

To Learn More

Call the CDC National STD and
AIDS Hotline 1-800-342-2437

STD Facts

Sexually Transmitted Disease



This brochure is not intended as a substitute for your health professional's opinion or care.

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What Is STD?

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASE (STD) is serious, sometimes painful, and can cause a lot of damage.

Some STDs infect only your sexual and reproductive organs. Others (HIV, hepatitis B, syphilis) cause general body infections.

Sometimes you can have an STD with no signs or symptoms. Other times, the symptoms go away on their own. Either way, you still have the STD until you get treated.

A few STDs cannot be cured. But most STD can be cured if you get treated.

How Is STD Spread?

STD IS SPREAD during close, sexual activity, including vaginal, anal and oral sex. Some STDs (HIV and hepatitis B) are also spread by contact with infected blood.

Most STD germs need to live in warm, moist areas. That's why they infect the mouth, rectum and sex organs (vagina, vulva, penis and testes).

What to Do

IF YOU THINK you might have an STD, get checked out. Don't just hope the STD will go away. It won't!

Most county health departments have special STD clinics. Private doctors also treat STD.

If you don't know where to get help, call your local family planning clinic for information. Your case will be kept private.

You may feel embarrassed about having an STD. It may be hard for you to go to a doctor or clinic for help.

But you must get treatment for the STD, even if it is a hard thing for you to do. This is the only way you will get well.

Most STDs can be treated with antibiotics. Do exactly what your doctor tells you. Be sure to use all of your medicine.

You also must tell your sexual partner(s). If they aren't treated, they can get sick. They can spread the STD. They might even give it to you again!

STD	What to Watch For	How Do You Get This STD?	What Happens if You Don't Get Treated?		
<h3>Chlamydia or NGU</h3>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chlamydia affects women and men. In men, chlamydia can cause NGU. Symptoms show up 7–28 days after having sex. Most women and some men have no symptoms. <table border="0"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>Women:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discharge from the vagina. Bleeding from the vagina between periods. Burning or pain when you urinate (pee). Need to urinate (pee) more often. Pain in abdomen, sometimes with fever and nausea. </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>Men:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watery, white drip from the penis. Burning or pain when you urinate (pee). Need to urinate (pee) more often. Swollen or tender testicles. </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Women:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discharge from the vagina. Bleeding from the vagina between periods. Burning or pain when you urinate (pee). Need to urinate (pee) more often. Pain in abdomen, sometimes with fever and nausea. 	<p>Men:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watery, white drip from the penis. Burning or pain when you urinate (pee). Need to urinate (pee) more often. Swollen or tender testicles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spread during vaginal, anal and oral sex with someone who has chlamydia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can give chlamydia to your sex partner(s). Can lead to more serious infection. Reproductive organs can be damaged. Women and possibly men may no longer be able to have children. A mother with chlamydia can give it to her baby during childbirth.
<p>Women:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discharge from the vagina. Bleeding from the vagina between periods. Burning or pain when you urinate (pee). Need to urinate (pee) more often. Pain in abdomen, sometimes with fever and nausea. 	<p>Men:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watery, white drip from the penis. Burning or pain when you urinate (pee). Need to urinate (pee) more often. Swollen or tender testicles. 				
<h3>Genital Warts</h3>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Symptoms show up 1–8 months after contact with HPV, the virus that causes genital warts. (Another type of HPV is linked to cervical cancer in women.) Small, bumpy warts on the sex organs and anus. Itching or burning around the sex organs. After warts go away, the virus sometimes stays in the body. The warts can come back. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spread during vaginal, anal and oral sex and sometimes by genital touching with someone who has genital warts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can give genital warts to your sex partner(s). Warts may go away on their own, remain unchanged, or grow and spread. A mother with warts can give them to her baby during childbirth. 		
<h3>Gonorrhea</h3>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Symptoms show up 2–21 days after having sex. Most women and some men have no symptoms. <table border="0"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>Women:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thick yellow or gray discharge from the vagina. Burning or pain when you urinate (pee) or have a bowel movement. Abnormal periods or bleeding between periods. Cramps and pain in the lower abdomen (belly). </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>Men:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thick yellow or greenish drip from the penis. Burning or pain when you urinate (pee) or have a bowel movement. Need to urinate (pee) more often. Swollen or tender testicles. </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Women:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thick yellow or gray discharge from the vagina. Burning or pain when you urinate (pee) or have a bowel movement. Abnormal periods or bleeding between periods. Cramps and pain in the lower abdomen (belly). 	<p>Men:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thick yellow or greenish drip from the penis. Burning or pain when you urinate (pee) or have a bowel movement. Need to urinate (pee) more often. Swollen or tender testicles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spread during vaginal, anal and oral sex with someone who has gonorrhea. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can give gonorrhea to your sex partner(s). Can lead to more serious infection. Reproductive organs can be damaged. Both men and women may no longer be able to have children. Can cause heart trouble, skin disease, arthritis and blindness. A mother with gonorrhea can give it to her baby in the womb or during childbirth.
<p>Women:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thick yellow or gray discharge from the vagina. Burning or pain when you urinate (pee) or have a bowel movement. Abnormal periods or bleeding between periods. Cramps and pain in the lower abdomen (belly). 	<p>Men:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thick yellow or greenish drip from the penis. Burning or pain when you urinate (pee) or have a bowel movement. Need to urinate (pee) more often. Swollen or tender testicles. 				
<h3>Hepatitis B</h3>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Symptoms show up 1–9 months after contact with the hepatitis B virus. Many people have no symptoms or mild symptoms. Flu-like feelings that don't go away. Tiredness. Jaundice (yellow skin). Dark urine, light-colored bowel movements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spread during vaginal, anal and oral sex with someone who has hepatitis B. Spread by sharing needles to inject drugs, or for any other reason. Spread by contact with infected blood. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can give hepatitis B to your sex partner(s) or someone you share a needle with. Some people recover completely. Some people cannot be cured. Symptoms go away, but they can still give hepatitis B to others. Can cause permanent liver damage or liver cancer. A mother with hepatitis B can give it to her baby during childbirth. 		

