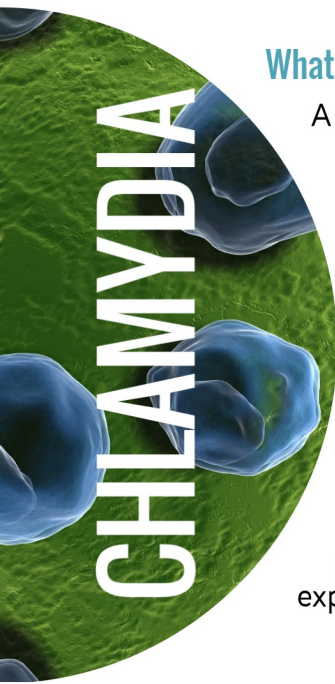


# SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES

Young people are especially affected by STDs: Half of all new cases of STDs occur among 15- to 24-year-olds. Learn how to protect yourself!

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are diseases that are spread through vaginal, anal, or oral sex - but some STDs can spread from just skin-to-skin contact. You cannot tell if your partner is STD-free just by looking at them, because many people do not show symptoms. To protect yourself and the people you have sex with, it is important to know how you can get STDs and just as importantly - how you can prevent them.



## CHLAMYDIA

### What is it caused by?

A bacteria called Chlamydia trachomatis

### How is it spread?

Coming into contact with a penis or vagina that is infected. This can include sex with a penis, sex toy, or oral sex.

### How can I reduce my risk?

Always use a condom when you have sex with a sex toy or a penis, and a dental dam when you have oral sex with a vagina. Have fewer sex partners - it reduces your potential exposure.



## GENITAL HERPES

### What is it caused by?

Two viruses, called herpes simplex type 1 and herpes simplex type 2

### How is it spread?

Skin-to-skin contact with someone who has herpes. This can be kissing, oral sex, sex with a penis, touching the infection.

### How can I reduce my risk?

Reduce your number of partners, and always use a condom during sex with a penis or sex toy and a dental dam during oral sex. However, parts of your skin not covered by the condom can still be infected. Even if your partner has no visible herpes sores, the virus can pass through skin-to-skin contact.



## GONORRHEA

### What is it caused by?

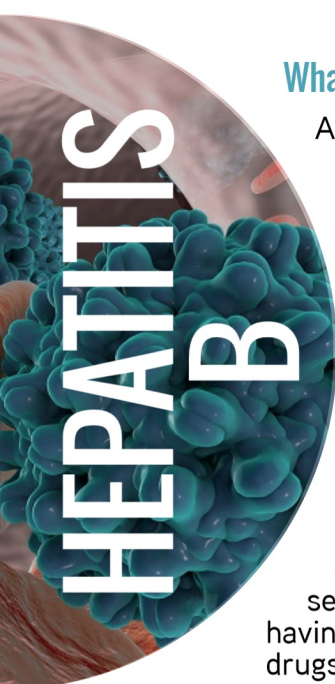
A bacteria called Neisseria gonorrhoeae

### How is it spread?

Coming in contact with a penis or vagina that is infected. This can include sex with a penis, sex toy, or oral sex.

### How can I reduce my risk?

Reduce your number of partners, and always use a condom during sex with a penis or sex toy and a dental dam during oral sex. Reducing exposure to gonorrhea is important, as many strains of the bacteria are developing resistance to our current drug treatments.



## HEPATITIS B

### What is it caused by?

A virus called hepatitis B virus

### How is it spread?

By coming into contact with bodily fluids (blood, vaginal fluid, semen) of someone with hepatitis B. This can be from sex with a penis, oral sex, sharing needles.

### How can I reduce my risk?

Two types of vaccinations for Hepatitis B are available. Always use a condom during sex with a penis or sex toy and a dental dam during oral sex. You can also reduce your risk by having fewer sex partners and not injecting drugs.



## HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS (HPV)

### What is it caused by?

Over 100 types of viruses; 40 of these affect the genitals

### How is it spread?

By skin-to-skin contact. In particular, genital HPV is caused by skin-to-skin contact of the genital area during sex.

### How can I reduce my risk?

Have fewer sex partners and always use a condom during sex with a penis or sex toy and a dental dam during oral sex. Vaccinations for some strains of genital HPV are available for girls and boys. Sexually active girls younger than 21 should get regular pelvic exams to check for signs of cervical cancer.



## SYPHILIS

### What is it caused by?

a bacteria called Treponema pallidum

### How is it spread?

By coming into contact with someone else's syphilis sore during vaginal, anal, or oral sex

### How can I reduce my risk?

Always use a condom during sex with a penis or sex toy and a dental dam during oral sex. Have fewer sex partners. Sores may be hidden in the vagina or under foreskin, so it is not always possible to tell if your partner is STD-free just by looking.



## TRICHOMONIASIS "Trich"

### What is it caused by?

A parasite called Trichomonas vaginalis

### How is it spread?

By having unprotected vaginal sex (penis-vagina or vagina-vagina) with someone who has trichomoniasis

### How can I reduce my risk?

Trichomoniasis particularly affects women and can be passed from penis to vagina (and vice versa) as well as vagina to vagina. Always use a condom or dental dam during sex and reduce your number of partners to limit your exposure.



