be far less anxious and will start enjoying sleepovers.

2015_4_Q5.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I have little white and red bumps on my arms and I want to know if there is any way to get rid of them. I've tried exfoliating as well as using cleansing wash but it doesn't work. It's embarrassing and I can't really wear singlets or anything cos I get paranoid. Please help!

2015_4_A5.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

It sounds like you've got keratosis pilaris, which occurs in lots of teenagers. It's usually not itchy, and it isn't harmful or infectious, so you can't pass it on to anyone else. There's no instant cure for it, but it can get worse when your skin is dry. The best thing to do is to not over-clean skin with scrubs, antiseptics or soaps, keep your skin moisturised with a moisturising oil and drink plenty of water. The condition will often pass once you leave your teen years, so it might just be a matter of patience too. You could also use body foundation to cover it if you're worried about what it looks like - but make sure it's alcohol and oil free, and do a spot test first to check that your skin doesn't react to it.

2015_4_Q6.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I'm only 14 years old and I have stretch marks all over my breasts, legs and waist that won't go away! I've had them for a while now and I don't wear anything short because of my legs. I just want them gone, please help me!

2015_4_A6.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

Stretch marks usually start around the time of adolescence when your body grows suddenly in some places and the skin just can't keep up with what's underneath it. Unfortunately, there's no magic cure for stretch marks, but there are a lot of over-the-counter treatments which claim that they make them disappear. Early on, stretch marks can come up as pink-purple in colour but over time they fade to a fine pink or

silvery colour. While they are annoying to have, they won't hurt you. But it's always worth looking after your skin by making sure you're well hydrated (by drinking lots and lots of water), and by using moisturisers, body oils and a good sunscreen. Staying in a healthy weight range will also help to keep any stretch marks at bay.

2015_4_Q7.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 14 and I have small boobs... they don't even fill an A-cup! I also have little bumps around my nipples. But when I squeeze them, brown or yellow liquid comes out. Please help me!

2015_4_A7.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

Breasts develop over several years, and size and shape change, even in adults, because of things like weight changes, hormones, contraceptives, pregnancy and breastfeeding. It's normal to feel self-conscious when parts of your body don't seem 'average', but there's no 'average' when it comes to breasts. Trust that time will help you out, both with your development and with becoming less self-conscious. As for your nipples, the dark circle around the nipple, which is called the areola, contains glands that make a natural moisturiser, as well as hair follicles. The bumps you've noticed could actually be either of these. Squeezing the glands (it's best not to!) sometimes produces a white substance, but brown or yellow liquid suggests a bit of infection or damage. If you're still noticing brown or yellow liquid or if the areola is swollen or sore, get it checked out by your doctor.

2015_4_Q8.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 16 and I've had my period since I was 13. I've tried to use tampons but I can never get more than just the tip in. It really hurts when I try to push it in further. I've looked at YouTube animations to help but it still won't go in. It's embarrassing and I find that pads are uncomfortable. What do I do? Help!

2015_4_A8.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

Tampons can be tricky little things! You've been patient over a long time and done the right thing by looking at diagrams and animations. The fact that you're having normal periods means there is no major obstacle in the way. Try gently putting one or two fingers inside your vagina while looking in a mirror so you can see where the tampon is going in your body. It also helps to insert a finger high into your vagina to get a feel for the direction it slopes in (upwards and backwards towards your lower spine). If you can see a thin membrane across the opening of your vagina, it could be your hymen, which stretches as you go through puberty. In some cases, the hymen is thicker and even a little less stretchy. Try practising with mini tampons in between periods too. If all else fails, ask Mum for advice or see a doctor who you really trust. :)

2015_5_Q1.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 14 years old and live with my divorced mum and my younger sister. My mum is dating someone new and he comes over a lot. Sometimes he visits as late as 11pm. I can hear them having sex and it wakes me up. Headphones and music don't block out the noise. It makes me really uncomfortable and upset. What should I do? Should I ignore it?

2015_5_A1.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

When your parents start new relationships, it can bring many reactions, some not so good. A lot of people experience many different feelings: sadness, anger, disappointment, happiness, relief and shock. This is normal. Does your mum know how you're feeling? She might just be a little caught up in the excitement of newly dating someone and not notice how it is affecting you. Try talking to her, and maybe come to a compromise about nights he stays over. If you feel unable to talk to your mum about this, talk to a friend or trusted adult.

2015_5_Q2.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

I really struggle in social situations. Whether it's at school or just out in public, I constantly feel nervous. I hate leaving the house, so I try to just stay home. I won't go to parties or even talk to people on the phone because it just makes me feel sick. Do I have some form of anxiety?

2015_5_A2.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

We can all feel anxious for different reasons but when it's happening all the time, it can get in the way of enjoying life. Understanding what anxiety is can help you overcome your fears. Talk to an adult you trust in your life who will be able to help you find out more on anxiety. It's best to seek this information from a health professional as they can make a proper assessment of your specific feelings. But while you are seeking help, try to use some coping mechanisms when you feel extreme nervousness coming on. A great way to do this quickly is to breathe in for six counts and out for eight counts, and repeat as many times as you need.

2015_5_Q3.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

I feel like I don't really have any true friends. I have two girls who I sit with only during class and a big group of other people during our lunch break, but I don't like them that much. I want a true friend to pour my heart out to. I need someone who I can trust and will just listen. Should I try online friendships or just trust an old best friend again?

2015_5_A3.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

The idea of having one true friend can feel special but that sort of person is hard to find. It can also put a lot of pressure on friendships if you expect one person to listen plus do everything with you. Getting to know people online can be risky; they might not be who they say they are. I suggest you start taking a bit of initiative with the people who you are already spending time with you. Think of things you can do together out of school so you can learn more about them and naturally become closer. It's easier to start liking someone if you do more with them and pay them the kind of attention you want to have.

2015_5_Q4.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 14 and want more guy friends but I don't know how to approach them cos I only hang out with girls. I don't know how to talk to boys. Let alone make friends with them!

2015_5_A4.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

When you're used to hanging out with your girlfriends, the idea of talking to guys and making friends can seem a bit tricky. But don't worry, guys are human, too, and usually feel just as awkward as you do starting out. Invite a few guys from school or sport to a group activity with your friends. Doing something active, like a game of soccer or a hike, will make it less awkward to get to know them. Also, your friends probably have brothers and guy friends, so slowly start to include yourself in conversations. Begin by talking about something you just read or saw online, or make a funny comment and then let him see you smile. Smiling is the tool to making friends; it shows that you're relaxed and friendly and that will also help him feel relaxed.

2015_5_Q5.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I think my sister has an eating disorder. She barely eats in front of us. If she does, she goes to the bathroom straight afterwards. The other day, I heard her throwing up but when I asked what was wrong she just said she was sick. She then went out with her friends, so I don't think she was telling the truth. She's two years older than me, please help!

2015_5_A5.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

Your sister is lucky to have you and it's important to let her know how much you care. It does sound like she might be engaging in unhealthy and dangerous behaviour. It can be difficult for people who are struggling with an eating disorder to admit they need help. I encourage you to talk to her in a sensitive way - you don't want her to feel attacked. It can sometimes be hard and even scary to know how to approach a loved

one when you're worried about them. If you'd like some help with this, seek a trusted adult (a parent, teacher or professional) and ask for their help in talking to her.

2015_5_Q6.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 13 and recovering from glandular fever for five months now. My doctor says I have chronic fatigue and I'm really upset that I have to take a lot of medicine. I have always been active, so not doing sport and staying in bed is driving me crazy. Please help me.

2015_5_A6.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

Chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) affects a small percentage of people after they have had glandular fever (which is caused by a virus). People who suffer from CFS experience fatigue that often lasts a very long time, sometimes six months or more. CFS is treatable. This involves two things. Firstly, identify the symptoms that are specific to you (headache, nausea, muscle pain, sleep disturbance, dizziness) and treat these carefully with help from your GP. Secondly, develop a management plan with your doctor, parents and teachers. This usually involves making fortnightly plans, gradually getting you back into physical, social and learning activity.

2015_5_Q7.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I've noticed my eyebrows are really oily. I don't wear a lot of make-up and when I do, I'm careful not to put it on my eyebrows. They are also a few shades darker than my light brown/blonde hair. How can I prevent this? Does the darker colour mean anything?

2015_5_A7.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

It's great that you're avoiding putting make-up on your eyebrows, particularly oily foundations. Your skin type can be different on other areas of your body, so you might just be producing more oil at the follicle of your eyebrows. A temporary solution could be using facial tissue-blotters to remove noticeable oil. While there is not a lot to apply externally to prevent them from being oily, some medications can decrease oil flow. Speak to your GP about options you're comfortable with. Don't worry at all about your eyebrows being darker than your hair colour. This is the case for most people and is quite a lucky trait to have. A lot of people even colour their eyebrows darker on purpose.

2015_5_Q8.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

Since I was 12, I've had a pretty normal 28-day-cycle period. I have bad cramps, and although my periods are heavy, they seem pretty ordinary. However, about four months ago, my periods started getting closer together. I have an app that keeps track

of the days in my cycle and it's gone from 29 to 21 to 16 days between periods. There was less than two weeks between my last and current period. I don't understand what's going on.

2015_5_A8.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I suspect that your menstrual cycle is still fine-tuning itself as you go through puberty. But you might need to look into other possible causes for this sudden cycle change and make sure you're not losing too much iron. Have a chat with your doctor. You will probably need to tell them the length of each period, whether it was heavy, light, painful or unusual, whether you're sexually active, are taking medications including the pill, have experienced any weight changes or have any other medical conditions. They might also check your thyroid function (this affects metabolism but can interfere with your periods if it's overactive or underactive). It's most likely due to temporary hormonal fluctuations, although, a check-up is a good idea.

2015_5_Q9.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 14 years old and since the beginning of this year, I've started noticing some pimples and blackheads on both my chest and back. Are these like facial pimples? Can they be treated with the things I use for my face?

2015_5_A9.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

Yes, they're basically the same thing. Acne or pimples can occur not only on the face but the body, too. This is caused by overactive oil glands on your skin, causing small inflamed spots. Try an acne body wash containing the ingredient benzoyl peroxide, which is effective on larger areas of skin. Avoid body moisturiser or thick sunscreen, especially in the hot weather and try a gel or spray-on sunscreen instead. Ocean water can reduce bacteria (stopping pimples becoming more inflamed) and dry some of the excess oil your skin is producing. If nothing works, ask a dermatologist for more treatment options.

2015_5_Q10.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 13 and have long arms and legs. I've started waxing but I've noticed the hair all over my stomach, back and chest, too. It's at least 8mm long. I've thought about using hair-removal cream but I've had a reaction to that on my legs. I'm not sure what to do.

2015_5_A10.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

When there's hair on your stomach, back and chest, find out if it occurs in your family. Sometimes, it's linked to a hormonal imbalance, so you should talk to your GP about having hormonal tests. If this is the case, you can then discuss treatment options to balance them out. Body hair can be associated with poor nutrition, too. If you feel

this is correct, talk with your parents or guardian about adjusting eating habits and having a more balanced diet. The important thing is to get a medical assessment first before trying topical options. Once this is sorted, you can talk to your parents about trying bleaching, shaving, waxing, threading or even laser if it is really bothering you. But, if all medical tests come back clear, having a little more hair is absolutely nothing to worry about.

2015_5_Q11.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I'm really struggling with body image and my mental health. I've been diagnosed with social anxiety and have a lot of panic attacks. I think it's gotten worse recently and that I might have depression. I don't know how to explain it to my mum. I often feel like I'm never good enough, that my body isn't skinny enough, that I shouldn't be eating and I need to starve myself. I really want some help. I want to be the happy girl that I used to be. What do I do?

2015_5_A11.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I can hear that a part of you wants to be well and happy even though it can feel like hard work at times. A lot of young people often experience similar feelings and it can be difficult to be accepting of yourself when you're feeling anxious and depressed. People find that these emotions prompt them to engage in unhealthy behaviours around food. Even though it's difficult to explain to your mum, sharing the burden with the right person can be a relief. Recovery from what you're feeling is 100 per cent possible but it's important that you seek support. If you're worried about how to approach your mum, it might be helpful to talk your thoughts through with a professional, like a counsellor or a GP.

