

Love, Lust & Other Stuff

# SEX ON THE FIRST DATE

A man and a woman are shown in profile, facing each other. The man is on the left, and the woman is on the right. They are both looking towards each other. The background is a blurred night scene with colorful lights, possibly from a festival or event. The overall mood is romantic and intimate.

Along with not wearing white after Labor Day (seriously?) and waiting for a guy to ask you out (eff that), you can add “Don’t have sex on a first date” to the list of rules that are now considered one hundred percent outdated.

**COSMO'S  
POLL  
RESULTS**

We used to think that falling into bed with someone too soon would disqualify you from being considered girlfriend material. But welcome to 2013, when the world is a lot less sexist than it used to be. "In this day and age, more people recognize sex as an important component of a successful relationship, not something to be ashamed of," says Justin Lehmiller, PhD, a social psychologist at Harvard who studies relationships and sexuality. "For those people, it's important to establish sexual compatibility early on, and having sex on the first date may be the right move for them."

Ultimately, getting *nekkid* with some dude you've known for only 2.5 hours may not be your thing, and that's fine too. The point is that hard-and-fast dating rules (like "No sex till date three") and old-fashioned expressions like the vile "Why buy the cow when you can get the milk for free?" are antiquated and harmful—they produce all this unnecessary anxiety and shame about something normal and natural: dating and sex. At Cosmo, we're all about breaking the rules, so when the new book *It's Okay to Sleep With Him on the First Date: And Every Other Rule of Dating, Debunked* landed on our desks, we were inspired to launch our own investigation.

**We polled almost 1,000 18- to 35-year-olds about their attitudes on sex on the first date and whether they've actually done it. And we gave the book's coauthor, Jeff Wilser, a chance to break down his POV.**



**"TRUST ME—  
MEN DON'T JUDGE  
YOU FOR HAVING  
SEX ON A FIRST DATE."**

You go on a date. It's fun. You hook up...and then he loses interest. Why did this happen? Who knows: Maybe he's too picky, maybe he doesn't feel a spark, maybe he's commitmentphobic, or maybe he's just a game-playing douche.

There is one variable, however, that almost never feeds into the equation: whether you "gave it up" too soon. It's a misconception that is held by millions

(spoiler alert: Cosmo's poll found that 83 percent of women believe men think less of a woman who has sex on the first date), but the truth is, most guys just don't think like that (67 percent of guys polled say they absolutely don't). Men are simple creatures. In the history of planet Earth, no guy has ever said, "She's awesome. She's intelligent. She's sexy, and she's into *Game of Thrones*. There's only one problem....We hooked up on the first date."

"If the moment feels right, and there's chemistry, why not sleep together?" says my friend Teddy, a designer, who has the guts to say what most guys really think. When he was 23 and living in Austin, Texas, a female bartender thought he was cute and asked him out. On their first date, they slammed tequila shots, danced to Patsy Cline, hailed a cab, made out in the back seat, and then stumbled into her apartment to do what single people do. Did Teddy think that she wasn't girlfriend material? The question strikes him as ridiculous. "After a first date hookup, all I think about is whether I like her, whether she's smart and funny, and if I want to see her again." He did. They dated exclusively for a few months, and no, while it didn't end in a wedding (most relationships don't), their breakup had nothing to do with the boozy romp.

If there's chemistry, there's chemistry, and from the guy's perspective, it doesn't really matter if we hook up on date one or date seven. I don't say this lightly. I just cowrote a dating book about it. As part of our research, my cowriter (relationship expert Andrea Syrtash) and I heard hundreds of men say the same thing again and again: Men are unfazed by first-date booty.

Let's look at Exhibit B. A few years ago, Phil from Chicago (then 36 and an exec at a chocolate company) visited some friends in Toronto. He hit it off with a woman named Rica, who decided to seduce him. "I just wanted to get laid," Rica told me, laughing. "I had bought a new \$5,000 bed, and I wanted to break it in."

The conventional wisdom would say that Rica made a mistake. Acted too aggressively. Misplayed the game.

**Have you ever had sex on a first date?**

YES 38.6%  
 NO 61.4%

YES 44.4%  
 NO 55.6%

**Have you ever had sex on a first date—and then had that date turn into a relationship?**

YES 27.8%  
 NO 13.9%

**I've never had sex on a first date**  
58.3%

YES 36.8%  
 NO 13.2%

**I've never had sex on a first date**  
50%



**Have you ever wanted to have sex with a guy on the first date (or with a guy you met out) but held off because you liked him and didn't want him to get the wrong idea about you?**

YES 63.5%  
NO 36.5%

**Do you know any couples who started out by having sex on a first date?**

YES 44.5%  
 NO 55.5%

YES 58.6%  
 NO 41.4%

The almighty judges who make The Rules would be shocked—shocked!—to learn that when the back of Rica’s dress tore open, she turned to Phil and said, “Well, I guess you’re going to have to keep your hand on my ass all night.” Phil told the conventional wisdom to go to hell. **“It wasn’t a red flag. It was super hot and sexy.”** And then, the next morning, it was so much more intimate. We got to know each other, and we found that we had so much in common.” They broke every rule. They christened Rica’s bed, spent the weekend together, held hands at the coffee shop, and when Phil returned home to Chicago, “It felt magical, like we were already boyfriend and girlfriend.”

