Don't ask, do tell?

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.

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

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

Nancy García, 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.