

**Dear Deirdre ... / CHAPS, GMFA ; illustration by Barrie Dwyer.**

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Gay Men Fighting AIDS (Organization)  
CHAPS (Organization)

**Publication/Creation**

[1997?]

**Persistent URL**

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/p35w2td5>

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WHY IS SAFER SEX



dear  
Deidre,

1997

A good friend of mine met an attractive guy recently. One thing led to another and they ended up having sex together. He has an open relationship with his boyfriend so it wasn't like he was cheating on him or anything.

Unfortunately he had unsafe sex with this guy and now he is unsure what to do. The agreement he has with his boyfriend is that they both have safer sex with men outside the relationship, but don't use condoms with each other.

Friend of Dorothy

Dear Friend of Dorothy,

Please, I wasn't born yesterday! "A good friend!?!?..." We're talking about you here aren't we? The big temptation will be to forget about it and carry on in your relationship as normal, but you should tell your boyfriend exactly what's happened. He'll probably give you a load of shit over it, but it'll be a damned sight easier than telling him a few years down the line that you've given him AIDS.

So, you've had unsafe sex away from home. If you want to continue having unprotected sex with your boyfriend, then FIRST get tested for HIV. To be sure that the result is accurate you need to have a test three months after you had unsafe sex with your one night stand, because if you have caught HIV it might take several weeks for the test to show up positive. In the meantime you should use condoms with your partner because the spooky thing is, during those first three months after infection the virus is highly active in the body, which means if you are positive you're much more likely to pass it on.

Now would be a good time for both of you to get all of your past history out into the open. If you find either of you are having unprotected sex with other guys on a regular basis you might want to re-think your ideas about having unprotected sex together.

**CHAPS**  
COMMUNITY  
HIV AND AIDS  
PREVENTION  
STRATEGY

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**GM -A**  
Gay Men Fighting AIDS

Illustration by barrie dwyer©