## HIV Human Immunodeficiency Virus

### What is it caused by?

A virus called human immunodeficiency virus

### How is it spread?

The most common ways HIV is spread in the U.S. is through unprotected vaginal or anal sex or sharing injection needles with someone who has transmittable HIV.

### How can I reduce my risk?

Always use a condom during sex with a penis or sex toys. Have fewer partners - that means partners who know their HIV status, regularly get tested for HIV and STDs, do not use injection drug needles, have sex in exchange for money or drugs. Regularly get tested for STDs, so you can get treated as early as possible, if needed. Lastly, regularly get tested for HIV: it's important to a healthy sex life!

### Symptoms

May include: a burning sensation when peeing or unusual discharge from the penis or vagina. Some men experience pain or swelling in the testicles.

Symptoms of infection in the rectum (butt): discharge, pain, or bleeding

### Complications

Women can have serious complications from untreated chlamydia, including pelvic inflammatory disease. This can cause long-term pain or prevent her from being able to have children later on.

### Treatment

A urine test or swabbing the vagina can determine if you are infected. Chlamydia can be cured with the right drugs from a health care provider.

### Symptoms

Painful sores that look like blisters around the genitals, rectum (butt), or mouth. During the first outbreak of sores, an infected person may also have fever, body aches, and swollen glands.

### Complications

Although the outbreaks of sores get less painful over time, touching fluids from the infection and then touching another body part (such as the eyes) can spread the infection. Herpes sores can also increase the risk of getting HIV.

### Treatment

A doctor can determine if you have herpes by looking at the symptoms. Herpes cannot be cured, but medicines can help manage outbreaks and reduce the spread of infection.

### Symptoms

May include a burning sensation when peeing or unusual discharge from the vagina or penis. Some women get unusual vaginal bleeding between periods. Some men get pain or swelling in the testicles. Symptoms of infection in the rectum (butt): discharge, anal itching, soreness, bleeding, or painful bowel movements.

### Complications

If left untreated, it can affect men and women's ability to have children later on. It may also cause long-term pain.

### Treatment

A urine test or swabbing the affected area can determine if you are infected. Gonorrhea can be cured with an antibiotic treatment from a health care provider.

### Symptoms

May include: pain in the stomach area, dark-colored pee, fever, joint pain, loss of appetite, nausea and vomiting, feeling extremely tired, and the skin or eyes becoming yellow in color.

### Complications

Most people get an acute infection (less than 6 months) that goes away on its own, but some get chronic infections (more than 6 months). Chronic infections can cause serious liver problems, like cancer or liver failure, or other serious problems in other organs.

### Treatment

A blood test can determine if you have hepatitis B. Cures for chronic infections are still being developed, but antiviral medicines can help fight the virus and prevent liver damage.

### Symptoms

HPV is very common. Most strains do not cause any health problems. However, some strains of genital HPV can cause genital warts. They may go away on their own, but if untreated, the warts may stay there or increase in number.

### Complications

Some strains of genital HPV in women can lead to cervical cancer and other cancers in the genital area.

### Treatment

Genital warts are usually not life-threatening, but can be removed with medicines if they are bothersome. Warts do not always mean cancer will develop. Instead, regular pelvic exams and cancer screenings can prevent complications of HPV before cancer develops.

### Symptoms

Syphilis starts as one or more sores that appear in the affected area. It may not hurt and can be confused with a bump or ingrown hair.

### Complications

Even though syphilis symptoms will go away on their own, if left untreated without medicine, more serious symptoms will return and can cause brain damage, blindness, or death.

### Treatment

A blood test at your health care clinic can determine if you are infected. Syphilis can be cured with the right kind of antibiotics.

### Symptoms

May include: itching, burning, soreness, or redness in the genitals; discomfort when peeing; smelly vaginal or penile discharge; or discomfort when having sex. However, most people with trichomoniasis do not show any symptoms.

### Complications

Trichomoniasis can increase the risk of getting infected by other STIs, including HIV.

### Treatment

Trichomoniasis can be diagnosed with a lab test at a health care clinic. Once diagnosed, it can be quickly cured with one dose of the right kind of antibiotics.

### Symptoms

Some people feel flu-like symptoms 2-4 weeks after infection. HIV in the blood usually cannot be detected by an HIV test until 3 months after infection. People can live with HIV for years without knowing they have it, because they did not experience symptoms. They are still infectious, which is why it is important to get tested.

### Complications

If you have HIV and are not on treatment, your body's immune system weakens to the point of having AIDS. When you have AIDS, your body is vulnerable to getting really sick with infections.

### Treatment

People with HIV can live healthy and AIDS-free with HIV treatments. A daily medicine, Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PREP), is also available, which can help prevent HIV among people who are at high risk. It has not been tested in teens yet.

## How can I reduce my risk of HIV and STDs?

The only way to completely reduce your risk for HIV and STDs is to not have sex.

However, if you are having sex, practice safe sex:

Always use a condom correctly during vaginal and anal sex.

Reduce your exposure, by having fewer sex partners.

Get tested for STDs on a regular basis, and get treatment immediately if needed.

Learn more about our research:  
[InnovativePublicHealth.org](http://InnovativePublicHealth.org)

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; MayoClinic; AIDS.gov  
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