2015_5_Q12.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

Around two years ago I noticed I was getting grey hairs on my head. They're starting to get worse and now there are too many to pluck out. My mum said she got greys early, too. It makes me feel self-conscious.

2015_5_A12.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

Are you sure they are grey and not just a lighter colour of what you have, maybe bleached from the sun or chlorine? See if you can check with a hairdresser to make sure this is the case. But if your mum experienced the same thing, it's most likely that you're just dealing with a trait passed down to you. There are some medications available to stop hair going grey early, however, you'd need to talk seriously with your mum as well as your GP if this is right for you. If it's really concerning you, you may need to be referred to a dermatologist for other treatment options.

2015_6_Q1.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 15 and I've never kissed a guy. About six months ago, my best girl friend kissed me on the lips. It felt good. We kiss quite a lot now and no-one else knows. Lately our kisses have been getting more passionate and I become wet 'down there' while we make out. I'm not sure if this makes me a lesbian and I'm really confused. Please help - is it normal for friends to kiss?

2015_6_A1.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

The best thing is to figure out what feels right for you. Being confused about your sexual orientation is not unusual when having your first sexual experiences. It's helpful to think separately about your behaviours (kissing), your identity (straight, gay or bisexual) and your experiences ("I enjoy kissing my friend"). It might be part of a romantic relationship or you may simply be enjoying the sexual exploration. Physical arousal, for example, is a normal response to kissing. And it's OK to kiss whoever you like, but it can sometimes change friendships. Try talking to your friend about how you feel.

2015_6_Q2.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

I think I have a form of OCD. I have to repeat and re-do things a certain number of times, and if I don't, I feel like something bad will happen to the people I love. It's getting in the way of my home and school life. I told my parents about it but they said I was overreacting. They also said that I should just try to stop repeating things but it's not that simple. I don't know what to do.

2015_6_A2.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

First, lets talk about OCD. Obsessive Compulsive Disorder is a type of anxiety where someone experiences distressing thoughts and then uses rituals to cope. This can be distressing to experience. People with OCD view their thoughts as 'truth.' Someone without OCD might think that something bad has happened to a loved one if they're not answering their phone, but won't put importance on it. This person might feel a need to call every minute until a person picks up, or believe if they do a certain action over and over again, that thought won't come true. It sounds like you're worried about what you're experiencing. Try talking to your school counsellor as a starting point, because they'll be able to connect you with the kind of help you need to assess if you have OCD.

2015_6_Q3.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

I went through some traumatic things as a child, including bullying. I'm now 15 and have been suffering from mild depression since I was about 10. My mum also has it and I think it's been passed down to me. This year, my depression got really bad and I felt hopeless, stupid and upset, and I started harming myself. I have been able to stop because of counselling but I still get anxious and depressed. What should I do?

2015_6_A3.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

It sounds like you've gone through some hard times, and shown real resilience to persevere and improve your life. Well done on stopping your self-harming - that's an achievement you should be proud of. Be sure to write down how you did that to help you if the urge returns. The road to getting better can be bumpy and is something that you need to keep working towards. Recovery is more like the sun gradually rising, as opposed to a light switch suddenly turning on. Think about what has worked in the past, but also anyone else you could talk to. Different counsellors use different approaches, and different things will work at different times.

2015_6_Q4.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

My boyfriend is suffering from depression and anxiety. I love him but he's clingy and says that I'm the only one that makes him happy. I don't know if it's best to break up or help him.

2015_6_A4.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

This seems like a tough situation for both you and your boyfriend. It sounds like he needs support at the moment, but you can't do that alone. Consider if your decision about whether to break up or stay with him can be separated from the help he needs. When you're worried about someone, it makes it hard for you to feel relaxed around them. Try explaining that you want to help him, but you're not the only one who can make him happy. Also, there are ways your boyfriend could get support with his unhappy feelings. First, start with sites like youthbeyondblue.com, and drop-in places like Headspace (headspace.org.au). If he gets the help that he needs, you can enjoy the time you spend together more.

2015_6_Q5.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

My friends have just started a diet club, but we're only 14! I hate it and am happy with my body. But it's all they talk about at lunch and I feel left out. I don't want to lose weight. I don't think what they're doing is healthy but I don't want to tell a teacher or even my parents because they'll know that I said something. What can I do?

2015_6_A5.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

It's a great thing you're happy with your body! Positive body image (when you're able to accept, appreciate and respect your body) is really important and is something you can help your friends to develop. And a good place to start might be getting some information for your friends on healthy eating and why dieting might be an unhealthy thing for them to be doing. It's important they understand that it can sometimes be really destructive, impacting negatively on their health, wellbeing, schoolwork and

fitness. Even though you don't want to tell a parent or teacher, your friends' diet club is an issue worth raising with someone you trust, because they'll help you give your friends the support they need.

2015_6_Q6.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I've had my period for a year now, but I'm still really flat chested. I'm so confused - is this normal? Is there anything I can do to make my boobs grow?

2015_6_A6.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

Don't panic - it sounds like your body is still developing and this happens differently for everyone. There is no right or wrong order when it comes to your body's development and what you're experiencing is totally normal. Boobs come in all kinds of different shapes and sizes, and they can grow at different rates. It might even be helpful for you to speak to other women, maybe even a family member or friend, about their experience. You'll find that what you're feeling is really common and lots of women have felt the exact same way as you do right now. If you continue to feel worried about this, speak to a GP or health professional who you trust. They can help you understand what's going on and what to expect, as well as assure you that everything is progressing along OK.

2015_6_Q7.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I noticed that I had a pimple near my private areas, and when I went to check it, I noticed a lump or something on the edge of my vagina. I don't know what it is or what to do. I'm 14 and haven't engaged in any sex or sexual activities. Help me!

2015_6_A7.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

Have you tried to remove any pubic hair? Lumps can appear after shaving or waxing due to inflammation of the hair follicle or ingrown hairs. My advice is to just leave it alone. Closer to the opening of the vagina and the inner labia (lips), there isn't any hair but the skin is full of glands that produce an oily moisture. These can get blocked and cause lumps. If it's small, leave it, but check it regularly. If you're still worried, ask a doctor to check it out for you.

2015_6_Q8.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

I've been eating a lot late at night because I'm so stressed with school. I've read this isn't good for you and I feel really guilty the next day, so I don't eat anything until the next afternoon. But then I'm starving later at night and do it all over again. I'm worried stress will make me put on a really unhealthy amount of extra weight. Can you please help me?

2015_6_A8.txt

<section> DD health & body </section>

<title> </title>

What you're feeling is common. Lots of people find stress changes their eating habits, and the way they feel about food and their body. But, your body needs food throughout the day for fuel to get you through it. And without eating food, you're more likely to be tired, cranky and find it hard to concentrate in class. You're also more likely to eat a lot later as your body tries to make up for running on an empty tank all day long. Often, a bad pattern can develop called bingeing, which is where you feel out of control about what and how much you eat. This can affect both your mental and physical health, so it's really important to talk to someone about it. Try to eat throughout the day - especially breakfast, lunch and dinner.

2015_7_Q1.txt

<section> DD mind & body </section>

<title> </title>

I've always been confused about my body. When I was younger, I was pretty skinny despite how much I used to eat. Now that I'm 17 years old, I'm starting to feel like my thighs, tummy and arms are getting bigger. But, my mum says she can feel my spine through my skin and my sister is always commenting on me being skinny. Why are my body proportions so weird?

2015_7_A1.txt

<section> DD mind & body </section>

<title> </title>

Adolescence is a crazy time for your body and the way you feel about it. Everything changes, but how and when it changes can be different for everyone. It's normal to feel a little weird and uncomfortable as you get used to going through these things. But, it's important to focus on what your body can do and how you feel about yourself, rather than what you look like. It sounds like your mum and sister may see you differently to the way you see yourself. Sometimes when you don't think of your body the exact same way other people do, it's a sign that you might need some help with how you feel about your confidence and body. It's important that you talk to someone - reaching out to your mum or sister is a good place to start. You could also talk to your school counsellor, or even contact a confidential counselling service for young people.

2015_7_Q2.txt

<section> DD mind & body </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 16 years old and I'm still struggling to insert tampons, or anything, into my vagina. When I attempt to masturbate I can't seem to find the entrance of my vagina and when my boyfriend fingers me it hurts so much. I've been researching it recently and I think I may have vaginismus. Is there any possible treatment to cure it?

2015_7_A2.txt

<section> DD mind & body </section>

<title> </title>

Vaginismus is an involuntary contraction of the pelvic and vaginal muscles, usually when something makes direct contact with the vaginal area. When the muscles are contracted, trying to insert something - like a finger, tampon or penis - can cause a lot of pain and the more it hurts the tighter the contractions. Even though this might be what's going on for you, it is important to have it properly assessed and your GP is an excellent place to start. You can see them confidentially and they will probably ask a few questions about your sexual history and any other symptoms you might be experiencing. If it is vaginismus, then treatment can involve exploring whether you feel anxious when you (or your boyfriend) touch your genital area. You will probably be given some simple things to practise: pelvic floor contractions and slow, gentle exercises involving gradually inserting a fingertip, then finger then two or three fingers into your vagina. There is absolutely no rush to be able to 'fix' this situation - in fact, the slower you take things the more likely you will succeed.

2015_7_Q3.txt

<section> DD mind & body </section>

<title> </title>

A boy I used to like recently told my friend he doesn't like me because I'm fat. I'm a size 12 and exercise whenever I can. I don't eat that well, but I never actually thought of myself as fat until now. I don't even like him, but can't stop thinking about his comments. I'm worried I'll give myself an eating disorder if I keep obsessing. Please help!

2015_7_A3.txt

<section> DD mind & body </section>

<title> </title>

It can be very uncomfortable, embarrassing and quite distressing when another person makes a negative comment about your weight. These comments can also really affect your self-esteem and the way that you view yourself. But it is very important to think about the possible reasons why someone may be making these kind of comments. For instance, are they trying to be smart, stir you up or upset you? Or are they worried instead about their own weight and trying to compensate by making other people around them feel bad about themselves? The most important thing is that you must value yourself, and appreciate your genuine talent and beauty. Never measure your worth based on the size you wear or numbers on a scale. Don't let anyone dictate how you should look or make you feel like you're not valued because of how much you weigh. Your value is not in the way that you look but the person who you truly are.

2015_7_Q4.txt

<section> DD mind & body </section>

<title> </title>

I have noticed I've been getting sadder over the last month and it's making me feel like I don't want to eat. I don't want to get to a point where I just stop eating altogether. I don't want to talk to anyone about it because I'm afraid they will judge me. Is this something to worry about?

2015_7_A4.txt

<section> DD mind & body </section>

<title> </title>

I'm sorry that you feel like you've been getting sadder over time, but it's really great that you want to make sure you stay healthy in your mind and body. You're not alone in how you're feeling; quite a lot of young people feel similar to the way you do. But, if you're consistently feeling down or helpless, having problems sleeping or eating, or trouble concentrating, it is serious and you should reach out for help as soon as possible.

You can see your GP, school counsellor, or health professional you trust. If your eating is something you're particularly concerned about tell someone you really trust and who can find you help. Even though it can be quite difficult and even scary to know how to explain what's going on, most people find that when they talk to someone it can be a relief and weight off their shoulders.

2015_7_Q5.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

My 'friend' has been bullying me for a really long time now. She always says that she is so much better than me and keeps teasing me. It's really mean. When our teacher is away and there's a substitute in, she and another girl gang up on me and call me a loser. At the end of the day she says sorry, but I think she's just saying that because she doesn't want me to tell on her. There are a few people who stand up for me, which is really nice, but it never seems to stop her. She is even being mean to some other people. I have told my parents and some of my other friends, but nothing has been done. Please find a way that I can stop her from being mean and a bully.

