



## Sexplained One: Sex & Your Health

**Helen J. Knox**

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*Combining practical medical advice with answers to “squidgy” questions, Knox’s guide is suited to anyone curious about the nuts and bolts of all kinds of sex.*

With one simple, humane assertion—“Men and women are not machines on which a button can be pressed to turn on the desire to have sex at will”—nurse Helen J. Knox sets out to explore the physical, psychological, and cultural aspects of sex in her new book, *Sexplained One: Sex & Your Health*. It’s a mighty subject, but Knox takes it on with humor and patience. Instead of a unified theory of sex, or a moral guide, the book is a useful toolbox to help users make their own informed decisions.

Although *Sexplained One* starts with some sobering statistics—such as the lifetime cost of a treating single AIDS patient—Knox writes with general humor and a friendly tone. The guide makes no assumptions about sexual experience, preference, or dysfunction, and reads like a clinical *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. Laid out in a friendly, welcoming format, the book is as easy to read as a pamphlet. Bright colors, sidebars, and photos provide important, need to know information. Knox’s British English may be a little unfamiliar to the American ear; she uses common British slang terms for body parts, and standard British spelling, but differences are not difficult to understand.

Knox earned her nursing license at Westminster Hospital in 1978, and started a series of pop-up safe sex clinics in London’s most at-risk areas in the early 1990s. A dedicated sex educator who’s worked with sex workers, HIV-positive men and women, and homeless shelters, among others, she is passionate about dispelling myths, stigma, and discrimination about sex. She also fields questions in her long-running “Sexplained” column in *Better Health Magazine*, which she’s written since 2001.

Rather than stick with technical detail, Knox makes sex and sexual health easy to understand, both for people who are new to sex and for people who have specific questions about sexual health. There’s no hand-wringing or shaming in *Sexplained One*: just good, solid reference material. Knox covers subjects from “Vaginal Topics” to “Common Willy Worries,” as well as sexual conditions and diseases and basic sexual health. Excerpts from Knox’s “Sexplained” column take center stage and give Knox the opportunity to hold forth on commonly asked questions about losing one’s virginity, sex after menopause, and intimacy following a hysterectomy or even cancer. Always candid, Knox’s tone is firm and friendly—expert at soothing jangled nerves.

At its core, *Sexplained One* is all about communication and respect, which, Knox says, is the best preventative for sexually transmitted infection. While many people may reach for Google or WebMD, *Sexplained One* includes photos, descriptions, and suggestions—and peace of mind—that random online searches can’t provide.

*Sexplained One* is gently humorous and immensely helpful. Combining practical medical advice with answers to “squidgy” questions, Knox’s guide is suited to anyone curious about the nuts and bolts of all kinds of sex.

CLAIRE FOSTER (February 20, 2017)

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