

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES

What are Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)? STDs are diseases and infections which are capable of being spread from person to person through sexual intercourse. Most, but not all, STDs are spread this way.

Some diseases are caused by bacteria. These are syphilis, Chlamydia, gonorrhea, vaginitis, and NGU (nongonococcal urethritis). Other diseases are caused by a fungus, including yeast infections. Still others are caused by a virus, such as herpes, AIDS and Chlamydia. The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) causes AIDS. The Herpes simplex II virus causes genital herpes, and the Human Papilloma Virus causes Condyloma, or Genital Warts. Microscopic organisms are the cause of scabies, crabs and trichomoniasis.

HOW ARE STDs SPREAD?

Sexually transmitted diseases may be spread from one person to another through sexual intercourse. Infections can also be spread through oral-genital contact, or in non-sexual ways. For instance; HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, is spread through sexual intercourse, IV drug use and blood transfusions. Some vaginal infections are caused by changes in the vagina's chemical balance. Often, antibiotics may trigger this change and create a suitable setting for infections.

SYMPTOMS

What are the symptoms? How would I know if I have been infected?

- Sores (either painful or painless)

- Blood in urine

- Burning sensation when urinating

- Rashes

- Itching

- Bumps

- Warts

- Unusual discharge

70 - 80% have no idea that they have the disease. Many women never show the signs or symptoms that men usually have. Therefore, they continue to spread the disease rather than being treated for it.

(Pass out the STDs study guide for students to fill out as you discuss the different STDs.)

TYPES OF STDs

CHLAMYDIA (Kla-MID-ee-uh).

The most widespread sexually transmitted disease today is Chlamydia. Four million new cases of chlamydia occur each year. It's particularly common among teens and young adults. The symptoms are mild and may be similar to those of gonorrhea. It is the major cause of Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID) and nongonococcal urethritis (NGU). (NGU is sometimes call nonspecific urethritis or NSU.)

SYMPTOMS: fever, weight loss for no reason, swollen glands, fatigue, diarrhea, white spots on the mouth.

FEMALE SYMPTOMS:

Vaginal discharge (white or grey) or burning with urination

Lower abdominal pain

Bleeding between menstrual periods.

Low-grade fever (later symptom)

MALE SYMPTOMS:

Discharge from the penis and/or burning when urinating

Burning and itching around the opening of the penis

Pain and swelling in the testicles

Low -grade fever (associated with epididymitis - inflammation of the testicles)

There are two kinds of test for chlamydia. One involves collecting a small amount of fluid from an infected site (cervix or penis) with a cotton swab. These tests are universally available. New tests, which use only urine samples, will be available soon and will make testing much easier and less painful.

Treatment includes - antibiotics

If left untreated, this infection can cause painful after-effects, including arthritis. Permanent damage to the reproductive organs, causing chronic pain and infertility is also a result of nontreatment. Sterility and ectopic or tubal pregnancies may also result if the disease is untreated. When babies are born to infected mothers, there may be eye, ear and lung infections and sometimes death.

It is estimated that 60-80% of women and 50% of men with Chlamydia have no symptoms. This disease can be cured by antibiotics.

You can get and spread chlamydia through unprotected vaginal and anal sex.

GONORRHEA (gah-na-REE-uh)

Gonorrhea is a very common form of sexually transmitted disease. Other names for gonorrhea are the clap, drip, or a dose. Gonorrhea is a very common infectious disease. Each year approximately 650,000 people in the United States are infected with gonorrhea. People with gonorrhea can more easily contract HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. People get gonorrhea from close sexual contact (anal sex, oral sex., and vaginal).

Gonorrhea can also be spread from mother to child during birth.

Gonorrhea infection can spread to other unlikely parts of the body. For example, a person can get an eye infection after touching infected genitals and then the eyes. Individuals who have had gonorrhea and received treatment may get infected again if they have sexual contact with people infected with gonorrhea.

SYMPTOMS:

Appear 5-7 days or can take up to 30 days to appear
sore or red throat if you have gonorrhea in the throat from
oral sex

rectal pain

blood and pus in bowel movements if you have gonorrhea in the
rectum from anal sex.

FEMALE SYMPTOMS:

Symptoms may show up 2-21 days after having sex

May notice a yellow or white discharge from the vagina

May be a burning or pain when urinating

Bleeding between periods

Heavier and more painful periods

Cramps or pain in the lower abdomen, sometimes with
nausea or fever

MALE SYMPTOMS:

Yellow or white drip/discharge from penis

Burning or pain when urinating

Frequent urinating

Swollen testicles

Can gonorrhea be dangerous? Yes! If not treated it can spread to the pelvic and sex organs. This can cause permanent damage and make both men and women unable to have children. It may also cause pain and swelling in the knees or other joints, skin problems and heart problems.