2015_7_A5.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

Bullying can cause a lot of distress and it's not OK that this is happening. It's important to support and stand up for people who are being bullied and you are lucky you have friends who will do that. Is it possible you and your friends could all speak to a teacher together to highlight what's really been happening? When you speak to the teacher be honest about who's hurting you and what you would like done about it. It can also help to keep a diary of bullying incidents including who was involved, the time it occurred, what happened and who you told about it. If the bullying continues, ensure you go back to the teacher and let them know it hasn't stopped.

2015_7_Q6.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

My ex and I broke up four months ago when he had to transfer schools, but now he is back. I still really like him and I thought that he would ask me out again (I didn't want to do the asking). But, I recently found out that he asked out another girl. I'm so upset and angry. I have no idea if he is trying to make me jealous or if he really does like her. I need advice on how to discover his feelings, and how to deal with them if they're not what I was expecting.

2015_7_A6.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

I know it can feel romantic and sweet when a guy asks you out, but sometimes it's truly best for you to make the first move. Maybe he wasn't sure if you still had feelings for him, so he didn't feel brave enough to ask you out again. If he's trying to make you jealous, it seems he's done a pretty good job. If he does like you but then asked someone else out, this is really hurtful for you. The best advice I can give you is to move on from this guy and try to find someone who is truly interested in you and won't play games. For a guy worth your time, there will be zero lies or no messing around.

2015_7_Q7.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

We moved house a little while ago and I met a boy at school who I fell in love with. He was also my first kiss and the first person I had sex with. But, after over a month of dating he broke up with me and I was just devastated. I now have a new boyfriend and we got together not long after all this happened. He was a very close friend, and it developed into something more. Is there a time limit for moving on from a break-up? Is it OK for me to move on quickly?

2015_7_A7.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

There is no definite time period for moving on from the ending of a relationship. We all work through things very differently. Relationships can often be complicated and difficult to navigate but what's most important is that you feel comfortable, safe, not under pressure and are able to be honest and open with each other. Sometimes you might have to work on how you view and feel about yourself. Talking to a close friend or family member about what may be worrying you can help you think things through. If you feel uncomfortable talking to someone close, have a chat with a school counsellor or another trusted person who will be able to view things objectively.

2015_7_Q8.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 15 and I'm having problems with my parents. I often argue with my dad about the smallest things and sometimes I don't even start it. He's really controlling and often takes my phone off me for long periods of time as punishment for bad school diary notes. I try really hard to make my parents proud of me. I do really well at school and I have a part-time job but nothing seems to help it. What can I do to get my dad to let go a bit?

2015_7_A8.txt

<section> DD life & love </section>

<title> </title>

It can be extremely tough for parents to let go when their children start becoming independent teenagers. Your problem is really common, but that's little comfort when the arguments happen so often. This might be a great chance for you to show maturity. Can you take the initiative to have a chat with your dad sometime when you are both calm? Try to explain to him how you feel about arguing over small things,

because I'm sure neither of you like it. Perhaps you could both think of things that you each can do differently to reduce the tension. Maybe he could give you a bit more freedom if you continue to try hard and do well at school. Also, try to spend some time relaxing or doing fun things with your dad. When you enjoy being with each other it can make the little problems seem less important.

2015_8_Q1.txt

<section> DD sex & relationships special </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 16 and recently had sex for the first time while on my period. It was a few weeks ago and now my period is late. Is there any chance I could be pregnant?

2015_8_A1.txt

<section> DD sex & relationships special </section>

<title> </title>

If you've had sex with a guy there is always the risk of pregnancy. Being on your period at the time of intercourse does NOT prevent pregnancy, especially as your cycle can be irregular in the first couple of years and the time of ovulation can be more unpredictable. However, that chance is low if you used a reliable contraception method correctly, for example, condoms, the pill, the Implanon rod or another hormone contraceptive. Worrying about pregnancy and being stressed can be enough to make your period late, so try to relax. If your period IS overdue, then I suggest you take a pregnancy test at home (they are available at supermarkets, pharmacies) or ask your doctor. Your doctor can also talk to you confidentially about contraception options, including the emergency pill, which can be bought over the counter at a pharmacy, and can be taken up to five days after unprotected sex. You might also want to talk to your mum or an adult you trust for support.

2015_8_Q2.txt

<section> DD sex & relationships special </section>

<title> </title>

I've liked a guy for four years but then recently realised I lost some of those feelings and have moved on. We weren't dating or anything, but good friends. We have fun but since he found out I don't like him like that, he has become verbally mean, and what he says really hurts. What's going on and how do I deal with it?

2015_8_A2.txt

<section> DD sex & relationships special </section>

<title> </title>

Even though you weren't dating, it sounds like there were some romantic feelings between the two of you, and it's natural that change could be upsetting. I'm guessing that your friend is feeling hurt or confused or maybe even annoyed with himself. What's important is how he deals with negative emotions. Being verbally mean or trying to make another person feel bad is often a sign of immaturity. Communicating honestly is the best way to deal with this, especially as you have had a close friendship. Talk to him about his behaviour and how it makes you feel. Tell him about your own feelings. If this means he needs a complete break from seeing you for a while until he feels better, that is not a bad thing. Of course, if his meanness gets any worse or out of hand, try talking to a parent, or an adult you trust.

2015_8_Q3.txt

<section> DD sex & relationships special </section>

<title> </title>

There's this boy that I kind of like but he's dating one of my best friends. We've been texting and he told me I'm his 'number two' but asked if I would stop talking to him as much because he didn't want to complicate things with his girlfriend. Every so often he unloads this stuff about how he's feeling or what's going on in his GF's life that's upsetting her. I guess it's a bit friend-zoney but why does he tell me all this stuff? It makes things feel awkward for me. I just feel really confused.

2015_8_A3.txt

<section> DD sex & relationships special </section>

<title> </title>

You're right - relationships can be confusing! Whether it's with your best friend, someone you have romantic feelings for, or someone you're dating. Trust your gut instinct. It's telling you things don't feel right. Next, ask yourself, "How would you want your best friend to behave if the situation was reversed?" and "Where do you draw the line between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour?". Sure, friends can unload and share personal stuff, but ask yourself if he should be saying most of it directly to his girlfriend. Be aware that your own romantic feelings mean you can't be objective, and it's possible that all of you could get hurt. If you need him to back up, say so nicely. Tell him it's awkward because she's one of your best friends, and that some of the stuff he's asking for is between them, and encourage him to talk to her.

2015_8_Q4.txt

<section> DD sex & relationships special </section>

<title> </title>

I've recently started talking to an old primary school friend on Snapchat, and he keeps asking me for nude photos. I really don't know what to do. I repeatedly tell him no but he won't listen. Please help me. I don't want to tell my mum, and only my close friends know about it.

2015_8_A4.txt

<section> DD sex & relationships special </section>

<title> </title>

What this guy is doing is called sexual harassment. It's also illegal. So is receiving or sending naked photos if you're under 18. This might help you work out what to do, which is to tell him to stop, block him, and if these don't work, report it to an adult. I realise this is easy for someone on the outside to say, but if you're dealing with someone that you consider a friend, it can be harder. Try to take a step back and think about his behaviour. Do you think it's acceptable for anyone to keep asking for something after the other person has said no? Do you really think a friend who respects you would keep hassling you? I'm sure your mum would want to support you, even though I know that it freaks you to think of telling her. Perhaps there's another adult in your life you could talk to first, who could help you talk to your mum. You deserve respectful relationships - whether with friends or romantic partners - and this is not one of them.

2015_8_Q5.txt

<section> DD sex & relationships special </section>

<title> </title>

Is it normal for me to want to be having sex? I have been doing a lot of sexual things since I was about 11, like watching pornography, reading erotic romance stories, masturbating and heaps more. I have also posted photos of myself naked online a few times. I feel really bad.

2015_8_A5.txt

<section> DD sex & relationships special </section>

<title> </title>

Starting to have sexual thoughts and feelings is a very normal part of going through puberty and becoming an adult. The same hormones telling your body to develop breasts and start having periods can also make you become curious about sex and to sometimes feel sexually aroused. Masturbating, fantasising and experimenting are normal and shouldn't cause you to feel any guilt. However, if these activities begin to interfere with things like hanging out with your friends, getting assignments done or going to work, then you might want to talk to someone confidentially about it. Posting naked photos online is illegal if the person in the photos is under 18, as this is considered child pornography and can potentially get you into trouble with the police. Before you post something online, it might help to ask yourself, "Would I be OK with my mum/dad/grandma seeing this? Will this hurt anyone? How would I feel if it was shared publicly?" This is also something that you could talk to someone who you trust confidentially about.

2015_8_Q6.txt

<section> DD sex & relationships special </section>

<title> </title>

My girlfriend and I have been together for a long time, and we're thinking about going all the way. For obvious reasons, we don't have to worry about getting each other pregnant, but do we still need to use some form of protection to keep away STIs or something?

2015_8_A6.txt

<section> DD sex & relationships special </section>

<title> </title>

It's good that you're wanting to look after your and your girlfriend's health. Women who have sex with women can transmit STIs. Like sex between any couple, the type of STI and degree of 'risk' depends on a number of things, such as previous sexual partners (of any gender), previous STIs, the type of sex you have and the protection that you use. STIs can be transmitted between women by bodily fluids (vaginal fluid) or from skin-to-skin contact. So, if you're going to use a dildo or other object for penetration, make sure it's clean, and put a condom on it and don't reuse condoms. This will reduce the risk of STIs carried in vaginal fluid, such as chlamydia. If you're having oral sex, use a dental dam (a thin piece of latex you put between your mouth and her genitals). This will reduce the risk of genital herpes. For more info on STIs and women who have sex with women, visit reachout.com and search STIs; there's info there for people in same-sex relationships.

2015_8_Q7.txt

<section> DD sex & relationships special </section>

<title> </title>

When I was eight or nine years old, I willingly had sex with a guy a year older than me. But at the time, I didn't know what sex was, and he did. Is this classified as rape? I also don't know if we really 'did it' as such (I don't know if he actually went in) and I still consider myself a virgin. Is this right? I also don't want to be treated as if I'm not a virgin.

2015_8_A7.txt

<section> DD sex & relationships special </section>

<title> </title>

Children, even from a young age, can enjoy what we call sexual play. That might include hugging, kissing, taking clothes off and touching parts of the body, including the genitals. If both kids are enjoying this together, it's not necessarily a problem and is different from adult sexual play. Once the body goes through puberty, it's able to experience adult-like sexual arousal and orgasm, and boys can ejaculate. Rape has a technical legal definition, but essentially it occurs where there is penetration of the genitals which is not consented to and may include penetration using the penis, a part of the body, an object or the mouth. It also depends on the age of the two participants. It's possible what you were doing was natural child sexual play that did not involve penetration, and that was consensual. But what concerns me is you're worrying about this now, which suggests something about what happened troubles you. Perhaps it's because you're older and thinking about adult sexual relationships, including what it means to be a virgin. Virginity is best defined as a state of mind rather than a single act of sexual intercourse, so it's fine to consider yourself a virgin. Maybe you think something less innocent happened and you need to talk about it. Have a confidential conversation with a health professional or counsellor, or a parent or other adult in your life you can talk to.

2015_8_Q8.txt

<section> DD sex & relationships special </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 13 and not allowed to have a boyfriend or any social media accounts, but I really like this guy and he apparently really likes me back. How do I tell him? Should I just date him but keep it a secret?

2015_8_A8.txt

<section> DD sex & relationships special </section>

<title> </title>

There are lots of 13-year-olds out there who aren't allowed to date or use social media. But it's an opportunity to start having conversations with your parents/carers about becoming more independent. Just make it a two-way thing - try to understand their point of view and express your feelings without it leading to any arguments. As for this guy, you could tell him about your feelings directly, or you might want to take it much more cautiously by striking up a conversation about other things. You could ask him about his hobbies, music tastes, or school. That way, you also get to know him a bit better, and it'll help you decide how much you like him. Whether to keep stuff secret can be tricky and it's important to think about potential consequences if you do. Maybe getting to know this guy as a friend first could even be a pretty good compromise.

