

Physiology
— or a question
of honour?



losing your
hymen?



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afraid of losing your
hymen?

Everything about the hymen
and what it means for you



afraid of
hymen





afraid of losing your hymen?

In some societies, it is seen as being very important that a girl remains a virgin until she is married. In some extreme cases, family members bring out the blood-specked bed sheet the morning after the wedding night to show to the rest of the family, in order to «prove» that the bride was a virgin until the wedding. If there is no blood on the sheet, then these traditional families will believe that the bride was not a virgin. This can have serious consequences for the girls; they can be subjected to violence and maltreatment, and in some cases even threatened with death. To protect themselves from shame, violence and cruelty, some girls get in touch with hospitals or clinics that «repair» the hymen by surgery.



The belief that an intact hymen is proof of virginity is based on ignorance. The demand that a girl proves her virginity on her wedding night by the breaking of her hymen ignores the fact that many girls are in fact born without a hymen. This tradition has no other purpose than to suppress women's sexuality, and has its origin from primitive times. It is important that girls have knowledge of their own bodies, so that they can defend themselves against unfairness and injustice, physical violence and psychological torture. Parents must also be informed of a woman's physiology, so that they too can defend their daughters against discriminating traditions.



what is the hymen?

The hymen is a thin membrane that is found at the vaginal opening in some girls and young women. It is comprised of tissue that partly covers the vaginal opening. The hymen has an opening in the middle, which is either round or oval, which leaves an opening for menstrual blood to flow through.

Do all girls have a hymen?

Not all girls are born with a hymen. The hymen is already formed when the foetus develops in the mother's womb. However, the tissue that makes up the hymen and covers the vaginal opening can be completely divided whilst the child is still in the mother's womb. The fact that a girl has a hymen is not an indication of whether or not she is a virgin. Some girls who are still virgins do not have a hymen.



is a hymen proof that a girl is a virgin?

The hymen is not necessarily proof that a girl is a virgin. Some hymens are so elastic that they do not tear or are only partially torn during sexual intercourse. Thus there is no blood in this case. Some girls can break their hymen without knowing about it themselves.



You can break the hymen through, among other things:

Gymnastics, gynaecological examinations, or by using tampons etc. To have a hymen (or not) is therefore no proof that a girl is a virgin – or not. It is also impossible to determine just by medical examination whether a girl or young woman has had vaginal sexual intercourse.

Know about your body and your rights, and fight for your personal freedom and dignity!