



BASIC INFORMATION

STD FACTS:

- Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) include HIV (human immunodeficiency virus), chancroid, chlamydial infections, genital herpes, trichomoniasis, pubic lice, genital warts, gonorrhoea, lymphogranuloma venereum, syphilis, viral hepatitis, scabies, candidiasis, human papillomavirus, molluscum contagiosum and others.
- Sexually transmitted diseases affect more than 15 million men and women in the United States each year. Many are teenagers or young adults.
- Using drugs or alcohol increases your chances of getting STDs because these substances can interfere with your judgment and your ability to use a condom properly.
- Intravenous (IV) drug use puts a person at higher risk for HIV and hepatitis B because IV drug users usually share needles.
- The more sexual partners you have, the higher your chance of being exposed to HIV or other STDs. This is because it is difficult to know whether a person is infected, or has had sex with people who are more likely to be infected due to intravenous drug use or other risk factors.
- Sometimes, early in the infection, there may be no symptoms, or symptoms may be easily confused with other illnesses.
- You cannot tell by looking at someone whether he or she is infected with HIV or another STD.

STDs CAN CAUSE:

- Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), which can damage a woman's fallopian tubes and result in pelvic pain and sterility.
- Tubal pregnancies (where the pregnancy grows in the fallopian tube instead of the womb); sometimes fatal to the mother and always fatal to the fetus.
- Death or severe damage to babies born to infected women.
- Sterility—the inability to have children—in both men and women.
- Cancer of the cervix in women.
- Damage to major organs, such as the heart, kidney and brain, if STDs go untreated.
- Death (e.g., with HIV infection).

RISKS:

High-risk behaviors include having sex—vaginal, anal or oral with:

- A person who has an STD. This is the riskiest behavior. If you know your partner is infected, avoid intercourse (including oral sex). If you do decide to have sex with an infected person, always be sure to use a new condom from start to finish, every time.
- Someone who has shared needles to inject drugs with an infected person.
- Someone whose past partner(s) were infected. Because the AIDS virus can be in the body a long time before a person feels sick, if your partner had intercourse with a person infected with HIV, he or she could pass it on to you even if the sexual contact was a long time ago—even as long as 10 years—and even if your partner seems perfectly healthy.

PREVENTION:

- To lessen the chance of being infected with STDs, people who take part in risky sexual behavior should always use a latex condom.
- Use of a latex condom is also important for an uninfected pregnant woman because it can help protect her and her unborn child from STDs.
- If you are in a new sexual relationship and have concerns about STDs, consider being tested for infection. Chlamydia, gonorrhoea, HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B are the most likely to not have symptoms and are fairly easy to test for.

SEE A DOCTOR IF YOU HAVE ANY STD SYMPTOMS:

- Discharge from the vagina, penis or rectum.
- Pain or burning during urination or intercourse.
- Pain in the abdomen (women), testicles (men), and buttocks and legs (both men and women).
- Blisters, open sores, warts, rash, or swelling in the genital or anal area, or mouth.
- Persistent flu-like symptoms—including fever, headache, aching muscles, or swollen glands—which may precede STD symptoms.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR INFORMATION:

CDC National STD & AIDS Hotline 1-800-227-8922;
www.cdc.gov/std.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

You or a family member has questions or concerns about sexually transmitted diseases.