2015_8_Q9.txt

<section> DD sex & relationships special </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 14 and I have a massive crush on this guy in my grade. He inboxed me a couple of weeks ago and he seemed sweet. But then he started asking really personal questions, like if I was a virgin and if I would have sex with him. After answering the questions, he asked if I wanted to hang out but I couldn't. He then dated some other girl and they broke up straight away. Now he is apparently having sex with other girls but he still flirts and inboxes me for bikini shots. What do I do?

2015_8_A9.txt

<section> DD sex & relationships special </section>

<title> </title>

Sometimes people start off seeming sweet, so it's easy to develop a massive crush, but then their real nature shows itself. Seriously, though, this boy sounds immature and selfish. Let's hope he grows up soon or gets some help. Flirting is one thing, and something you can probably just ignore. That part is him playing games to keep your attention. The inboxing for bikini shots is on another level, and even if he wasn't doing any other stuff, it's inappropriate, disrespectful and could be considered harassment or stalking. It's a good time to think about how to respect yourself. That could involve telling him his inboxes aren't welcome, blocking him, or even reporting his behaviour to a teacher, parent or other adult if he continues. It goes without saying that you shouldn't send him bikini shots, or even answer his questions. Any relationship without respect is not a real relationship.

2015_8_Q10.txt

<section> DD sex & relationships special </section>

<title> </title>

I've gotten really close to this guy lately. We kiss a lot and he has told me he likes me back but he's not ready for a relationship. I don't want to pressure him but I feel like he doesn't really like me. Also, one of my 'friends' knows how much I like him but she keeps flirting with him and it's really starting to annoy me. What do I do?

2015_8_A10.txt

<section> DD sex & relationships special </section>

<title> </title>

It can be tricky when you like someone and aren't sure if they feel the same way. If you're feeling confident, maybe you could directly ask him how he feels. If you want to be less upfront, pay attention to the way he treats you and how this makes you feel. You deserve to feel valued and to spend your time with people who make you feel happy and safe, and a relationship that is causing you lots of worry can really get you down. You mention your friend has been flirting with this guy. Have you talked to her about it? Maybe she doesn't realise how this is actually making you feel. If she seems to be doing this on purpose to hurt you, then it might be time to rethink your friendship.

2015_9_Q1.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

My boyfriend and I broke up after seven months. Following the break up, we stayed friends and considered getting back together. That was until a week later when he and

my 'best friend' went to a party, got drunk and ended up having sex. They've both tried to apologise but I've decided to cut both of them out of my life. I know my friend has liked him for ages and I keep thinking that maybe he slept with her cos I wasn't ready to have sex. I don't know what to do.

2015_9_A1.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

If your ex-boyfriend has been this disrespectful then it sounds like you've done the right thing by trying to ignore both him and your 'best friend'. It must be upsetting to have a big change in two of your closest relationships but if either of them are treating you in a way that is not respectful or is causing you to be worried or upset then you are better off without them. Good on you for sticking to your gut instinct and not having sex before you were ready. It can be hard to avoid peer pressure but staying true to your own beliefs and feelings is great. In a loving, safe relationship, you shouldn't feel pressured to do anything you don't feel ready for so be confident and know that YOU get to decide what you do with your body.

2015_9_Q2.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

My boyfriend and I are sexually active. We use protection and have already discussed what we're doing with his parents. The only person who doesn't know is my mum. I want to tell her but I don't have the courage, especially because we usually do it at my house. I don't want her to feel disappointed that I've done it under her roof. Any suggestions on how to improve the situation?

2015_9_A2.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

If shows a lot of maturity and respect for your mum that you want to have this conversation with her. Your honesty about your feelings is fantastic, because fear and lack of courage can stop us from doing something even when we believe it is right. So, a starting place is to accept that it is difficult but that it's something that matters. One approach is to be direct. Pick a good time and start by saying, "Mum, I want to talk about something and I'm very nervous about it but please listen". The alternative, indirect approach can make it a hypothetical situation, like "Mum, how would you feel if...?" or can refer to something you heard about (such as in Dolly) and say, "Mum, I read this... How would you react if I was doing this?" Somewhere in between might be to write her a note, a bit like what you wrote to me. By showing her you want an honest relationship with her, I'm sure you'll be able to work things out.

2015_9_Q3.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 10 years old and I have recently started masturbating. I have done it a few times now and I was wondering if it was OK for me to be doing this at my age? Is it wrong? I'm too afraid to talk to any of my family members. Can I have some advice?

2015_9_A3.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

Masturbation involves touching parts highly sensitive to sexual stimulation, such as the genitals and nipples. Masturbating can lead to an orgasm or it can be a way of exploring what feels good. It's normal for children, even at a young age, to enjoy touching themselves for pleasure, and once you get to adolescence it can become very exciting as your body experiences new sensations. Masturbation is common but there have been myths over the years about what can happen if you masturbate too much or too little. Masturbating can be a healthy way for you to explore your sexuality, enjoy your body, relieve stress or relax. It's certainly not wrong or bad and, like you, many other people prefer to keep masturbation a private topic of conversation. There's no need to worry, unless you are becoming excessively anxious or find that it's interfering with day-to-day life and is getting obsessive. If that's the case, you can chat confidentially to a health professional, or try bringing up the topic generally with a parent or someone who you trust.

2015_9_Q4.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

I think I have some sort of anxiety. I'm always talking down about myself and think that the people around me talk behind my back. I don't feel like myself when I leave my house and I'm finding that I rarely talk to anyone. I don't want to talk about it to other people just in case I do have anxiety and then everyone will worry about me. I'm also scared that I will be humiliated. What should I do?

2015_9_A4.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

I'm sorry to hear you're going through what sounds like a lonely and difficult time, but there is excellent help out there. Anxiety is very common and affects up to one in six teens in Australia. There are different forms of anxiety but symptoms include feeling worried or scared, having butterflies, a racing heart, sweaty palms or having trouble sleeping. Feeling all these things can make you even more worried and stop you from doing your normal activities, which creates a vicious cycle and can make you more isolated. A good place to start is getting an assessment, so you know what is going on. Sometimes there are medical causes for symptoms of anxiety that need to be ruled out. Your GP is a good place to start, or you can contact your local headspace centre (headspace.org.au). These services are confidential, but I would encourage talking to a parent or adult you trust, like a teacher; this is not something a person should have to deal with alone. ReachOut (reachout.com.au) and beyondblue (beyondblue.org.au) are great websites with lots of practical information about anxiety, online forums and advice about phone helplines. Taking that first step to get help might be hard but could be the start of feeling like yourself again.

2015_9_Q5.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 18 years old and I play a lot of sport, but mostly contact activities. Lately I've noticed that my breasts have become saggy and this doesn't help my self-esteem. I

read somewhere that if you stretch the ligaments in your breasts, then they won't be perky again. I don't want saggy breasts at 18! How can I fix this?

2015_9_A5.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

Your sport won't be affecting the ligaments in your breasts so don't worry. Regular exercise will also help your fitness and keep your body in great shape. You don't mention your breast size but some women have larger breasts that appear to 'sag' but really it's to do with their size and shape. It's only after pregnancy, breastfeeding and later menopause that breast tissue itself changes, and with ageing the breasts will not be as full, or 'perky'. Wearing supportive sports-type bras helps with comfort when you play a lot of contact sport and will stop them from a lot of movement if they are large. You also mention self-esteem which is a whole other issue. It's not fair that any woman feels unhappy about themselves on the basis of breast size or shape. Even though unrealistic images in the media are partly to blame, it can signal underlying difficulties with mood, anxiety or relationships (such as being bullied). I don't want to make any assumptions, but if you are feeling unhappy about things, then try and talk to a trusted adult, or confidentially to a health professional about your feelings first.

2015_9_Q6.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 14 and I got my period last year, and have been getting it regularly ever since. The problem is I've had no breast development. Is this normal? I feel really self-conscious and left behind.

2015_9_A6.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

Everyone develops at different speeds and will develop breasts that are different shapes and sizes. Your breast size will depend on your genetics and weight. By the time a girl gets her first period, her breasts will have been developing for a couple of years on average, but they can continue to grow for a few years. You should be able to feel some breast tissue underneath and around your nipples, and the areolae (darker circles around the nipples) should also have grown and become darker in colour. If none of this has happened, you could see your doctor to discuss your worries, if you feel OK talking to your mum or any older sisters/cousins about this, you could ask them how old they were when their breasts first started to develop. Feeling self-conscious can be no fun at all, but almost every teenager feels this way about their body at some stage. It can be hard when your friends have developed before you, but try and remember that they probably felt the same way too.

2015_9_Q7.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

About a week after my period ends and about a week before it starts, I get this clear jelly kind of substance in my undies. What is it? Is it normal?

2015_9_A7.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

Yes it's completely normal. You're noticing the changes in vaginal fluids that happen with every menstrual cycle. These fluids come from a combination of secretions (fluid seeping through the vaginal walls) and clear mucous from the cervix (the opening of your uterus). Both these fluids keep your vagina healthy by maintaining the right pH balance, and keeping it free from infection or overgrowth of yeasts and other bacteria. The two parts of these fluids vary over the menstrual cycle: the vaginal secretion part increases from the beginning of your period until the next one, whereas the cervical mucous part often varies in consistency and texture. At the time of ovulation, the mucous made by your cervix can get very runny and stringy, whereas in the week leading up to your period it can often be thick, white and clumpy. What you've noticed is more than likely to be the changes in mucous. Normal vaginal fluid is clear to off-white in colour and shouldn't smell bad. If you notice any changes in smell or colour or develop any unusual symptoms like itching, burning or pain then see your doctor for a confidential discussion.

2015_9_Q8.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

I noticed that I have stretch marks around my belly. It might be because I am overweight but I don't know for sure. Please, DOLLY Doctor - can you help me?!

2015_9_A8.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

Stretch marks are common, and happen to girls of all shapes and sizes. They appear as parallel lines or streaks in the skin, which can be white, brown, pink, red or purple, depending on your skin type. While it's not certain why some people get stretch marks and others don't, they happen when the skin stretches quickly, such as with rapid weight gain, and with changes in body shape. During puberty, stretch marks can appear on the breasts, hips, buttocks, thighs and lower stomach as these are the parts of the body that give us our womanly curves. Stretch marks always fade over time, and though there are lots of expensive creams and lotions advertised, these don't get rid of stretch marks once they are there. It's important to look after your skin by eating healthily, drinking lots of water, and staying fit and physically active. It's easy to feel self-conscious about your body but remember that many of your friends might even be going through the same thing.

2015_11_Q1.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

Whenever I try to have sex, my vagina hurts a lot and goes green and crusty. I can never get the penis in. What can I do?

2015_11_A1.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

Many women experience discomfort when they first try to have intercourse, and it can feel as though a penis can't fit inside the vagina. There is almost never an actual size

problem, since the vagina is a stretchy muscular tube (that can even fit a baby!), but tightening or spasming of the muscles will make it difficult and painful, in which case your partner should stop. This is usually related to anxiety and it's best to have sexual play in other ways (fingers, using lots of lubricant) and trying to relax the muscles. However, I'm concerned about what is going 'green and crusty'. I think you might mean you notice a green discharge after sex that dries? Or are you referring to crustiness on the vaginal skin/opening itself? Either way, it could signal an infection or a skin condition, or both, in which case this may be causing or contributing to painful sex. I'd advise you to see your doctor, a sexual health or Family Planning clinic for a confidential, proper assessment. Sex should be safe, enjoyable and relaxing - so try to get the advice you deserve.

2015_11_Q2.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

My boyfriend and I want to have sex for the first time with each other. We've done it before, but we want this time to be special. Is it possible to have sex underwater and is it safe?

