

# INTERSEX IS NOT...

## A SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Intersex solely refers to a person's sex characteristics. Body parts don't define who a person is or is not attracted to.

## A GENDER

Again, Intersex solely references someone's sex characteristics. These characteristics include hormones, chromosomes, anatomy, reproductive organs, and secondary sex characteristics. Sex characteristics are often seen as defining a person's gender - think gender reveal parties. However, sex does not determine gender, it simply tells us about a person's body. A person who is intersex, has intersex sex traits. Their gender is separate from that.

## A MEDICAL DISORDER, DISABILITY, OR PATHOLOGY

Anatomical, chromosomal, and hormonal differences function in the same way that things like height, weight, and natural hair colour do: they are specific to each person and everyone's characteristics are unique. Somewhere between 1 and 4 percent of all people are intersex, and only a few intersex traits have been linked with serious medical conditions, such as Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia (CAH), which is a condition where your adrenal glands do not produce an appropriate level of hormones. Many intersex people have no related health problems and do not have to undergo any surgical procedures.

**THE TERM INTERSEX SOLELY REFERS TO A PERSON'S SEX CHARACTERISTICS.**

OUTSaskatoon works to uplift 2SLGBTQ people by leading, serving, and supporting in a dynamic community. OUTSaskatoon fosters physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health through community support groups, counselling, drop-in services, queer-specific education and training, sexual health services, community events, and a long-term group home for Two Spirit, queer and trans youth ages 16-21.

**FIND MORE RESOURCES AT:**

[www.outsaskatoon.ca](http://www.outsaskatoon.ca)

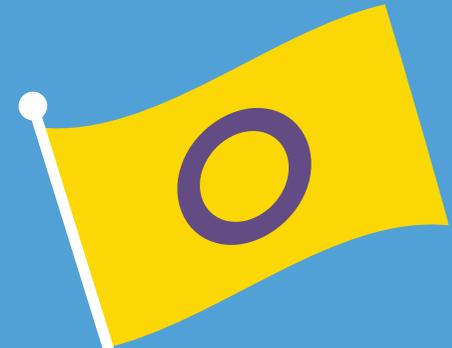


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# INTERSEX IDENTITIES

**OUT**  
SASKATOON

# INTERSEX 101

Intersex is the term for people who have variations in their chromosomes, reproductive organs, hormones, genitalia, or secondary sex characteristics like body hair or fat distribution, that aren't easily categorized into female or male.

Intersex people may have variations in one or more sex characteristic.

## DUE TO THE MANY WAYS IN WHICH SEX CHARACTERISTICS ARE DIVERSE, AROUND 1 IN 200 PEOPLE ARE INTERSEX.

Intersex traits are not a disorder, pathology or a condition. Instead, they are an example of how truly complex the human body can be.

Historically, the term "hermaphrodite" was used to describe people that are Intersex. Today, "hermaphrodite" is an offensive and outdated term and has been replaced with the term Intersex. If your doctor uses this term, that may be a sign that you should find a more informed doctor.

## PEOPLE WITH INTERSEX TRAITS MAY NOT KNOW THAT THEY HAVE THEM

Some people are not aware that they are Intersex. This can be due to doctors concealing or misleading parents about intersex differences at birth, to being subject to normalizing surgeries at a young age, or due to characteristics not being discovered until a later age. For example, someone may be chromosomally intersex and they would have no way of knowing unless they had their DNA tested. Again, many intersex traits, such as chromosomal differences, do not cause any physical health concerns.

## WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU HAVE AN INTERSEX CHILD OR DISCOVER THAT YOU ARE INTERSEX

DON'T PANIC

The main problem Intersex people face is other people. There have been great strides in improving education and resources for parents of intersex children and for people who discover that they have intersex traits. Always remember that all bodies are different, intersex bodies have always existed, and that there is nothing wrong with having intersex traits.

THINK

If you are worried about how this will affect you or your child's life, stop to consider what role sex characteristics play in your day to day life. How many times do you talk about anatomy in a day? How often do you talk about your chromosomes? Genitals are referred to as "private parts" for a reason, so the impact of being intersex on day to day life might not be as bad as you first think.

GET ONLINE & GET IN TOUCH WITH COMMUNITY

The internet is your strongest connection to other intersex people. Online support, forums, and blogs can help connect you with a community. You should also reach out to community organizations, such as OUTSaskatoon. We provide counselling, peer support, educational presentations and resources, and a kind, non-judgemental space for people to visit.