

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES (STDs)

NOLENSVILLE FAMILY MEDICINE
JOHN R. THOMPSON M.D.
615-776-8088



BASIC INFORMATION

STD FACTS:

- Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) affect more than 12 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. These substances can interfere with your judgment and your ability to use a condom correctly.
- Intravenous (IV) drug use puts a person at higher risk for human immunodeficiency virus (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 if a person is infected, or has had sex with people who are more likely to be infected due to IV drug use or other risk factors.
- Sometimes, early in an infection, there may be no symptoms. Also, symptoms may be easily confused with other illnesses.
- You can not tell by looking at someone whether he or she is infected with HIV or another STD.
- Sexually transmitted diseases include HIV, chancroid, chlamydial infections, trichomoniasis, genital herpes, pubic lice, genital warts, gonorrhea, lymphogranuloma venereum, syphilis, viral hepatitis, scabies, candidiasis, molluscum contagiosum, and others.

STDs CAN CAUSE:

- Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). It can damage a woman's fallopian tubes and result in pelvic pain and being unable to have children.
- Tubal pregnancies (where pregnancy grows in the fallopian tube instead of the womb). It is sometimes fatal to the mother and always fatal to the fetus.
- 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 most risky 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 with a past partner(s) who was/were infected. If your partner had sexual contact with a person infected with HIV, he or she could pass it on to you. This can happen even if the prior sexual contact was a long time ago—as long as 10 years. Your partner may seem perfectly healthy. HIV can be in the body a long time before a person feels sick.

PREVENTION:

- Reduce the chance of being infected with HIV or other STDs. People who take part in risky sexual behavior should always use a condom.
- Use of a condom is also important for an uninfected pregnant woman. It can help protect her and her unborn child from STDs.

SEE A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER IF YOU HAVE ANY OF THESE 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 the mouth.
- Persistent, flu-like symptoms. These include fever, headache, aching muscles, or swollen glands. These symptoms may precede STD symptoms.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR INFORMATION:

- National AIDS Hotline (800) 342-2437; website: www.cdc.gov/hiv/dhap.htm.
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases Hotline (800) 227-8922.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

You or a family member has questions or concerns about STDs.

Special notes:

More notes on the back of this page