Dear Repressed, depressed, & scared to act,

When it comes to the transmission of HIV, scary statistics can take all the fun out of sex. It's smart to be cautious, but you don't have to miss out on all the action. Many forms of sexual activity have a very low risk of HIV transmission, and other forms, including oral sex, can be made safer by donning a condom.

As for your specific questions, yes, latex condoms do offer protection and are effective in preventing the transmission of HIV. There are no known cases of HIV transmission through protected male-to-male oral sex. And no, french kissing does not place you at risk of infection, since HIV is not present in a high enough concentration in saliva for transmission. If the infected person has an open sore in his or her mouth, it is still unlikely that HIV will be transmitted because saliva has an inhibitory factor in it that is believed to hinder the virus.

It's worth clarifying that one partner must be HIV positive for transmission to occur. Getting tested, knowing your status, and then having an honest conversation with your partner about your sexual histories can lessen the fear factor before any rendez-vous. Whether you just met or have been doing it for ages, you'll both benefit from knowing your status.

These resources offer more information about gay men's sexual health and HIV transmission and testing:

- Gay Men's Sexual Health Alliance [2] ? GMSHA offers a variety of information and services for preventing HIV and living with AIDS, among other sexual health issues.
When it comes to safer sex, knowledge gives you the power to protect yourself and your partner.

Alice!
Category:
Sexual & Reproductive Health
Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI's)
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