2015_11_A2.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

Yes, it is possible and it's as safe as you make it, but being safe starts with mutual consent and communication. The fact you've talked about it and you're asking this question is a good sign. It's important to know the risk of pregnancy (or STIs) is the same whether underwater or not. A condom could come off or break more easily underwater so be careful. You may like to see a GP or sexual health centre for a confidential STI check before having sex with your boyfriend, and encourage him to do the same. You might also want to talk about contraception. It might feel awkward, but shows a lot of maturity by looking after your health.

2015_11_Q3.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

I have moles (two on the side of my face and one on my arm) that have become scabby since scratching them. If the scab comes off, they bleed. Is this dangerous? Could this lead to cancer if the sun got to them?

2015_11_A3.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

While the Australian sunshine can be wonderful, it does mean higher rates of skin cancer in fair-skinned people. The most common skin cancers happen in older people who have had a much longer exposure to the sun's harmful UV rays. Melanoma is a type of skin cancer that can affect younger people, which is why cancer experts recommend regular skin checks ('mole patrols') for fair-skinned people once you hit your teens. Signs to look out for are any changes in size and colour, itchiness and bleeding. It's also important to remember that moles often grow during puberty. So, the best way to be reassured is to have your GP check them. Everyone, whether they have moles or not, should remember to wear sunscreen, a hat and a pair of sunnies

any time they're outside, and try to minimise the time you spend in the sun. Unprotected sun exposure not only causes sunburn and skin cancer, but can also lead to premature ageing of skin and sunspots, known as solar keratoses, later in life.

2015_11_Q4.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

I'm almost 14 and have had my period for three years. In the last year, my period pain has gotten a lot worse. It makes me feel sick, and paracetamol doesn't help. The only thing that helps is a long sleep with a heat pack, but I can't do that at school. My periods also go over five days but on the fourth day I don't have it at all. I've talked to Mum but she doesn't get pains and doesn't know what to do.

2015_11_A4.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

Period pain is no fun at all but it can be effectively treated. Just as you've found, period pains often start, or get worse, after the first couple of years. This is because your menstrual cycles become more 'mature' and the hormones that cause pain are in full swing. The things you've tried, like heat packs and resting, can help. Gentle exercise, like going for walks or doing stretches, can also help with cramps. Tablets with ibuprofen are more effective than paracetamol but need to be taken at the first sign of your period and before the pain hits. Although period pain is common, it shouldn't be so bad that it interferes with day-to-day life. It's worth a chat with your GP who might suggest a trial of the Pill, which is used for managing various period problems. Visits to your doctor are confidential, but if you like, you are welcome to take your mum along to help discuss the problem and decide on the next steps.

2015_11_Q5.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 13 and I have recently started fingering myself. I have noticed a large lump (about twice the size of a marble) about 3cm down inside my vagina. I'm really worried it might be cervical cancer but I have lost my mother and don't want to have to tell my dad about it if it's nothing to worry about! I have had the vaccination to prevent cervical cancer but I'm really worried!

2015_11_A5.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

I'm so sorry to hear you've lost your mum. Try not to worry - this is not cervical cancer. The lump could be the tip of your cervix which is at the end of your vagina. The diameter is about the size you describe and its consistency is a bit firmer than the tip of your nose. As your vagina grows during puberty, its lining also becomes bumpy, so the lump may be just a normal part of the vagina wall, or it could be a cyst (fluid-filled sac) or blocked gland underneath the surface. The hymen is a skin-like membrane near the opening of the vagina that can feel like a smallish lump. You might want to try looking at diagrams of the anatomy inside the vagina to see if you can pinpoint where this lump is. You could also see a GP; doctors are used to talking about body issues, and it's confidential. Your doctor might ask you about periods,

discharge (fluid from the vagina) and whether you've had sex. If you're comfortable with it, your doctor could examine the lump. You might like to have someone with you, like a friend or big sister.

2015_11_Q6.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 15 and still haven't had my first period, but lately I've been experiencing a lot of discharge down there. I'm talking about every couple of days. Is this normal? Do I need to wear a panty liner?

2015_11_A6.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

What you're noticing is a sign your first period is not too far away. One of the hormones of puberty (oestrogen) that makes your breasts grow and helps bring on periods also causes the vagina to secrete a fluid that is clear or white. It usually dries yellow on your undies and shouldn't have a bad smell. The fluid can occur quite frequently, and it's fine to wear a panty liner if you want to. Your first period comes two years after your breasts first start to develop, and after you have your major growth spurt. You might want to talk to your mum or any older sisters about how old they were when they had their first periods. It can be really useful to know what to expect to make it a little less scary. A good idea might be to carry a couple of pads in your school bag just in case your first period catches you off guard on a school day!

2015_11_Q7.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 12 and super tall, and I have a size 36B bra and all my friends are like double-A cups. Are my breasts normal?

2015_11_A7.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

Yes, your breasts are completely normal, and so are those of your friends. It sounds as though you started puberty a little younger than your friends, and might have had, or be going through, your growth spurt already. Most girls start developing breasts around the age of 11, but it can be as young as eight or as old as 14. So it's only natural that there will be a huge range of breast sizes when you're 12. The other things that affect your breast size is your genes as well as your general health and weight.

2015_11_Q8.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

I have a crush on a 16-year-old that I am talking to on Tinder. I have never met him IRL and I'm actually only 13. What should I do?

2015_11_A8.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

It can be exciting to talk to guys online and easy to develop feelings for them even when you haven't met them in person. Just as you wouldn't give your personal details out to a stranger on the street, be careful about telling a guy online information like where you live or go to school, or your phone number. Once you have written something on Tinder or any social media, it can be shared without your knowledge and can't be deleted easily. If you plan on meeting this guy in real life, ensure that you're meeting in a public place, do not go alone, and make sure someone knows where you are and who you are going to be with. While most people you chat to might be average teenagers, just keep in mind what their motivation is for meeting up. Don't be afraid to stand up for yourself if anything makes you feel uncomfortable, whether online or in person.

2015_12_Q1.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

I've got stomach hair, which you can see when I put on my bikini. I would really like it gone, and it's also getting around my boobs. Please help.

2015_12_A1.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

It's very likely all these things are completely natural. The first sign of puberty is pubic hair, and it grows on your outer labia (vaginal lips) and across the top of the pubic bone. It can extend from the middle of your pubic bone in a thin line up towards your belly button, and from your outer labia on to the inner thighs. The amount of pubic hair you have depends on genetic and racial factors. When your breasts grow, so do your nipples and areolae (the dark circles around the nipples). These areolae contain occasional hair follicles, so long hairs can appear here. During puberty, girls also grow more hair on their arms and face. However, they shouldn't have hair on their chest, back, or across the whole width of the stomach. If you think you have excessive body hair, then ask for a check-up from your doctor, as this can be a sign of hormone imbalances. Hair can be removed in several ways, including shaving, waxing, plucking and depilatory creams. However, hair removal is not compulsory, and these methods can cause skin rashes and can be very expensive. Perhaps you could chat with your mum to see what's normal for female members of your family. You could also get her advice on hair-removal methods.

2015_12_Q2.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

I'm in Year 9 and this whole year I've been stressed. I don't sleep well and I have a short temper. I've tried telling my parents but they just wave it off cos they're too focused on my sister, who has depression. I feel really neglected and like they don't see how I've been struggling. Is there something wrong with me?

2015_12_A2.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

Your feelings are real and important - there's nothing wrong with wanting someone to help you and to listen. Year 9 can be stressful for all sorts of reasons, like school

work, and worrying about your body and friends. It's also a time you need your parents' support, but with a sister who's been unwell, that support feels like it's not there. I can't say whether you might also have depression, or anxiety - both are common in teens - or whether there might be something else going on. I'd encourage you to keep trying to talk to your parents. It's not because they don't care about you, it's just that they don't appreciate what's really going on. Choose a time to approach them when they're not in a rush and when you're feeling calm. You might also want to talk with a professional or another adult, and you can do that at the same time as trying to talk with your parents. You could see your GP, look for a Headspace service, or talk to a teacher or school counsellor.

2015_12_Q3.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 13 and have no idea of my sexuality. I picture kissing as kind of a disgusting thing. I also think of sex as a little bit terrifying and not something that I really want to do. I have never liked anyone, either girl or guy. I don't know what this means and if it's normal.

2015_12_A3.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

It means that you're completely normal. Sexuality is as natural as life itself, and is as varied as humans are. There is absolutely no need to define your sexuality - either now, or ever. What we do know about sexuality is that we are born with it; it doesn't start when you're an adult or going through puberty. Young children can often be seen touching themselves for stimulation. When the body goes through puberty, it often brings all these new and strong sensations, such as sexual arousal or intense attractions. However, for many young people this is not the case at all. There are also adults who do not feel interested in sex. These people may refer to themselves as 'asexual'. Others might feel strongly that they are attracted to the same or opposite sex or both. There's no need to give yourself a label, since that's all it is - something you feel describes you. And if you don't need a label, don't have one! Just be yourself.

2015_12_Q4.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

I'm 14 years old and all of my friends have grown up a lot since we were kids - all except me. Unlike my friends, I still have a pink room full of teddies and I still watch shows like My Little Pony. They often tease me and I'm starting to feel insecure about it, so I've been avoiding going shopping or to sleepovers with them. Is there a point in life where you have to grow up? How should I deal with this?

2015_12_A4.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

Your questions show you're a very mature and intelligent 14-year-old, who is already growing up. You don't need to worry about what you enjoy or don't enjoy. One of the most difficult things about being a teen is believing you have to like or do what everyone is doing. And it would be sad to be untrue to yourself by changing who you

are. At your age, it's normal for tastes and interests to change among friends, so be aware that this is just something that happens. You can be interested in how your friends are changing without being interested in the same things as they are. Rather than worrying about not liking the same things as them, ask them what it is about shopping or media that they find interesting. Sometimes at this time of life, we find ourselves drawn to different people - friends grow apart and new friends come together. This can happen without pain or hurt, but if it does involve any sort of teasing or bullying then it's not OK. And that's a time when it really helps to talk to a parent, a teacher or a trusted adult about how you feel.

2015_12_Q5.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

I'm almost 14 and had my period for three years. This year, my period pain has gotten worse. It makes me feel sick, and Nurofen and Panadol don't help. The only thing that does is a long sleep with a heat pack but I can't do that at school every time. My periods are also very strange; they go over five days but on the fourth day, I don't have it at all. My mum doesn't know what I should do.

2015_12_A5.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

It sounds like you have a common experience called 'dysmenorrhoea', which means 'painful periods'. Over 80 per cent of young women will have dysmenorrhoea sometimes, and a smaller percentage will have it almost every month. Bad period pain can be associated with nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and feeling dizzy or light-headed. Needing to miss school or having to go to the sick bay during class is a sign the dysmenorrhoea is severe. The main hormone responsible for bad period pain and associated symptoms is called prostaglandin. Anti-prostaglandin medication, such as ibuprofen (the active agent in Nurofen), can help reduce or prevent dysmenorrhoea if taken just before or right at the start of a period. More than one dose might be needed over the first day or two. As you've discovered, heat packs are good. Rest can help, but sometimes so can exercise. When period pain occurs often, it's sometimes worth trying the Pill. The Pill may be a contraceptive, but it's also recommended as a medical treatment for this kind of pain. Your period pattern is also just a normal variation; it's the pain that's more important to get under control so you can enjoy normal activities during your period. Perhaps your mum can help you make a doctor's appointment and support you to get medical advice.

2015_12_Q6.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

My vagina has been itchy for ages now, ever since I finished sport at the end of the year. I haven't been using soap as apparently it makes it worse. I've tried salt baths and cream but none of it's really working. Please help.