How about Phil’s buddies? Did they snicker, disapprove, and warn that she’s only booty-call material? That’s not how we operate. “My friends just told me, ‘You lucky devil!’” Phil e-mailed Rica to say that if she came to visit, he would make her an elaborate six-course dinner of scallops, monkfish, and lime sorbet. She hopped a flight to Chicago, he cooked, and they started dating long-distance.

Okay. It’s time for a key clarification. I’m not saying that you *should* hook up on the first date. I’m not arguing that it will boost your odds of finding love. That logic is nutty, and I have no idea if it makes sense from your perspective. Maybe it does, maybe it doesn’t, and there are 357 valid reasons to wait, including: If you think the guy’s acting sketchy, if you have religious or moral reasons, if he uses the expression *YOLO*, if you want to ratchet up the delayed gratification, if his texts include *ROFL*, if he enjoyed *Fifty Shades of Grey*, if you’re a virgin, if you have an STD. (Obvious? I’d hope so. But my lawyer is forcing me to type these disclaimers at gunpoint.) **All I’m saying is that if you want to hook up, we’re not going to think less of you. You shouldn’t feel guilty. You shouldn’t feel ashamed.**

(A final disclaimer: This is true for most guys—not every guy. The roots of this double-standard go back to the twisted mind-set that a

guy who sleeps around is a stud and a woman who sleeps around is a slut. It’s ugly, unfair, and openly sexist. And would you really want to date that kind of hypocrite anyway?)

When researching the book, we found that many women decided to wait for their own reasons. “If you know that sleeping with someone won’t bring out your best or will make you needy, it’s a good idea to wait,” says Andrea Syrtash, my cowriter on the book. “However, **don’t wait because you think the guy will lose respect or interest. Wait because of how it will affect you.** It’s really not about him. Guys who are interested in you will still call and pursue you after they’ve seen you naked.”

**Confession time:** It’s also possible that we won’t call after a first-night hookup. This happens. I’ve had dates where I was only kinda-sorta feeling it, then we drank a round of margaritas, then another round, and soon we’re making out and hooking up. (Stay classy, Jeff!) Then the next morning, we’re sober. The spark is gone, and date two never happens. The fallacy, though, is thinking that date two would have happened if we had skipped the nooky. That’s misidentifying the root cause. **If the man and the woman are a match, it doesn’t really matter when they hook up.** Corollary: If they’re not a match, it also doesn’t really matter. (See the handy matrix, at left.)

As for Phil and Rica? Eventually he moved to Toronto to live with her. They traveled to England as a couple, toured the countryside, and even stayed in a stone castle...where he took out a diamond ring and popped the question. She said yes! ■

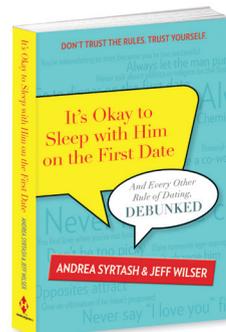
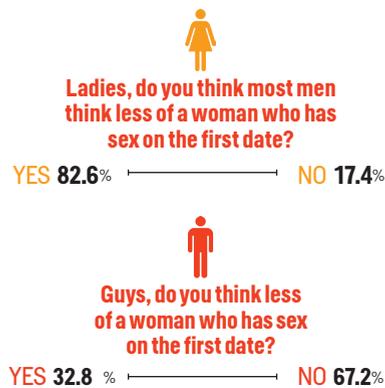
**COSMO'S POLL RESULTS**

**In your current or most recent relationship, if you waited several months to have sex, why did you wait?**



**WHAT DID COSMO'S POLL AND JEFF'S RESEARCH FIND? IT DOESN'T MATTER WHEN YOU SLEEP WITH HIM!**

		<b>Will this lead to a serious relationship?</b>	
		<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Do you hook up on the first date?</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>SOMETIMES THIS HAPPENS</b>	<b>SOMETIMES THIS HAPPENS</b>
	<b>YES</b>	<b>SOMETIMES THIS HAPPENS</b>	<b>SOMETIMES THIS HAPPENS</b>



**Jeff Wilser** is the New York-based coauthor of *It's Okay to Sleep with Him on the First Date: And Every Other Rule of Dating, Debunked*.