



Sex with animals and STDs?

Question

Alice,

I recently had intercourse with a sheep at a friend's house. He is a sheeprancher and one day he was talking about how good it was. He left town for a few days and asked me to feed his animals. I took the chance and gave it a try. The strange thing is that I enjoyed it more than having sex with my girlfriend. When I was a young lad I was molested by a female babysitter. I was wondering if you may think that the earlier incident in my life has affected my sexuality. I liked it so much that I want to do it again, but I am worried that I may contract a STD from the ewe. I have heard that you can.

Could you please help me?

Sincerely, Woody

Answer

Dear Woody,

Generally speaking, the STIs (sexually transmitted infections) we associate with person-to-person sexual contact, including HIV, cannot be transmitted through sexual contact between humans and animals because these infections are species-specific. There are a number of infections that are known to cross the species barrier, but these are not the STIs that concern most humans — for more information, check out the archived response to Bestiality. If you remain worried about potential disease risk with any type of sexual activity, follow safer-sex guidelines — such as wearing a condom — in each and every one of your sexual encounters.

Aside from infections, here's something else to consider: it's impossible for animals to consent to sex with humans, and these acts are illegal in most places. If animals become the focus of one's sexual attention and activity, it might be time to call a mental health counselor in your area to explore what's on your mind: concerns, motivations, etc. Have you asked yourself why you might want to have sex with non-human animals? Are there other worries besides STIs that prompted you to send in the question?

As with other uncommon, taboo, and/or illegal activities, sexual contact with animals might be stimulating for some people because they are secretive, forbidden, and potentially dangerous acts. On the flip side, an animal doesn't "kiss and tell," nor do her or his expectations "get in the way." Some historical background on human-animal relations, along with other reasons why anyone would even horse around this way, can be found, again, in the response to Bestiality.

As for you Woody: confusion, fears, mistrust, anger, or anything else you might feel about the sexual abuse you experienced earlier in your life may be reason enough to consider picking up the phone for some assistance, regardless of what behaviors it may or may not be triggering now (for more on help in this area, see Resources for male survivors of childhood sexual abuse and incest in the *Go Ask Alice!* Emotional Health archive).

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