2015_12_A6.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

A common myth is that the vagina is the same thing as the vulva, for example. The vulva is the outside genitals in a woman. The hair-covered parts can be affected by skin conditions such as eczema, psoriasis and dermatitis, which can all cause itch. If you remove pubic hair, that can cause skin irritation, inflammation and itch, same as soap or perfumes, whereas water-soluble oils and unperfumed moisturisers can be soothing. A different scenario is if the itch is coming from inside the vagina itself. The most common cause of this is an overgrowth of yeast, causing thrush. If thrush becomes severe, it can cause a white discharge, redness or swelling of the vaginal opening and inner lips, and burning when you pee. Thrush is easy to treat and can be done so with an antifungal cream. There are also other possibilities such as an allergy to something, or an STI if you're sexually active. Having a proper assessment and diagnosis is really important. You can see your doctor confidentially. It's possible she will want to examine you, because that will help with the diagnosis, but you have the right to decide whether you want that or not. It's up to you.

2015_12_Q7.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

I have a best childhood friend who I've known since I was two years old. He has an older brother Troy who's now 18. Troy has recently shown signs of liking me. I kind of have feelings for him too, but I'm only 13 and I just don't know what to do. Me and Troy were Skyping the other day and my dad told me to stop talking to him as he's an older boy. My dad's also threatening to never take me to visit their family again. I'm really upset and angry that my dad is being so controlling and over-protective. I really need some advice.

2015_12_A7.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

Parents can feel anxious when their children show signs of growing up. Unfortunately, your dad's way of dealing with his concern isn't that helpful. You're being mature by recognising your feelings, and by wanting to find a sensible way to deal with it. It's natural to respond to a guy showing signs of liking you. The age difference between you and Troy wouldn't matter if you were both a little older, but when you're only 13, it is worth looking at closely. Being a family friend can mean it's easy to like one another, and to feel you trust him. On the other hand, trust your instincts, and if anything doesn't feel right about his interest in you, listen to your inner voice (if you're not sure, talk to someone). Now, as for your dad, this is a great opportunity for you to show him how mature you are by starting the conversation. Remember, he's trying to look out for you, so ask him what he's worried about, and tell him how you see things. It's OK to disagree, but the only way to find common ground is to talk it out.

2015_12_Q8.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

Do you have to be a certain age to have sex? What if you're 14 and want to have sex? When I was 12, my friends were having sex but I always wondered how they bought condoms. I'm curious!

2015_12_A8.txt

<section> DD sex, body, health & love </section>

<title> </title>

Firstly, sexual behaviours include kissing, touching someone's genitals or breasts, oral sex, penis-vagina sex (intercourse), anal sex, and others. None of these behaviours are OK unless the people involved consent to it, no matter how old or young they are. I'm guessing you're referring to sexual intercourse and wondering about the 'age of consent', which refers to laws that say two people are considered old enough to be allowed to have intercourse. In Australia, this law varies from state to state. In most states, it's illegal if you're under 16. However, if two people are legally 'too young' but they both consent and are of a similar enough age, it is rare that they would get charged. What's more important is that a person has sex (of any type) when they're ready - physically and emotionally - so that it's a positive experience without any unwanted consequences. Speaking of which, condoms are useful for preventing unwanted pregnancy and STIs. In Australia, people of any age can buy condoms. As for how it might happen, being able to have a conversation about sex with a potential partner is more likely to make it a positive and protected experience, so it's good for people to ask about it first.

Appendix 3: Keyword list, DDD corpus compared to the Australian Corpus of English

Keyword	Freq.	N. Freq.	Texts	% Texts	LL
your	1546	1747.3	484	45.0	4560.1
you	2283	2580.3	560	52.0	4385.7
I'm	506	571.9	351	32.6	1422.4
I	1689	1909.0	575	53.4	1258.9
my	845	955.1	439	40.8	1125.8
it's	537	606.9	360	33.5	1115.4
can	795	898.5	486	45.2	1062.6
you're	339	383.2	227	21.1	1043.0
if	784	886.1	450	41.8	987.9
feel	347	392.2	264	24.5	916.6
sex	270	305.2	165	15.3	853.0
don't	410	463.4	323	30.0	827.0
boyfriend	189	213.6	162	15.1	782.8
really	327	369.6	266	24.7	720.7
guy	169	191.0	133	12.4	648.3
talk	226	255.4	173	16.1	645.3
skin	184	208.0	90	8.4	585.5
help	270	305.2	220	20.4	573.0
friend	213	240.7	153	14.2	547.2
friends	210	237.3	160	14.9	513.9
want	270	305.2	213	19.8	513.0
doctor	177	200.1	146	13.6	508.5
about	601	679.3	384	35.7	490.9
mum	140	158.2	102	9.5	473.2
vagina	108	122.1	70	6.5	465.0
try	191	215.9	156	14.5	459.2
do	409	462.3	334	31.0	446.1
I've	184	208.0	151	14.0	444.6
yourself	150	169.5	107	9.9	435.2
like	445	503.0	329	30.6	405.8
me	445	503.0	282	26.2	402.0
get	305	344.7	262	24.3	389.1
how	301	340.2	232	21.6	378.6
normal	131	148.1	116	10.8	351.3
breasts	89	100.6	56	5.2	345.8
feelings	113	127.7	84	7.8	340.1
relationship	124	140.1	86	8.0	331.5
puberty	77	87.0	63	5.9	327.3
hair	145	163.9	60	5.6	304.5
think	217	245.3	181	16.8	301.3
sexual	110	124.3	72	6.7	295.8
what	430	486.0	324	30.1	288.4

guys	87	98.3	64	5.9	5.0
him	381	430.6	212	19.7	279.8
periods	93	105.1	60	5.6	279.7
know	244	275.8	211	19.6	275.9
counsellor	67	75.7	62	5.8	7.1
body	166	187.6	105	9.8	266.6
might	206	232.8	172	16.0	260.7
girls	123	139.0	91	8.5	239.6
doesn't	109	123.2	98	9.1	229.8
you've	91	102.9	78	7.2	228.9
things	167	188.7	129	12.0	228.5
someone	121	136.8	97	9.0	227.7
stop	109	123.2	95	8.8	219.6
tell	131	148.1	119	11.1	216.4
breast	55	62.2	31	2.9	204.6
can't	115	130.0	105	9.8	199.3
pill	49	55.4	32	3.0	197.6
make	223	252.0	184	17.1	195.1
sure	113	127.7	106	9.9	187.7
important	151	170.7	126	11.7	187.2
ok	48	54.3	43	4.0	6.3
go	198	223.8	178	16.5	181.3
feeling	100	113.0	84	7.8	180.6
period	125	141.3	74	6.9	175.6
just	238	269.0	203	18.9	173.4
weight	85	96.1	53	4.9	173.2
vaginal	38	42.9	27	2.5	170.5
worried	62	70.1	60	5.6	168.7
pain	68	76.9	43	4.0	166.5
sounds	59	66.7	53	4.9	165.9
sometimes	110	124.3	100	9.3	165.2
infection	49	55.4	41	3.8	162.0
talking	80	90.4	74	6.9	161.0
getting	104	117.5	94	8.7	160.7
having	132	149.2	113	10.5	158.3
condom	38	42.9	27	2.5	155.1
symptoms	47	53.1	39	3.6	154.0
going	148	167.3	132	12.3	151.2
best	140	158.2	121	11.2	149.9
lots	50	56.5	46	4.3	149.8
parents	95	107.4	75	7.0	148.9
need	160	180.8	128	11.9	148.2
scared	44	49.7	42	3.9	147.9
pregnant	50	56.5	41	3.8	145.1
gp	38	42.9	33	3.1	145.0
find	138	156.0	113	10.5	143.8
sexually	43	48.6	36	3.3	143.8
won't	75	84.8	72	6.7	140.8

penis	31	35.0	26	2.4	139.1
pregnancy	48	54.3	32	3.0	137.5
what's	64	72.3	60	5.6	136.5
start	91	102.9	79	7.3	135.5
intercourse	37	41.8	30	2.8	132.6
clinic	40	45.2	38	3.5	131.7
he's	84	94.9	71	6.6	130.8
ask	75	84.8	71	6.6	126.4
uncomfortable	33	37.3	32	3.0	119.6
eating	51	57.6	41	3.8	118.9
healthy	44	49.7	39	3.6	118.3
friendship	48	54.3	43	4.0	118.1
adult	53	59.9	46	4.3	116.8
wear	47	53.1	42	3.9	116.3
please	52	58.8	52	4.8	116.3
they're	64	72.3	57	5.3	116.3
something	124	140.1	107	9.9	110.2
trust	54	61.0	50	4.6	108.2
whether	99	111.9	82	7.6	107.0
you'll	52	58.8	48	4.5	105.6
there's	76	85.9	71	6.6	104.6
she's	53	59.9	40	3.7	103.9
trusted	29	32.8	27	2.5	102.8
dad	43	48.6	34	3.2	96.3
lot	91	102.9	87	8.1	95.9
comfortable	38	42.9	36	3.3	94.8
eat	47	53.1	37	3.4	93.5
cycle	34	38.4	27	2.5	91.4
cause	68	76.9	60	5.6	90.8
check	46	52.0	40	3.7	90.3
grow	47	53.1	43	4.0	88.8
hurt	39	44.1	37	3.4	88.7
shouldn't	32	36.2	31	2.9	88.1
recently	64	72.3	62	5.8	87.9
anyone	58	65.6	54	5.0	87.8
makes	66	74.6	63	5.9	83.1
am	89	100.6	75	7.0	82.3
problem	85	96.1	80	7.4	78.4
happening	33	37.3	28	2.6	77.4
painful	28	31.6	27	2.5	77.3
feels	38	42.9	36	3.3	76.0
haven't	38	42.9	34	3.2	76.0
anything	73	82.5	70	6.5	74.8
maybe	51	57.6	46	4.3	73.2
isn't	51	57.6	48	4.5	71.6
wrong	54	61.0	51	4.7	68.5
avoid	38	42.9	33	3.1	68.2
bad	60	67.8	52	4.8	65.2

worry	36	40.7	36	3.3	63.3
tried	53	59.9	48	4.5	62.8
likes	29	32.8	28	2.6	62.5
usually	61	68.9	57	5.3	60.9
relationships	34	38.4	30	2.8	60.4
health	67	75.7	59	5.5	59.6
person	87	98.3	73	6.8	59.6
bit	61	68.9	55	5.1	58.8
aren't	34	38.4	34	3.2	57.5
doing	67	75.7	62	5.8	57.4
affect	30	33.9	28	2.6	57.0
common	62	70.1	56	5.2	57.0
happen	36	40.7	34	3.2	56.7
difficult	59	66.7	51	4.7	56.1
safe	33	37.3	30	2.8	55.5
diet	38	42.9	35	3.3	55.4
girl	55	62.2	52	4.8	54.8
exercise	42	47.5	35	3.3	54.5
decide	33	37.3	30	2.8	53.7
changes	56	63.3	48	4.5	53.3
keep	66	74.6	62	5.8	52.8
trying	53	59.9	48	4.5	52.5
advice	42	47.5	42	3.9	52.5
love	72	81.4	61	5.7	52.0
prevent	32	36.2	31	2.9	51.8
enjoy	33	37.3	29	2.7	51.0
situation	61	68.9	56	5.2	50.9
age	71	80.2	61	5.7	50.2
remember	48	54.3	46	4.3	47.5
hard	67	75.7	66	6.1	46.4
risk	32	36.2	26	2.4	45.9
started	52	58.8	51	4.7	45.6
stress	27	30.5	27	2.5	45.0
myself	45	50.9	39	3.6	43.2
ready	32	36.2	28	2.6	42.9
experience	57	64.4	54	5.0	40.2
everyone	42	47.5	40	3.7	39.9
contact	32	36.2	31	2.9	38.2
worse	28	31.6	28	2.6	37.8
probably	55	62.2	51	4.7	37.1
gets	29	32.8	29	2.7	36.1
lose	29	32.8	27	2.5	33.0
size	45	50.9	37	3.4	32.3
planning	35	39.6	34	3.2	31.2
blood	41	46.3	26	2.4	29.3
treatment	30	33.9	26	2.4	29.1
medical	40	45.2	36	3.3	28.6
develop	32	36.2	29	2.7	28.4

worth	32	36.2	32	3.0	27.5
serious	36	40.7	34	3.2	26.0
caused	32	36.2	28	2.6	25.4
break	28	31.6	26	2.4	23.6
inside	34	38.4	32	3.0	23.2
understand	29	32.8	29	2.7	21.4

