



## Talking to Your Healthcare Team About Being Part of the LGBTQ+ Community.



### Talking with your care team

**The better we know you, the better we can care for you.**

Your health is important. Being open with your care team about your life is important for staying healthy. This includes letting your care team know if you are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ+), or have questions about your sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Being open with your care team means they can:**

- Pay closer attention to health issues that affect LGBTQ+ youth.
- Learn to use the terms, names, pronouns and other words you prefer.
- Refer you to other health experts and specialists who can meet your specific needs.
- Better involve you in decisions about your health.
- Help connect you with support for you or your family, especially if you are having problems.

Our mission is to improve the health of our communities, one person at a time. Every detail of who you are matters to your health, and we want to know all about it so we can provide the best care for YOU.

Learn how we're personalizing care:  
[NovantHealth.org/TellUsMore](https://NovantHealth.org/TellUsMore).



### Your physical and mental health

Research studies show members of the LGBTQ+ community are at greater risk for certain health issues, like HIV and STDs, smoking, alcohol use, depression and suicidal thoughts. Being LGBTQ+ can be stressful if your family is not accepting or if you are teased or bullied. Discussing problems at home or school, and being honest about using drugs and alcohol, will help your team give you the best possible care. Your care team can also help you get extra support if you need it.

### Your sexual health

Talking to your care team about sex isn't easy, but it's very important. If you are having sex or thinking about becoming sexually active, some issues to discuss are:

- Getting tested for HIV and STIs (infections that are spread through sex).
- Getting vaccines to prevent HPV and hepatitis A and B (viruses that can be spread through sex).
- Using condoms and other methods to prevent STIs, HIV and pregnancy.
- Getting a Pap test (a test that can help detect cervical cancer).
- Being sexually, physically or emotionally abused by a partner, family member or other person.



## Questions you may have

### **I don't want anyone besides my care team to know about my sexual orientation or gender identity. Will this information be shared?**

Your care team and Novant Health are bound by laws and policies to keep your information private. If you are under 18, there are certain situations in which your parents can have access to this information in your medical record. You can also ask your care team members not to enter this information into your medical record.

### **What if a member of my care team uses the wrong terms or pronouns when referring to me?**

Members of your care team may not always know what terms you prefer to use. If your care team members don't ask which pronouns you would like them to use, let them know how you describe yourself. If you give your care team permission, they will include this information in your medical record so that others involved in your care will use the name and pronouns you prefer.

### **What if I still don't feel comfortable coming out to my care team?**

There are several ways to find a care team you connect with. To start, you can talk to friends or use the resources in this brochure. Finding a care team you are comfortable with is essential to your health and wellness.

Novant Health would like to acknowledge the National LGBTQIA+ Health Education Center, a program of the Fenway Institute, as a primary source for information found in this brochure.

## Support for youth

There are several places for LGBTQ+ youth to find support. Here are a few.

### **Want a safe place to call for information, referrals and support?**

Try the Peer Listening Line, 617-267-2535 (toll free 800-399-PEER) or the LGBT National Help Center's Youth Talkline at 800-246-PRIDE (7743).

### **Have you experienced violence or sexual assault?**

Contact the Safe Horizon Project at 800-621-HOPE (4673) or contact the Sexual Assault Hotline at 800-223-5001.

### **Have you run away from home or are you homeless?**

Call the National Runaway Safeline for help at 800-786-2929, or visit [1800runaway.org](http://1800runaway.org).

### **Are you feeling sad or thinking about hurting yourself?**

Call the Trevor Project's Lifeline, 866-488-7386, or visit [thetrevorproject.org](http://thetrevorproject.org).

### **Want to find LGBTQ+ affirming physicians and clinicians?**

Use the "Find a provider" tool on the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association and World Professional Association for Transgender Health sites: [glma.org](http://glma.org) and [wpath.org](http://wpath.org).

### **Want additional support for your friends or family?**

PFLAG, a national organization that unites people who are LGBTQ+ with families, friends and allies, publishes lists of organizations it partners with and local groups for support, education and advocacy: [pflag.org](http://pflag.org).

## Resources and information

Here are websites LGBTQ+ youth can visit to find healthcare or get more information.

### **Questions about your sexual health?**

Visit Advocates for Youth at [advocatesforyouth.org](http://advocatesforyouth.org).

### **Want support for your friends or family?**

Visit the TransYouth Family Allies at [imatyfa.org](http://imatyfa.org) or Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) for lists of organizations and local support groups [pflag.org](http://pflag.org).

### **Want to help make changes at school?**

Find resources at GSA Network [gsanetwork.org](http://gsanetwork.org) or Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network [glsen.org](http://glsen.org).

### **Want to find organizations committed to LGBTQ+ healthcare?**

Review the Human Rights Campaign Healthcare Equality Index: [hrc.org/hei](http://hrc.org/hei).