

# Intersex explained

A plain-English guide including Self-ID & Sport  
from <https://declarationofbiologicaltruth.au/>



By Phil Dye, Updated 9/8/2024

The whole intersex issue has become a hot topic due to the controversy around two 'female' boxers at the Paris 2024 Olympics. Here is an attempt at a plain-English explanation.

Firstly, I'm not a doctor. I have been a science teacher in the past and then re-trained in communication specialising in science and medicine. Mid-career I worked for organ transplantation teams communicating complex issues to media and the public in a down-to-earth, no jargon way.

More recently I was at the University of NSW as an educator in the School of Medical Sciences. My role again was to make complex subjects simple for undergrads, the public, visiting overseas delegations, potential students, teachers and school students; to distil the forest of information on a single topic to a few simple trees.

This was done with the help of specimens from the attached Museum of Human Disease. These specimens, from deceased individuals who'd donated their body to the university, were in large jars and preserved in a formaldehyde-like liquid.



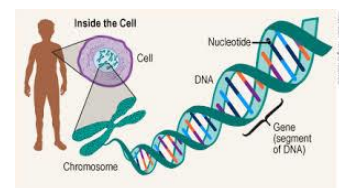
One specimen was the complete torso of an intersex individual who died in old age. The specimen was from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and originally called a '*hermaphrodite*'.

My early years as a primary school teacher no doubt helped me explain this tricky issue. There's far more to the issue than this, yet here's the basics.

## What is intersex?

Intersex is a chromosomal abnormality where an individual is born with characteristics of both male and female. These characteristics can be internal (inside the body), external or both. Sometimes, it's obvious. Sometimes it's not.

Chromosomes are inside the nucleus of every cell of our body. They consist of our DNA and bits of protein. The DNA is the genetic code that is unique to each person. A simple swab of the cheek can tell everything about us, including if we are male or female.



Intersex is **NOT** a sex classification like male & female. It's also **NOT** a gender identity. Someone can't 'choose' to be intersex.

It affects around 0.02% (1 in every 5,000) of babies born so is a very small number.

"The birth of an intersex child, far from being "a fairly common phenomenon," is actually a rare event, occurring in fewer than 2 out of every 10,000 births."

*Dr Leonard Sax, Journal of Sex Research*

Some intersex babies change over time where their natural DNA takes over eg: The internal testes of a male can ‘drop’ and become visible in the first year of the child’s life.

Depending on the childbirth environment, a baby may be declared female or male after an uninformed genital inspection. Their true sex may not become clear until later or be always unclear as their sex characteristics are inside the body. The child and their parents may live their whole lives believing they are female, when really, they are not.

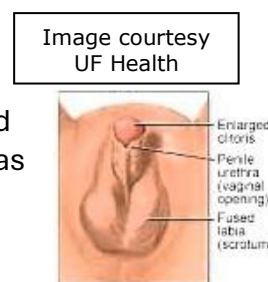
Physical traits will not 100% define if a person is male or female. This takes a DNA test.

### Self-ID

If some body parts eg, the testes, are internal and produce testosterone, no amount of self ID can change the fact that the woman is a man.

In the case of the intersex specimen I used to explain the rarity, the individual had a very small penis which resembled an enlarged clitoris and fused labia major (outer lips). However, the testes were internal. There was a uterus yet no ovaries. I was told the person lived their life as a female.

**A DNA test** would have proven them male.



### In sport

Intersex individuals who identify as female and want to participate in women’s sports usually have an **Androgen Insensitivity test** combined with a standard **DNA test**.

The **Androgen Insensitivity test** measures if the body can produce and use testosterone. It also measures how much it can use.

There are three categories: **Complete, Partial and Mild insensitivity**.

**Complete Insensitivity** means that the individual’s body can’t make or respond to testosterone **AT ALL**. There would be no ‘testosterone benefit’ in playing women’s sport.

**Partial** means they will be affected by testosterone in some ways eg: They may be strong but have no facial hair. This person **may get an advantage** playing in women’s sport.

**Mild** means they will be affected by testosterone in most ways eg: They will be stronger, faster, have facial hair yet have a high voice. They **will get an advantage** in women’s sport.

There are no definite rules yet about these categories in respect to women’ sport or in law.

### The TQA hijack

In respect to LGBTQIA+ ‘rights’, intersex organisations were never asked to be a part of the rainbow alliance. They were co-opted to add legitimacy to the TQA movement and have tried to distance themselves to forge their own set of rights. A useful abstract is [HERE](#).

### Sources:

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