

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI's)

What you need to know



What is an STI?

Sexually transmitted infections (STI's), or sexually transmitted diseases (STD's), are infections that are passed from one person to another through sexual contact.

They are usually spread during vaginal, oral, or anal intercourse but can spread through other sexual contact involving the penis, vagina, mouth, or anus. This is because some STD's, like herpes and human papillomavirus infection (HPV), are spread by skin-to-skin contact.

If untreated, some STD's can be passed from a pregnant person to the baby, during pregnancy or when giving birth. Other ways that STD's may be spread include during breastfeeding, through blood transfusions, or by sharing needles.



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Common types of STI's

- HIV
- Chlamydia
- Genital herpes
- Gonorrhea
- HPV
- Pubic lice
- Syphilis
- Trichomoniasis

What are the symptoms of sexually transmitted Infections (STI's)?

- Unusual discharge from the genital area.
- Sores or warts on the genital area.
- Painful or frequent urination.
- Itching and redness in the genital area.
- Blisters or sores in or around the mouth.
- Abnormal vaginal odour.
- Anal itching, soreness or bleeding.
- Low abdominal pain.
- Fever

How is it treated?

Antibiotics can treat STI's caused by bacteria or parasites. There is no cure for STI's caused by viruses, but medicines can often help with the symptoms and lower the risk of spreading the infection.

Can it be prevented?

- Use latex condoms every time you have intercourse.
- Use condoms correctly and for the entire intercourse act.
- Condoms are not 100% effective at preventing disease or pregnancy. However, they are extremely effective if used properly.
- If you use a lubricant, make sure it is water-based.
- Avoid sharing towels or underclothing.
- Wash before and after intercourse.
- Get vaccinated for Hepatitis B and HPV.
- Get tested for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).
- If you have a problem with drugs or alcohol abuse, get help. People who are drunk or use drugs often fail to have safe intercourse.
- Consider that not having intercourse is the only sure way to prevent STI's.

Talk to a healthcare provider for more information.