Appendix 4: Keyword lists, 1990s and 2010s sub-corpora comparisons

Keyword list comparing the DDD 1990s sub-corpus to the 2010s sub-corpus

Keyword	Freq.	N. Freq.	Texts	% Texts	LL
clinic	37	82.1	35	5.4	32.9
planning	33	73.2	32	4.9	32.0
stds	21	46.6	19	2.9	28.3
guys	68	150.9	54	8.3	27.5
std	18	39.9	16	2.5	24.3
pregnant	42	93.2	33	5.1	24.1
problem	65	144.2	60	9.2	23.4
pill	41	91.0	26	4.0	23.1
condom	33	73.2	23	3.5	22.1
local	33	73.2	32	4.9	22.1
mother	20	44.4	16	2.5	20.4
boyfriend's	19	42.2	18	2.8	19.1
although	37	82.1	35	5.4	15.5
form	20	44.4	18	2.8	13.4
caused	26	57.7	22	3.4	12.7
sexually	33	73.2	27	4.1	12.1
penis	25	55.5	20	3.1	11.8
face	32	71.0	28	4.3	11.3
occur	17	37.7	17	2.6	10.3
cream	21	46.6	17	2.6	8.3
loss	17	37.7	16	2.5	6.5
friend's	18	39.9	16	2.5	5.8
fact	18	39.9	16	2.5	5.8

Keyword list comparing the DDD 2010s sub-corpus to the 1990s sub-corpus

Keyword	Freq.	N. Freq.	Texts	% Texts	LL
gp	36	82.9	31	7.3	38.3
au	18	41.5	14	3.3	25.6
anxiety	28	64.5	17	4.0	24.2
online	15	34.6	12	2.8	21.4
stis	15	34.6	10	2.4	21.4
kids	14	32.3	14	3.3	19.9
down	58	133.6	51	12.0	19.4
org	13	29.9	11	2.6	18.5
thoughts	20	46.1	18	4.2	17.8
com	12	27.6	10	2.4	17.1
check	36	82.9	30	7.1	16.6
sti	11	25.3	10	2.4	15.7
issues	11	25.3	10	2.4	15.7
helpline	10	23.0	10	2.4	14.2
self	37	85.2	34	8.0	12.9
dating	16	36.9	16	3.8	12.9
here	13	29.9	12	2.8	12.7
helpful	13	29.9	12	2.8	12.7
listen	18	41.5	18	4.2	12.5
wondering	15	34.6	14	3.3	11.8
boobs	12	27.6	11	2.6	11.4
felt	17	39.2	16	3.8	11.4
call	17	39.2	16	3.8	11.4
e	19	43.8	10	2.4	11.2
experiencing	19	43.8	17	4.0	11.2
shaving	21	48.4	15	3.5	11.2
hear	11	25.3	11	2.6	10.1
line	13	29.9	12	2.8	9.4
chat	13	29.9	13	3.1	9.4
angry	13	29.9	13	3.1	9.4
depression	15	34.6	13	3.1	9.2
themselves	15	34.6	12	2.8	9.2
encourage	15	34.6	14	3.3	9.2
scary	10	23.0	10	2.4	8.9
upset	20	46.1	18	4.2	8.5
options	12	27.6	10	2.4	8.3
conscious	18	41.5	17	4.0	8.3
open	14	32.3	14	3.3	8.1
happy	17	39.2	17	4.0	7.4
actually	17	39.2	17	4.0	7.4
stay	15	34.6	13	3.1	7.2
chest	11	25.3	10	2.4	7.2
example	13	29.9	13	3.1	7.1
checked	16	36.9	15	3.5	6.5
issue	14	32.3	11	2.6	6.3

tough	14	32.3	12	2.8	6.3
handle	10	23.0	10	2.4	6.1
negative	10	23.0	10	2.4	6.1
differently	10	23.0	10	2.4	6.1
conversation	15	34.6	15	3.5	5.6
pressure	13	29.9	12	2.8	5.4
late	11	25.3	10	2.4	5.2
stand	12	27.6	10	2.4	4.5
saying	12	27.6	11	2.6	4.5

Appendix 5: Keyword lists, DDD sub-corpora compared to the Australian Corpus of English

Keyword list comparing the DDD 1990s sub-corpus to the Australian Corpus of English

Keyword	Freq.	N. Freq.	Texts	% Texts	LL
your	871	1932.5	286	43.9	3094.7
you	1166	2587.1	337	51.7	2510.7
I'm	289	641.2	205	31.4	980.5
my	469	1040.6	252	38.7	741.6
sex	176	390.5	111	17.0	699.6
I	847	1879.3	323	49.5	666.8
boyfriend	125	277.3	109	16.7	656.5
guy	123	272.9	96	14.7	603.1
you're	158	350.6	116	17.8	553.5
if	388	860.9	247	37.9	521.0
can	373	827.6	255	39.1	506.3
it's	227	503.7	170	26.1	471.9
don't	205	454.8	169	25.9	458.9
doctor	123	272.9	100	15.3	454.4
skin	104	230.8	52	8.0	401.2
feel	139	308.4	118	18.1	378.4
friend	109	241.8	81	12.4	321.6
want	144	319.5	115	17.6	315.1
vagina	58	128.7	43	6.6	315.0
guys	68	150.9	54	8.3	289.4
I've	101	224.1	90	13.8	287.9
talk	94	208.6	76	11.7	287.6
really	131	290.7	116	17.8	283
try	101	224.1	84	12.9	281.5
get	177	392.7	155	23.8	279.1
puberty	48	106.5	36	5.5	258.4
me	236	523.6	160	24.5	243.5
relationship	74	164.2	53	8.1	242.3
friends	90	199.7	77	11.8	230.4
help	110	244.1	92	14.1	229.1
do	200	443.8	170	26.1	227.3
him	227	503.7	136	20.9	223.9
counsellor	43	95.4	38	5.8	219.4
pill	41	91.0	26	4.0	213.3
sexual	65	144.2	41	6.3	213.3
yourself	66	146.4	50	7.7	210.7
periods	54	119.8	39	6.0	197.7
girls	78	173.1	57	8.7	193.7
normal	63	139.8	58	8.9	189.9

how	143	317.3	117	17.9	183.8
breasts	39	86.5	30	4.6	181.5
go	133	295.1	121	18.6	180.4
tell	83	184.2	74	11.3	177.3
hair	74	164.2	30	4.6	175.1
condom	33	73.2	23	3.5	174.0
like	202	448.2	160	24.5	171.2
doesn't	65	144.2	61	9.4	168.3
mum	47	104.3	38	5.8	168.1
pregnant	42	93.2	33	5.1	165.0
clinic	37	82.1	35	5.4	164.5
can't	69	153.1	61	9.4	148.7
feelings	45	99.8	38	5.8	144.9
think	102	226.3	90	13.8	144.7
you've	49	108.7	43	6.6	144.5
sexually	33	73.2	27	4.1	143.6
penis	25	55.5	20	3.1	143.2
stop	60	133.1	51	7.8	142.1
may	148	328.4	111	17.0	139.1
infection	33	73.2	27	4.1	138.3
best	89	197.5	77	11.8	130.3
weight	50	110.9	28	4.3	124.3
sure	63	139.8	58	8.9	124.0
body	76	168.6	50	7.7	124.0
vaginal	21	46.6	16	2.5	120.3
genital	21	46.6	18	2.8	120.3
know	110	244.1	98	15.0	118.3
scared	28	62.1	27	4.1	117.8
make	117	259.6	97	14.9	115.4
discharge	24	53.3	16	2.5	115.0
find	83	184.2	71	10.9	112.6
pregnancy	31	68.8	20	3.1	111.6
need	93	206.3	74	11.3	109.4
boyfriend's	19	42.2	18	2.8	108.8
won't	46	102.1	45	6.9	108.3
intercourse	24	53.3	21	3.2	108.2
stds	21	46.6	19	2.9	106.9
friendship	33	73.2	30	4.6	105.4
you'll	38	84.3	36	5.5	105.3
parents	55	122.0	42	6.4	105.2
pain	36	79.9	24	3.7	102.4
problem	65	144.2	60	9.2	100.1
symptoms	25	55.5	19	2.9	98
wear	31	68.8	26	4.0	97.9
they're	41	91.0	34	5.2	96.1
going	80	177.5	73	11.2	95.2
he's	49	108.7	42	6.4	93.6
someone	50	110.9	41	6.3	90.6

friend's	18	39.9	16	2.5	90.4
whether	62	137.6	51	7.8	90.3
should	118	261.8	106	16.3	87.9
lots	25	55.5	24	3.7	86.9
period	59	130.9	38	5.8	85.1
std	18	39.9	16	2.5	82.7
eat	31	68.8	24	3.7	80.1
trusted	18	39.9	16	2.5	79.6
getting	49	108.7	44	6.7	78.5
shouldn't	21	46.6	20	3.1	73.2
sometimes	48	106.5	46	7.1	69.4
uncomfortable	16	35.5	16	2.5	69.2
talking	34	75.4	32	4.9	68.3
cause	40	88.8	37	5.7	66.6
eating	25	55.5	18	2.8	64.9
having	58	128.7	52	8.0	64.8
might	72	159.8	62	9.5	64.7
important	60	133.1	52	8.0	61.9
there's	39	86.5	38	5.8	59.5
girl	39	86.5	36	5.5	59.5
planning	33	73.2	32	4.9	59.2
worried	22	48.8	22	3.4	58.7
comfortable	20	44.4	19	2.9	57.9
am	50	110.9	43	6.6	56.5
dad	22	48.8	18	2.8	55.9
healthy	19	42.2	16	2.5	54.8
sounds	20	44.4	20	3.1	54.6
painful	16	35.5	16	2.5	53.3
she's	25	55.5	20	3.1	52.3
adult	23	51.0	20	3.1	52.2
what's	25	55.5	23	3.5	50.9
cream	21	46.6	17	2.6	49.5
isn't	29	64.3	27	4.1	49.2
diet	25	55.5	23	3.5	49.1
ask	31	68.8	30	4.6	49.1
age	46	102.1	43	6.6	48.8
grow	23	51.0	21	3.2	47.3
probably	40	88.8	37	5.7	46.8
love	45	99.8	40	6.1	46.4
affect	19	42.2	18	2.8	46.1
haven't	20	44.4	19	2.9	45.8
recently	31	68.8	30	4.6	44.7
using	45	99.8	39	6.0	44.5
decide	21	46.6	19	2.9	44.4
start	35	77.7	31	4.8	44.2
hurt	18	39.9	17	2.6	44.0
usually	35	77.7	32	4.9	43.5
feels	19	42.2	18	2.8	42.2

anyone	27	59.9	25	3.8	41.8
prevent	20	44.4	19	2.9	41.5
exercise	25	55.5	19	2.9	41.0
avoid	20	44.4	18	2.8	40.9
things	50	110.9	45	6.9	40.8
started	33	73.2	32	4.9	40.8
bad	32	71.0	27	4.1	39.9
trust	21	46.6	20	3.1	39.4
situation	36	79.9	33	5.1	39.2
caused	26	57.7	22	3.4	38.1
tried	28	62.1	26	4.0	37.7
quite	45	99.8	41	6.3	37.1
feeling	29	64.3	28	4.3	36.0
remember	28	62.1	27	4.1	35.1
health	35	77.7	30	4.6	34.9
common	33	73.2	30	4.6	34.8
difficult	31	68.8	28	4.3	33.3
lose	20	44.4	20	3.1	33.1
changes	30	66.6	27	4.1	33
occur	17	37.7	17	2.6	32.6
happen	18	39.9	17	2.6	30.9
serious	25	55.5	25	3.8	29.2
wrong	24	53.3	23	3.5	29.0
aren't	16	35.5	16	2.5	28.3
treatment	20	44.4	16	2.5	28.2
myself	24	53.3	21	3.2	26.5
gets	17	37.7	17	2.6	26.4
medical	25	55.5	24	3.7	25.6
anything	30	66.6	28	4.3	25.4
experience	29	64.3	28	4.3	22.1
bit	26	57.7	22	3.4	21.5
blood	22	48.8	18	2.8	18.3
advice	17	37.7	17	2.6	18.1
makes	21	46.6	20	3.1	16.3
loss	17	37.7	16	2.5	15.7

