

# COLUMBIA SPECTATOR ARCHIVE

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## AIDS Awareness

Over the past five years, college campuses have seen a tremendous amount of improvement in the level of student awareness about sexually transmitted diseases. Very few students now would consider engaging in sex without using a condom, lest the fear of contracting AIDS provide an unwanted measure of danger.

Unfortunately, purchasing condoms is sometimes a difficult task. University Health Services provides condoms for free during business hours and area drug stores are open all night, but these sources can seem worlds away on a cold winter night. After last semester's hoopla over installing condom machines in the basement of every dorm, the machines in Wallach and John Jay are broken, and other machines have been vandalized. These machines must be kept stocked and in working order at all times. As for vandalism, seemingly harmless jokes become dangerous if students who need condoms decide it's easier to do without.

As students living in New York City, we are in one of the highest risk categories for non-IV drug using people our age. There may be a lot of hype about AIDS awareness now, but awareness can be diminished quickly by complacency. Safer Sex Awareness week sponsored many forums and lectures and gave away hundreds of free condoms and brochures. On display this month in the East Wing Gallery at Ferris Booth Hall, the Postcrypt Art Gallery, and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine are art exhibits dealing with the threat of AIDS present in our lives. These issues are in our minds now, but they must remain there in the future.

Get the facts and know where you can turn for help. Health Services provides an excellent AIDS information brochure to all students at the beginning of each year, in addition to sponsoring talks by Dr. Whoopie. The Columbia Gay Health Advocacy Project (854-2878) and the Columbia AIDS Peer Educators (854-5113) are also available for counseling. When lives are at stake, students must continue to be aware of the threat of AIDS.