Dear Alice,

I know this sounds gross, but sometimes when I get turned on, I like to rub my "vaginal area" on a stuffed dog. After it, I feel good, but a few minutes later, some discharge comes out on my underwear. What's going on, and is this safe?

Answer

Dear Reader,

People of all ages pleasure themselves with a little help from their inanimate friends, not to mention their pillows, mattresses, or whatever else is hanging around. In fact, the term "plushie" is a name that many people who enjoy exploring sex with stuffed animals use to describe their sexuality.

Is it safe? Undies on or off, the discharge you report is likely the normal vaginal secretion that most women experience in varying amounts when they're sexually aroused. This clear, odorless, and natural lubricant usually starts flowing after puberty, and slows or ceases after menopause. Is this emission present when you arouse yourself with your hands alone? If yes, this is a sure sign that all is well. Some people are allergic to materials used to make bedroom beasts. If this were the case, you would most likely experience itching and/or a rash. Some people may be irritated by dust and/or dirt that has accumulated on the stuffed animals. Just to be sure, try to keep your critters clean, or at least your underwear on when engaging in your doggie-style stimulation.

As always, if you remain concerned, or if you have discharge or pain that doesn't seem to connect with masturbating, you may want to speak with a health care provider about your physical symptoms. And feel free to leave the dog out of the conversation if bringing him/her up makes you uncomfortable.

Alice!
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