Keyword list comparing the DDD 2010s sub-corpus to the Australian Corpus of English

Keyword	Freq.	N. Freq.	Texts	% Texts	LL
you	1117	2573.3	223	52.6	2408.2
your	675	1555.0	198	46.7	2239.2
it's	310	714.2	190	44.8	797.4
I	842	1939.8	252	59.4	697.0
feel	208	479.2	146	34.4	688.0
you're	181	417.0	111	26.2	674.4
I'm	217	499.9	146	34.4	673.9
can	422	972.2	231	54.5	667.9
if	396	912.3	203	47.9	564.9
really	196	451.5	150	35.4	544.0
my	376	866.2	187	44.1	502.6
don't	205	472.3	154	36.3	471.9
talk	132	304.1	97	22.9	467.7
help	160	368.6	128	30.2	425.9
mum	93	214.3	64	15.1	403.4
about	349	804.0	204	48.1	384.4
friends	120	276.5	83	19.6	360.9
boyfriend	64	147.4	53	12.5	321.8
sex	94	216.6	54	12.7	314.1
friend	104	239.6	72	17.0	307.4
yourself	84	193.5	57	13.4	298.4
skin	80	184.3	38	9.0	291.1
like	243	559.8	169	39.9	275.0
vagina	50	115.2	27	6.4	273.3
do	209	481.5	164	38.7	260.9
want	126	290.3	98	23.1	260.1
feelings	68	156.7	46	10.8	256.5
breasts	50	115.2	26	6.1	244.3
try	90	207.3	72	17.0	242.8
might	134	308.7	110	25.9	238.9
things	117	269.5	84	19.8	234.8
how	158	364.0	115	27.1	233.2
I've	83	191.2	61	14.4	220.3
normal	68	156.7	58	13.7	216.1
what	233	536.8	167	39.4	196.7
guy	46	106.0	37	8.7	195.2
me	209	481.5	122	28.8	194.2
think	115	264.9	91	21.5	188.7
know	134	308.7	113	26.7	186.4
gp	36	82.9	31	7.3	183.2
feeling	71	163.6	56	13.2	180.0
ok	35	80.6	32	7.5	173.4
body	90	207.3	55	13.0	173.4
hair	71	163.6	30	7.1	168.5

someone	71	163.6	56	13.2	167.7
breast	33	76.0	18	4.2	155.1
puberty	29	66.8	27	6.4	153.6
get	128	294.9	107	25.2	153.0
important	91	209.6	74	17.5	149.8
doctor	54	124.4	46	10.8	148.2
relationship	50	115.2	33	7.8	142.0
sounds	39	89.8	33	7.8	141.6
worried	40	92.2	38	9.0	139.8
periods	39	89.8	21	5.0	130.6
sexual	45	103.7	31	7.3	129.6
just	134	308.7	113	26.7	128.5
you've	42	96.8	35	8.3	118.1
please	38	87.5	38	9.0	116.8
counsellor	24	55.3	24	5.7	116.7
sometimes	62	142.8	54	12.7	115.3
talking	46	106.0	42	9.9	114.6
pubic	21	48.4	11	2.6	113.8
having	74	170.5	61	14.4	110.9
start	56	129.0	48	11.3	110.1
period	66	152.0	36	8.5	109.2
something	80	184.3	67	15.8	106.1
what's	39	89.8	37	8.7	105.8
stop	49	112.9	44	10.4	105.4
check	36	82.9	30	7.1	102.6
shaving	21	48.4	15	3.5	100.3
getting	55	126.7	50	11.8	100.1
anxiety	28	64.5	17	4.0	99.5
vaginal	17	39.2	11	2.6	98.6
nipples	17	39.2	12	2.8	98.6
make	106	244.2	87	20.5	96.7
lot	61	140.5	57	13.4	96.0
ask	44	101.4	41	9.7	93.7
doesn't	44	101.4	37	8.7	93.1
itchy	19	43.8	14	3.3	93.0
lots	25	57.6	22	5.2	88.6
pain	32	73.7	19	4.5	88.1
stis	15	34.6	10	2.4	87.0
online	15	34.6	12	2.8	87.0
sure	50	115.2	48	11.3	85.3
symptoms	22	50.7	20	4.7	84.8
trust	33	76.0	30	7.1	84.6
makes	45	103.7	43	10.1	82.8
healthy	25	57.6	23	5.4	82.5
adult	30	69.1	26	6.1	80.9
au	18	41.5	14	3.3	80.9
girls	45	103.7	34	8.0	80.2
experiencing	19	43.8	17	4.0	78.3

can't	46	106.0	44	10.4	75.9
uncomfortable	17	39.2	16	3.8	75.6
org	13	29.9	11	2.6	75.4
weight	35	80.6	25	5.9	72.0
maybe	35	80.6	31	7.3	72.0
eating	26	59.9	23	5.4	70.5
going	68	156.7	59	13.9	70.2
boobs	12	27.6	11	2.6	69.6
confidentially	12	27.6	11	2.6	69.6
tell	48	110.6	45	10.6	69.0
she's	28	64.5	20	4.7	64.7
sti	11	25.3	10	2.4	63.8
parents	40	92.2	33	7.8	61.2
upset	20	46.1	18	4.2	60.4
scared	16	36.9	15	3.5	59.3
hairs	16	36.9	11	2.6	59.3
dating	16	36.9	16	3.8	59.3
anything	43	99.1	42	9.9	58.6
scary	10	23.0	10	2.4	58.0
helpline	10	23.0	10	2.4	58.0
cycle	18	41.5	13	3.1	57.8
hurt	21	48.4	20	4.7	57.0
infection	16	36.9	14	3.3	55.9
there's	37	85.2	33	7.8	55.9
anyone	31	71.4	29	6.8	55.8
guys	19	43.8	10	2.4	55.0
need	67	154.4	54	12.7	54.5
wondering	15	34.6	14	3.3	54.5
dad	21	48.4	16	3.8	53.4
checked	16	36.9	15	3.5	52.9
he's	35	80.6	29	6.8	52.6
recently	33	76.0	32	7.5	52.3
grow	24	55.3	22	5.2	52.3
won't	29	66.8	27	6.4	51.5
hard	45	103.7	44	10.4	51.4
comfortable	18	41.5	17	4.0	50.8
thoughts	20	46.1	18	4.2	50.3
pregnancy	17	39.2	12	2.8	49.8
confidential	12	27.6	12	2.8	49.6
find	55	126.7	42	9.9	48.2
conscious	18	41.5	17	4.0	47.8
thing	47	108.3	44	10.4	47.7
hurting	10	23.0	10	2.4	47.4
doing	40	92.2	37	8.7	47.4
wrong	30	69.1	28	6.6	47.0
person	50	115.2	39	9.2	46.7
happening	17	39.2	15	3.5	46.7
often	55	126.7	49	11.6	46.6

worry	21	48.4	21	5.0	46.3
trying	33	76.0	28	6.6	46.2
relationships	20	46.1	19	4.5	44.8
trusted	11	25.3	11	2.6	44.5
bit	35	80.6	33	7.8	44.0
tissue	15	34.6	12	2.8	43.6
stomach	13	29.9	12	2.8	43.5
listen	18	41.5	18	4.2	43.5
feels	19	43.8	18	4.2	43.4
chat	13	29.9	13	3.1	42.1
advice	25	57.6	25	5.9	41.0
keep	38	87.5	35	8.3	40.7
best	51	117.5	44	10.4	40.6
safe	19	43.8	16	3.8	39.9
haven't	18	41.5	15	3.5	39.7
depression	15	34.6	13	3.1	39.5
helpful	13	29.9	12	2.8	38.4
wear	16	36.9	16	3.8	37.5
enjoy	19	43.8	16	3.8	36.9
they're	23	53.0	23	5.4	36.8
painful	12	27.6	11	2.6	36.5
aren't	18	41.5	18	4.2	35.8
avoid	18	41.5	15	3.5	35.3
telling	17	39.2	17	4.0	34.9
cause	28	64.5	23	5.4	34.6
self	37	85.2	34	8.0	34.2
honest	12	27.6	12	2.8	34.2
hormones	12	27.6	11	2.6	34.2
likes	14	32.3	13	3.1	33.9
am	39	89.8	32	7.5	33.8
hang	13	29.9	11	2.6	33.4
friendship	15	34.6	13	3.1	33.1
noticed	18	41.5	17	4.0	32.5
lately	11	25.3	11	2.6	32.2
possible	39	89.8	33	7.8	32.0
happen	18	41.5	17	4.0	32.0
sister	20	46.1	18	4.2	31.9
bad	28	64.5	25	5.9	31.5
tried	25	57.6	22	5.2	31.2
whether	37	85.2	31	7.3	31.0
isn't	22	50.7	21	5.0	30.3
confused	14	32.3	14	3.3	30.2
differently	10	23.0	10	2.4	30.2
shouldn't	11	25.3	11	2.6	30.1
ready	18	41.5	15	3.5	30.0
health	32	73.7	29	6.8	29.9
everyone	24	55.3	23	5.4	29.6
starting	17	39.2	17	4.0	29.3

sensitive	11	25.3	10	2.4	29.1
able	37	85.2	32	7.5	28.7
difficult	28	64.5	23	5.4	27.9
size	27	62.2	22	5.2	27.7
eat	16	36.9	13	3.1	27.7
conversation	15	34.6	15	3.5	27.6
common	29	66.8	26	6.1	27.3
stress	14	32.3	14	3.3	27.1
definitely	10	23.0	10	2.4	27.0
angry	13	29.9	13	3.1	26.7
risk	16	36.9	13	3.1	25.8
chest	11	25.3	10	2.4	25.7
remove	11	25.3	10	2.4	25.7
mean	29	66.8	25	5.9	25.6
encourage	15	34.6	14	3.3	25.6
break	19	43.8	18	4.2	25.5
changes	26	59.9	21	5.0	25.2
thinking	24	55.3	22	5.2	24.8
usually	26	59.9	25	5.9	23.7
depressed	11	25.3	10	2.4	23.6
helps	10	23.0	10	2.4	22.1
older	17	39.2	14	3.3	21.9
asking	13	29.9	13	3.1	21.8
experience	28	64.5	26	6.1	21.4
contact	16	36.9	16	3.8	21.4
stuff	12	27.6	10	2.4	21.1
myself	21	48.4	18	4.2	20.7
options	12	27.6	10	2.4	20.6
knowing	12	27.6	12	2.8	20.6
develop	18	41.5	16	3.8	20.6
you'll	14	32.3	12	2.8	20.4
worth	18	41.5	18	4.2	20.0
reasons	17	39.2	17	4.0	19.9
exercise	17	39.2	16	3.8	19.9
affect	11	25.3	10	2.4	19.0
completely	13	29.9	12	2.8	18.4
worse	13	29.9	13	3.1	18.4
discuss	13	29.9	12	2.8	18.4
negative	10	23.0	10	2.4	17.9
remember	20	46.1	19	4.5	17.5
sleep	15	34.6	14	3.3	17.4
else	23	53.0	22	5.2	17.4
behaviour	16	36.9	13	3.1	17.2
putting	11	25.3	11	2.6	17.2
prevent	12	27.6	12	2.8	17.1
fat	12	27.6	10	2.4	17.1
happy	17	39.2	17	4.0	17.1
actually	17	39.2	17	4.0	17.1

decide	12	27.6	11	2.6	16.8
fun	11	25.3	11	2.6	16.7
concerns	12	27.6	11	2.6	16.4
tough	14	32.3	12	2.8	15.6
seeing	11	25.3	11	2.6	15.1