STD	What to Watch For	How Do You Get This STD?	What Happens if You Don't Get Treated?		
Herpes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symptoms show up 1–30 days or longer after having sex. • Some people have no symptoms. • Flu-like feelings. • Small, painful blisters on the sex organs or mouth. • Itching or burning before the blisters appear. • Blisters last 1–3 weeks. • Blisters go away, but you still have herpes. Blisters can come back. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spread during vaginal, anal and oral sex, and sometimes by genital touching, with someone who has herpes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can give herpes to your sex partner(s). • Herpes cannot be cured. • A mother with herpes can give it to her baby during childbirth. 		
HIV/AIDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symptoms show up several months to several years after contact with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. • Can be present for many years with no symptoms. • Unexplained weight loss or tiredness. • Flu-like feelings that don't go away. • Diarrhea. • White spots in mouth. • In women, yeast infections that don't go away. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spread during vaginal, anal and oral sex with someone who has HIV. • Spread by sharing needles to inject drugs, or for any other reason. • Spread by contact with infected blood. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can give HIV to your sex partner(s) or someone you share a needle with. • HIV cannot be cured. Can cause illness and death. • A mother with HIV can give it to her baby in the womb, during birth or while breastfeeding. 		
Syphilis	<p>1st Stage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symptoms show up 1–12 weeks after having sex. • A painless sore or sores on the mouth or sex organs. • Sore lasts 1–5 weeks. • Sore goes away, but you still have syphilis. <p>2nd Stage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symptoms show up 1 week–6 months after sore heals. • A rash anywhere on the body. • Flu-like feelings. • Rash and flu-like feelings go away, but you still have syphilis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spread during vaginal, anal and oral sex with someone who has syphilis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can give syphilis to your sex partner(s). • A mother with syphilis can give it to her baby during pregnancy or have a miscarriage. • Can cause heart disease, brain damage, blindness and death. 		
Trichomoniasis (“Trich”) or NGU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affects both women and men. In men, trich can cause NGU. • Symptoms show up 3–14 days after having sex. • Many people have no symptoms. <table border="0"> <tr> <td data-bbox="573 1692 1007 1907"> <p>Women:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Itching, burning or irritation in the vagina. • Yellow, greenish or gray discharge from the vagina. </td> <td data-bbox="1037 1692 1559 1907"> <p>Men:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watery, white drip from the penis. • Burning or pain when you urinate (pee). • Need to urinate (pee) more often. </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Women:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Itching, burning or irritation in the vagina. • Yellow, greenish or gray discharge from the vagina. 	<p>Men:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watery, white drip from the penis. • Burning or pain when you urinate (pee). • Need to urinate (pee) more often. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spread during vaginal sex. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can give trich to your sex partner(s). • Uncomfortable symptoms will continue. • Men can get infections in the prostate gland.
<p>Women:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Itching, burning or irritation in the vagina. • Yellow, greenish or gray discharge from the vagina. 	<p>Men:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watery, white drip from the penis. • Burning or pain when you urinate (pee). • Need to urinate (pee) more often. 				