

# LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX: A SEX-EDUCATION GUIDE FOR YOUNG ADULTS

## 性啟萌：青少年性教育讀本

*Asian parents often have a hard time broaching the topic of sex with their children, and school textbooks don't always say enough. Sexuality expert Shu Yu-Shen teaches young readers to know their own bodies and navigate natural emotional and physical processes.*

There's no doubt that sex education is an essential part of healthy development. Yet taboos against talking about sex make it hard for parents to discuss it with children, and the sex-ed materials used in schools are often woefully lacking. Thus, many young people have to learn about sex and their bodies through gossip, experimentation, and pornography, which can leave them with many false impressions.

This book by Human Sexuality Ph.D. Shu Yu-Shen provides young readers with dependable, scientific information about sex in easily understandable, holistic language. Dr. Shu explains how sexuality develops the human body and the many changes that come with that. He also addresses the legion of myths and difficult questions that attach so easily to our understanding of sex, like: How important is penis and/or breast size, really? What's a g-spot, and where is it? Is masturbation bad for you? (Answer: of course not.)

*Let's Talk About Sex* is dedicated to making sexual development safer and healthier by providing both relevant information as well as sensible, positive ways of explaining it to young readers, parents, and teachers. Its brilliant illustrations are the work of three young female artists – Crystal Kung, Uen Shin, and Penpoint – who depict the subject of each chapter in lively, metaphorically rich images.

Shu Yu-Shen 許佑生

With a B.A. in Chinese Literature, an M.A. in Communications, and a Ph.D. in Human Sexuality, Shu Yu-Shen is one of the Sinophone



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world's few sex educators who is also a full-fledged author. In recent years, he has established himself as a fluent and open communicator of knowledge about sexuality to the greater community of everyday readers, and his writing is designed to be accessible to a general audience. He has written over fifty separate titles, including *Love With Your Lips*, *Love the S&M Way*, *Flirting With Yourself*, and others.

# LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX: A SEX-EDUCATION GUIDE FOR YOUNG ADULTS

By Shu Yu-Shen

Translated by William Sack

## Part 3.4 Semen: A Man'S Ambrosia

For a period of time, people talked about semen oddly, as if it were a miracle beauty product. Internet rumors abounded that semen could be used to whiten your face, or that it could enlarge breasts and remove blemishes, so much was it being extolled. If you accept these statements, though, how have men not become cosmetics barons, with their endless reserves – or, put more tragically, become like cows constantly being milked?

Medical professionals note that semen contains protein and some nutritional value; however, that nutritional content is more or less the amount found in an egg, and it doesn't really do much good as skin care.

So, there we have it! Semen does not possess these secondary advantages, so rumors to that effect can officially be put to bed. Now, let's get back to basics, and understand semen for what it's meant to be!

Indeed, semen's contribution might even be called "The Greatness Enterprise": male semen contains a large number of sperm, which can combine with the female egg to form a fertilized egg. After the fertilized egg matures in the womb, it turns into a baby! Human beings can produce descendants, prolonging the species into eternity - sperm and eggs are great heroes!

### Required Reading:

Semen, or male ejaculate, is a bodily fluid that is ejected through the urethra in the penis. For humanity, semen is man's treasure, and it is not an exaggeration to call it "male ambrosia."

People often mistake semen and sperm as the same thing. In fact, semen is a mixture of bodily fluids produced by male ejaculation, and sperm is contained in semen. The two should not be confused.

More specifically, semen is a milk-white, viscous liquid that is ejected from a penis when a man climaxes. Sperm refers to the hundreds of millions of spermatozoa that swim in said liquid. Semen contains two components: sperm and seminal plasma. Remember this formula: semen = sperm + seminal plasma.

### Seminal plasma

The main ingredient in semen is water, providing the milky white color. Like chicken egg whites,

seminal plasma is there to nourish sperm. Seminal plasma is secreted out of the prostate and through the seminal vesicle. In fact, seminal plasma is a great feast, with more nutrients in it than you can count on your fingers: fat, lactic acid, fructose, prostaglandins, vitamin C, cholesterol, hormones, citric acid, amines, free amino acids and zinc. Sounds like the sperm eat pretty well!

