



WHORE  
UPTIGHT  
PRUDE  
SLUT

WILL  
THE  
VIRGIN  
QUESTIONS  
(No need to)

By Cierra Hinton, 17, Staff Writer

*Virgin.* Why does that word stress so many of us out? If you're a girl and you lose your virginity to a guy, you'll be seen as "easy," but if you are a guy who's lost his virginity to a girl then you're a "G" or a "pimp." This double standard is totally unfair and causes a lot of worry for guys and girls. And if you're a guy who loses his virginity to a guy, or a girl who loses her virginity to another girl, you're often left out of the conversation altogether!

Am I still a virgin? 'Cause I use tampons. I ride bikes, and I've masturbated before. How do you know if you've accidentally broken your hymen???

— Amber, 14, FL

And just about everyone stresses about when to lose it or if we should lose it, but does it even matter? Why should we put pressure on one another to be or not be virgins? The

biggest source of worry isn't really being or not being a virgin, but our fears of what we think other people will think of us. I'm here to say relax.

### Am I or Not?

We hear fairly often from virgin girls that they are very afraid that they're going to somehow magically lose their virginity without doing anything sexual at all.

LOSER

"Am I still a virgin? 'Cause I use tampons. I ride bikes, and I've masturbated before. How do you know if you've accidentally broken your hymen???" asks Amber, 14, of Florida.

This is a common fear among girls who think that being a virgin has to do with whether or not you have a hymen—the thin piece of tissue that partially covers the vaginal opening. Many girls tear their hymens before they have vaginal sex. It's so easy to tear your hymen that you can't use that as a definite sign of virginity. If you haven't had vaginal intercourse, and you believe that's what makes you a virgin, then you should think of yourself as a virgin.

Some people believe that if you've never had vaginal sex, but you have had oral or anal sex, you are still a virgin. So does that mean only heterosexual people can lose their virginity? And that girls who have sex with girls or guys who have sex with guys are forever virgins?

When I ask Kara, 19, of Virginia, about this, she says, "I am a lesbian teen. My friends know I'm gay, but they know I've slept with guys before and still use that when they refer to my virginity. But I couldn't even tell you what happened the night I lost my virginity—what I was wearing or what it felt like. I kinda was just doing it because I thought I was supposed to. Then I got to college. I met this girl, and we started fooling around. I remember perfectly when we first slept together—went down on each other. She was the first girl I had ever done anything major with. She was the one that pulled me out of the closet. I remember everything—how wonderful it felt and how glad I was to do it with her. In my mind, that's when I lost my virginity."

Our ideas about who is or isn't a virgin differ from person to person. But what about people who are the survivors of rape or sexual abuse? Have they lost their virginity if the sex they've had was forced on them? I don't think so.

Ultimately, the only person who gets to say if you're a virgin is you. Use what you believe to determine if you're a virgin.

### OMG, You're a Virgin!

While there are teens who worry that they've lost their virginity, others worry because they haven't.

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# THE VIRGINITY QUESTION

(to stress!)

DORK WEIRD CRAZY EASY

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think I'm a loser or a dork if she finds out I'm a virgin. But if I'm not a virgin then she'll think I'm a playa," says Robert, 17, of Florida.

You shouldn't have to lie and say that you aren't a virgin just to impress a girl or guy. You should be comfortable with who you are. That's easier said than done, especially if you have to deal with comments, like "Oh my gosh, you're a virgin!"—or worse, homophobic comments because you've chosen to wait to have sex. How do you react to that? You really don't have to react, because it's OK to be a virgin whether you're a guy or a girl.

But maybe the comments or people's assumptions that you're not a virgin have you thinking you should have sex, like Halima, 14 of NJ.

"In my school, I'm one of the popular girls and everybody thinks I already had sex. I want to have sex before high school is over just because when I'm in college I don't want to be 'the virgin girl,'" explains Halima.

What's so wrong with being "the virgin girl"? Why rush into sex just because people think you're not a virgin? Does what they say really matter all that much? Besides, there are plenty of virgins in college; you won't be the only one.

Enrique, 15, of New Jersey, is a virgin like lots of boys in high school. He is happy being a virgin, and this is what he had to say about not letting the rude comments get to you. "I don't care," says Enrique. "People can think what they want. People think that I'm weird because I'm a virgin or because I'm quiet. I'm not in a rush to lose my virginity. Hey, as long as I don't get a sexually transmitted disease, I'm good," he laughs.

If you're a virgin and the comments get to you, remember that being a virgin is much better than having sex when you're not ready.

And if you're being harassed in school, talk to a trusted adult, teacher or school administrator. No one should have to put up with harassment at school.

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## "Slut" and "Whore" Hurt

Whether you're a virgin or not, having to deal with being called "slut" or "whore" will stress any girl out.

"I have this guy friend who I've had a crush on since the fourth grade, and we've done stuff but not a lot. And now everyone thinks I'm easy.

People call me a slut, a whore, skank, and it sucks," says Brianna, 16, of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

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Life would be easier if we could control what people think or say about us. But we can't, and as long as you know the truth, then that's all that should matter.

Crystal, a 17-year-old from New Jersey, lost her virginity when she was in a relationship and was in love. "People think that I'm wild and crazy," says Crystal. "Some people even call me names like 'slut' or 'whore.'"

It's assumed that girls who aren't virgins are easy. But is that really the case? Do all girls who lose their virginity just want to have sex and give it up at the drop of a hat? Of course not. Crystal certainly didn't.

I asked Crystal how she feels when she is called these names. She says, "It hurts, but I learn to live with it."

## Wait Until You're Ready

Some people may give you a hard time about being or not being a virgin. I know what that's like. There will always be people who pass judgment, but you've got to be true to what you believe in and not let those people stress you out.

And at the end of the day, the choice to have or not have sex is yours. My only advice to you, whether you're a guy or a girl, is to wait until you are 100-percent ready— that way, you'll have no regrets later.