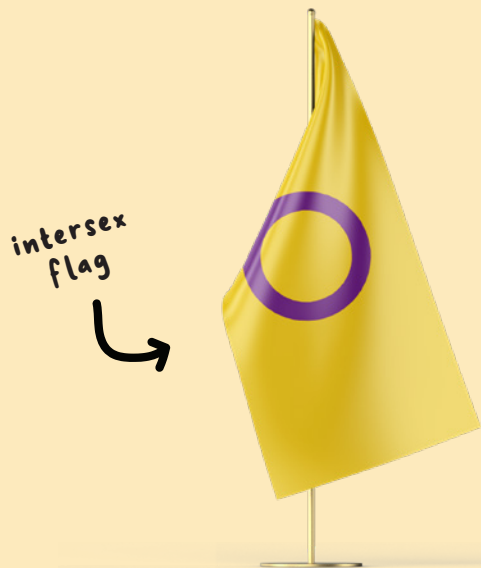


While we often discuss biological sex as being two distinct, separate categories, most scientists who study sex recognize sex as a spectrum.


What we consider to be “female” and “male” traits are more accurately describing a variation of commonly appearing traits in those humans who have XX and XY chromosomes.


Some people who do not fall “neatly” into one of these two biological sex categories may be described as being **intersex**.

Intersex variations are broad and vast, just like any other variation of human anatomy or trait. Most people don’t discover they’re intersex until later in life, if they discover it at all.



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Women and Gender
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité
des genres Canada



Developed by Jacq Brasseur, with support from Catherine Currie following consultation with 2SLGBTQIPA+ Northerners in 2021/2022.



NORTHERN
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all about **INTERSEX IDENTITIES**

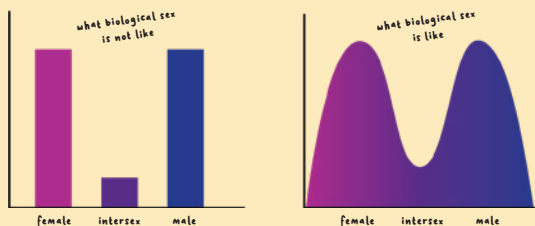
BIOLOGICAL SEX CATEGORIES

Biological sex refers to a scientific classification system which aims to categorize living things based on how they reproduce with other beings of the same species.

This is why biological sex looks different for different kinds of living things. For instance, bees are often categorized as three distinct sexes: queens, workers and drones, and plants have a wide range of morphology that indicate how they can reproduce.

Human biological sex classification includes two main categories (male and female), and while people often perceive them as distinct, we can consider something called **bimodal distribution** to understand biological sex categories.

While most people's whole of their sex characteristics fall into the "average" female or male category, some people fall outside of this.



SEX ASSIGNED AT BIRTH

People are generally assigned a sex category when they're born. While people might claim that this is based on chromosomes, in reality, babies are generally assigned a sex based on external genitalia.

Our biological sex classification system is designed almost entirely with assumptions being made about human's chromosomes. This is why some people choose to use the term "sex assigned at birth" or "assigned sex" instead of "biological sex"—because it recognizes these assumptions.

INTERSEX FAQs

Is being intersex the same as being transgender?

Being intersex and being transgender are different. Transgender people identify as a gender different than the one they were assigned at birth, while an intersex person is somebody who was born with a sex variation outside of the typical "female" or "male" categories.

Some intersex people might also identify as transgender.

How many people are intersex?

It's hard to know how many people are intersex, because this isn't something that hospital or health systems keep track of.

Estimates range from 0.9% to 1.7% when it comes to how many people in the world are intersex. While this doesn't seem like many, this is about the same number of people who are red-heads.

How do people find out that they're intersex?

Sometimes, doctors might know immediately that an infant is intersex, but often, people don't find out that they're intersex until much later in life.

Because there are so many different intersex variations, not all of them can be recognized simply by the appearance of a person's body. Intersex variations can include different chromosomes, different internal reproductive organs, different hormonal levels, and more.

Do all intersex people identify as part of the 2SLGBTQIPA+ community?

No. Some intersex people identify closely with the 2SLGBTQIPA+ community, and others feel as though they don't have a shared experience with others who might not be intersex, but may be 2SLGBTQIPA+. It's important not to make assumptions about how a person identifies.

AM I INTERSEX?

Being intersex is a bit different than other letters in the 2SLGBTQIPA+ acronym. Intersex people share a common experience of having bodies that include variations in sex characteristics.

The best way to figure out if you're intersex is to talk to a doctor or healthcare provider.

If you are an intersex person in the NWT looking for support or community, reach out to us.

INTERPHOBIA / INTERSEXPHOBIA

Interphobia or **intersexphobia** generally refers to negative attitudes, discrimination or stigma towards people who possess or believed to possess biological sex characteristics that are not typically "male" or "female".

The strongest example of interphobia is the practice of forced medical intervention on intersex bodies, what some refer to as *intersex genital mutilation (IGM)*. IGM is a practice where "corrective" surgery is performed, often without informed consent, on an intersex person's body to make it more typically "female" or "male".

Other examples of interphobia include discriminatory practices against people whose sex characteristics are deemed to be "wrong", such as the discrimination of intersex athletes.

If you are looking to learn more about intersex variations, or biological sex categories, talk to us about our workshops!

To learn more about intersexuality, visit:
<https://interactadvocates.org/>
<https://ihra.org.au/>