### **Semen – why is it sticky?**

Semen's stickiness should not be disregarded – it's in the design! Semen contains a component called "coagulase." After male ejaculation, the coagulase will quickly solidify the semen and become jelly-like, preventing semen from flowing back out the vagina. After entering the vagina, the coagulation effect reduces, and sperm is liquified by an enzyme. This allows sperm to swim freely, rushing to merge with the egg and form a fertilized egg.

Semen is alkaline. Thanks to its alkalinity, when sperm enters the acidic environment of the vagina, it won't keel over, but instead maintains its vitality and storms the egg castle! At the same time, the ingredients in seminal plasma are an acid-base buffer and play a role in regulating the environment inside the vagina.

### **How much semen is there each time?**

Healthy males have an ejaculation of about 1 ~ 2 teaspoons, which ejects spasmodically at intervals of less than one second, and in about four to five consecutive bursts.

The amount of ejaculate varies according to the quantity of semen in reserve. Supposing sexual intercourse or masturbation has been frequent, the amount of ejaculation will be less. Abstinence also affects ejaculate. The longer someone has been abstinent, the more ejaculate there will be. Additionally, good physical health and a highly excited state also positively correlate with emission quantity.

As you grow older, semen quantity will decrease. This is a natural part of aging and is not something to worry about. Healthy men average about 7,200 ejaculations in their lifetime. Each time you ejaculate, you burn about five to ten calories. The concentration of semen varies from day to day. Hydrating thins semen just as being dehydrated results in thicker semen.

### **Fertilization: Our Inspiration!**

The fertilization process is a marathon in which hundreds of millions of sperm participate, each one trying to win! In the end, the individual sperm with the most physical strength and fighting spirit enters the egg. This journey proves that before everyone is born, they have already stood out among hundreds of millions of competitors. You were made by blue-ribbon sperm! Before you were even born, you were a winner, so don't ever underestimate yourself! Every single person has been a winner from the start.

### **Q&A**

#### **Does semen mix with urine when it comes out?**

The urethra serves the dual functions of urination and ejaculation. Some people will inevitably wonder: Does urine excrete with semen upon ejaculation? This is too common of a worry. No

urine accompanies ejaculation. When men need to urinate, the cerebral cortex receives a message through the nervous system that the bladder is full. Then, the cortex gives instructions that allow the urethral sphincter to relax and push urine out. At the moment of ejaculation, the cerebral cortex is not over-joyed and off-line; it understands that now is not the time for urination, and so it commands the bladder “wait your turn, tense up.”

### **What color should semen be? Is something wrong if it's slightly yellow?**

All boys may be curious and look closely at their semen. The normal color of semen is egg shell or grayish. After abstaining for three or more days, semen may be slightly yellow and more viscous. If semen is reddish or bright red, it may be due to prostatitis or inflammation of the seminal vesicle – in which case, you should seek medical attention as soon as possible.

### **Why does semen smell?**

Semen has a full-bodied scent. Some people hate it, but others think nothing of it.

Some people think that the semen smells like lime, or like bleach's active ingredient, ammonia, and find it irritates the nose. This is because there is a chemical called "spermine ammonia" in semen, so there actually is a shared component with bleach.

### **What they don't teach at school**

#### **Can semen be eaten?**

As mentioned earlier, seminal plasma is full of nutrients and high in protein, so it is theoretically edible, but you still need to respect your sexual partner's preference for or against this. At the same time, boys can make their semen delicious: smoking and drinking will make the semen taste worse, while a healthy diet and lifestyle will improve the taste of semen.

One additional reminder: semen is also a vector of sexually transmitted infections. If there is a bacterial or viral presence in the semen, such as gonococcus or syphilis, gonorrhea and pharyngeal syphilis may result. Sexually transmitted infections can be passed on in more ways than just vaginal sex. Unsafe oral and anal sex also carry the risk of sexually transmitted infections.