

sextalk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

factoid 51% of UA students read *SexTalk* in the *Arizona Daily Wildcat*. (2004 Health & Wellness Survey, n=1434)

Q. I was wondering, what is the average number of sexual partners for college students that are already sexually active?

A. Among UA undergraduate students who have ever had sexual intercourse, 13% had no sexual partners in the last school year, 60% had one partner, and 16% had two partners. Another 9% reported three to five partners in the last school year, and 2% cited six or more partners. If you add these numbers up, you'll see that 89% of undergrads who have had sex reported two or fewer partners during the last year.

This information comes from the 1,434 students who completed Campus Health's annual Health & Wellness Survey, administered last spring to a random selection of undergraduate classes here at the UA. In a widely published sex study by The University of Chicago in 1994, similar numbers were seen nationally for respondents in the 18-24 age group.

Since these percentages only reflect students who said they have had sexual intercourse, what about the rest? Last year, a full 33% of undergraduate students claimed to be "virgins". Surprised? Most people think there is more sex going on than there actually is. Because the image of sex is seen throughout our culture, people tend to confuse that with sex itself. After all, we see images of sex selling everything from clothes to cars, cigarettes to cola.

While it's only natural that these images influence our ideas about sex, it doesn't make them accurate. That being said, what we see can often be misleading. Sometimes somebody driving a sexy car is just somebody driving a sexy car.

For more information on attitudes and behaviors related to sex, and plenty of reliable data to back it up, check out Kolata, Laumann, and Michael's 1994 book "Sex In America".

Have a question? Send it to sextalk@email.arizona.edu

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