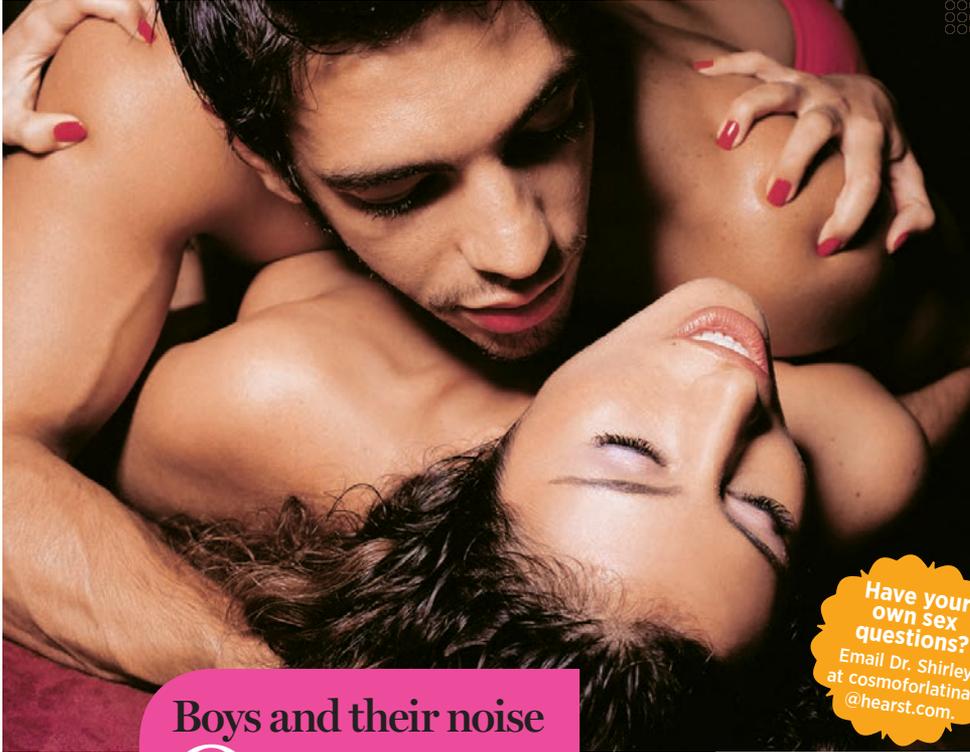


LET'S TALK SEX

Got a question? Our doc knows all.



Boys and their noise

Q My non-Latino boyfriend worries that I'm so loud in bed the neighbors will call the cops. But he's so quiet that I can barely tell he's having fun! What's up with this?

Teresa Martinez, L.A. County

This is a common complaint I hear, especially in bicultural couples. I think it's a great learning opportunity. Maybe he's an introvert and came from a quiet family, so he doesn't equate noise with passion. Talk about it—but not when you're in bed. Ask him, "Why is my expressing my passion so uncomfortable for you?" If he says, "Well, I'm shy," then you have your answer for both of his reactions. But don't let that repress you; this is less about sex than about getting to know each other and understanding each other's cultural—and vocal—differences.

KARINE BASILO

Have your own sex questions? Email Dr. Shirley at cosmoforlatinas@hearst.com.

Don't ask, do tell?

Q I was recently diagnosed with HPV, and I'm devastated. I feel like I can never date again. How would I go about telling someone?

L. Hernández, San Antonio

First of all, I'm glad you found out! Latinas are especially vulnerable to HPV infection: We have the highest rate of HPV-caused cervical cancer (nearly twice as high as non-Latinas). Also, our mortality rate from cervical cancer is second only to that of African-American women. So going to the doctor and getting this treated could be a life-saving decision. As for dating, please don't let this stop you! You don't have to mention it on the first date. It is, however, important to discuss before you have sex so that you can take precautions.



Dr. Shirley Impellizzeri is a clinical psychologist whose new book is *Why Can't I Change? How to Conquer Your Self-Destructive Patterns* (drshirley.com).

If you're having doubts, ask yourself, "Why wouldn't I want to tell him? Do I think he'll judge me, think of me in a negative way, or even leave me?"

Whatever your fears are, it's a risk that's worth taking. Come out of your comfort zone. If you think your situation speaks ill of your character or you know in your heart that you wouldn't date someone who's had it, then I would explore those issues about yourself. Think: Is a person who bolts at the first hint of trouble the kind of person you want to be with anyway?

A weighty subject

Q I've gained weight and feel really self-conscious about my body, especially in bed. How do I deal?

Nancy Garcia, Iowa City

While it's true that guys are visual, they're more interested in having sex than not. The bigger question is, What's going on in your life that's caused you to gain weight? Maybe it's your thyroid—always rule out the medical first. Then investigate the psychological issues: Are you depressed? Stress-eating? Covering up emotions with food? Or have you simply been so busy lately that physical exercise is the one thing you've sacrificed? Tackle those questions first.

Then address the real question with your guy and say, "Hey, I know I've gained a few pounds. Is this still working for you?" If he says yes, then it's a yes. Believe him.

Because, listen, women think guys like the *flacas*. The reality is, most guys don't. The essential thing in and out of the bedroom is always confidence. You can be wearing *chancletas*, no makeup, and wet hair—and if you're confident, relaxed, and in the moment, him wanting you is a no-brainer. ■