

STDs

Sexually Transmitted Diseases, STDs, are exactly what their name says. They are diseases that are passed from one person to the next by sexual contact. Men and women of all races and backgrounds can get these STDs. Some STDs can be cured. Some can not. If STDs are not treated by a doctor, they can cause many health problems.

Common STDs

Syphilis is a bacterial infection. It can be treated with medicine. If not treated, it can cause blindness and even death. Signs to look for are sores that last a week or longer on the penis or in the vagina. Other signs are: sore throat, muscle pain, headache, rash anywhere, raised bumps, spotty hair loss.

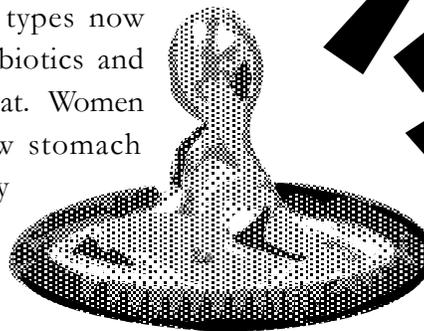
Chlamydia is an infection that has no signs at first. After a few weeks, men will have pain and burning when urinating and a thin, white discharge from the penis. Women will have no signs except for a light, white discharge. Chlamydia can cause infertility.

Genital herpes can not be cured but it does not kill. It seems to be linked with the nervous system. It comes and goes. When it is active there will be painful

sores in the genital area. It is highly contagious (easy to pass on). Babies who are born to mothers with genital herpes may be born with herpes or be blind.

Genital warts are a lot like warts that grow on other parts of the body. They can be removed by a doctor. Women with genital warts have a higher risk of cervical cancer. Genital warts are infectious (passed on through sexual contact). Both males and females with warts need medical care. Otherwise they can re-infect each other.

Gonorrhea is a bacterial infection that can be cured with antibiotics. Some types now fight the antibiotics and are hard to treat. Women may have low stomach pain, especially after a menstrual period. Both men and



women have a yellow discharge from the penis or vagina and painful urination. Gonorrhea can cause newborns to be blind. It can also cause sterility (not able to have children).

AIDS is a very deadly STD. It is an illness that hurts your immune system. AIDS is a viral infection which is spread by sexual contact. It can also be passed when drug users share a needle. There is no medicine to prevent AIDS. AIDS can kill you.

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You can protect yourself and your partner from STDs. Use a latex condom when you have sex. You can get more information on STDs on the hotline, 1-800-342-2437. The calls are free. ■