

## LGBT RESOURCES AND PUBLICATIONS

Here are a few quality resources:

**LGBT health care:** The National  
LGBT Health Education Center  
[www.lgbthealtheducation.org](http://www.lgbthealtheducation.org)

**Transgender health:** The Center of  
Excellence for Transgender Health  
[www.transhealth.ucsf.edu](http://www.transhealth.ucsf.edu)

**Health care organizations with a  
commitment to LGBT health care:**  
The Human Rights Campaign (HRC)  
publishes a Health Equality Index:  
[www.hrc.org/hei](http://www.hrc.org/hei)

**Support for friends and family:**  
Parents, Families, Friends and Allies  
United with LGBTQ People (PFLAG):  
[www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Will my provider share my private  
information with others?**

Your health care provider is bound by laws to keep your information private. If you are under 18, these laws will vary by state and policies may vary by medical practice. You can ask for certain information not to be entered into your medical record.

**What if my provider uses the wrong terms or  
pronouns about me or my spouse/partner?**

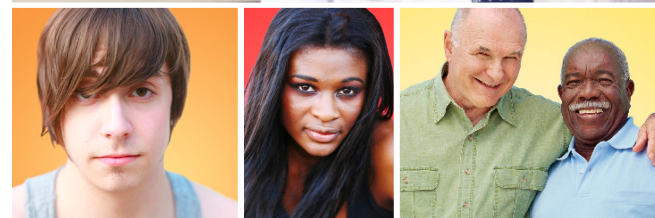
Providers may not always know what terms you prefer to use. Let them know how you describe yourself and your partner(s), and they should start to use those words.

**What if I still don't feel comfortable  
coming out to my current provider?**

There are many ways to find a provider you connect with. To start, you can talk to friends or use the resources in this brochure. Finding a provider you feel at ease with is essential to your all-around health and wellness.

## Do Ask, Do Tell:

Talking to your health care  
provider about being LGBT



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**Columbus LGBT Care Coordinator**  
**Jessica Homan, MSW, LISW**  
**614-388-7238**



**VA**

U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

## COMING OUT TO YOUR PROVIDER

Coming out to your health care provider is an important step to being healthy. Many people are not aware that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people face unique health risks. Some of these include: higher smoking rates, a greater risk of attempting suicide, and a higher risk for sexually transmitted diseases. Talking with your provider can help you address these issues and access the care you need most. You can be an active partner in your health care by being open about your: sexual orientation - sexual behavior - and - gender identity.

### Reasons to come out:

#### Your Provider can:

- Provide care that is personalized to your needs.
- Offer referrals to specialists who are welcoming to LGBT people.
- Be sensitive to current health trends that affect LGBT people.

Health care is about the whole person. By being open with your provider, you allow him/her to provide you with comprehensive care that supports your mind, body and spirit.



## BEHAVIORAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

LGBT people often experience prejudice, stereotyping, and harassment or bullying by others. Discrimination can be very stressful. And, it can put you at risk for depression, anxiety, substance abuse, feelings of loneliness, and even suicide. Sharing these concerns and issues with your provider helps ensure you receive the best possible care.

Exercise and healthy eating are important components of wellness. Physical health plays an important role in feeling emotionally healthy, too! Research has shown that LGBT people are more likely to smoke. Lesbians are at higher risk for obesity. And, some gay men struggle with poor body image. If you discuss these issues with your health care providers, they can advise you on healthy diets and self-image, smoking cessation, and exercise routines.

All LGBT people should feel comfortable talking to providers about family life issues. This can include issues such as partner abuse (feeling safe at home), and the need for a living will.

## SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Talking to your provider about your sexual health isn't easy. But, there are many benefits to doing so. Each person's needs will differ. Some of the sexual health issues that may be important to discuss are:

- Screening for STDs and HIV
- Getting vaccinated for HPV and hepatitis A and B
- Using condoms or other barrier methods
- Safer sex education and counseling
- Problems with sexual function or satisfaction
- Plans to adopt or conceive children
- Lesbians and bisexual women and some transgender people should have routine Pap smears and breast cancer screening.