Gonorrhea in a pregnant woman can cause premature delivery or spontaneous abortion. The infected mother may give the infection to her infant as the baby passes through the birth canal during delivery. This can cause blindness, joint infection, or a life-threatening blood infection in the baby.

Gonorrhea can be cured by antibiotics. Many of the currently used antibiotics can successfully cure uncomplicated gonorrhea. Because many people with gonorrhea also have chlamydia, antibiotics for both infections are usually given together.

SYPHILIS (sif-a-lus)

This is one of the more serious of the STDs if not treated. The long range effects can be very serious, including death. This disease is caused by the bacterium *Treponema pallidum*. In the United States, an estimated 70,000 new cases of syphilis in adults and more than 3,000 new cases of congenital syphilis in newborns occur each year.

The syphilis bacterium is passed from person to person through direct contact with a syphilis sore. Sores mainly occur on the external genitalia, vagina, anus, or rectum. Sores can also occur on the lips and in the mouth. Transmission of the organism occurs during vaginal, anal, or oral sex.

SYMPTOMS:

Stage 1: Symptoms usually appear 10-90 days after contact.

An infected person gets a sore (chancre), which may be painful at the point of contact (mouth, anus, rectum, throat or the sex organ). The chancre is usually firm, round, small, and painless. It appears at the spot where the bacterium entered the body. The chancre lasts 1-5 weeks and heals on its own.

This will disappear on its own, but may last 4-6 weeks.

In the female, the chancre is often internal and cannot be seen.

The secondary stage lasts 3-6 weeks. After the chancre comes a copper-colored skin rash which may appear on the palms of the hands, soles of the feet, or in more severe cases covers the entire body. The rash may be accompanied by fever, headaches, indigestion, loss of appetite, or loss of hair in spots over the scalp.

The third stage is known as the latent period. All symptoms disappear so that the victim thinks he/she is cured. If the infected person has not received treatment, he/she still has syphilis even though there are no symptoms. The bacterium remains in the body and begins to damage the internal organs including the brain, nerves, eyes, heart, blood vessels, liver, bones, and joints. The spirochetes may attack bone marrow, the spleen, lymph glands, or any tissue or organ of the body.

The fourth stage (tertiary stage) involves the accumulated damage produced during the latent period. The results of this internal damage show up many years later in the late or tertiary stage of syphilis in about one-third of untreated persons. Ten, twenty, even thirty years after the initial infection, the degenerative works of the spirochete may become apparent in a sudden heart attack, failure of vision, loss of motor coordination or mental disturbances.

Can syphilis be dangerous? YES! The conditions mentioned in the fourth stage bear this out. After about two years, a person with untreated syphilis reaches a point where she/he can't infect others, but his/her own health will deteriorate.

Pregnant women with the disease can pass it to the babies they are carrying. An infected pregnant woman has about a 40% chance of having a stillbirth (syphilitic stillbirth) or delivering a baby who dies shortly after birth. About 12% of infected newborns will die because of the disease.

If an unborn child is infected with syphilis, it will be born with congenital syphilis (present at birth). The baby may seem healthy at first, but a heart defect, bone deformity or other damage may appear in childhood. Syphilis may be cured by antibiotics.

One dose of the antibiotic penicillin will cure a person who has had syphilis for less than a year. More doses are needed to cure someone who has had it for longer than a year. A baby born with the disease needs daily penicillin treatment for 10 days.

HERPES SIMPLEX TYPE 2 (HSV-2).

Not every form of Herpes is an STD, but HSV-2 is an STD. Symptoms usually show 2-20 days after contact and may be extremely painful or very mild. Some infected people have "outbreaks" of blisters and ulcers. Once infected with HSV, people remain infected for life.

Without treatment, the symptoms disappear in a week or two, but may flare up later. Stress, bruising, chaffing, or a woman's period may cause an onset of the disease. Genital herpes cannot be completely cured. It may be a cause of cervical cancer in women.

FEMALE SYMPTOMS:

Blisters in or around the vagina, fever and headaches.

MALE SYMPTOMS:

Small sore or cluster of blisters on the penis.

A pregnant woman with active genital herpes can infect her baby during delivery. A baby who survives severe infection usually suffers physical or mental damage. To prevent herpes in the newborn, a mother may have to have her baby by Cesarean Section (C Section). There is no known cure for herpes.

GENITAL WARTS / VENERAL WARTS:

Growths that appear on the vagina or penis, near the anus, and sometimes in the throat. They are caused by viruses and spread through sexual contact. The viruses are often called Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). The warts might look harmless, but should be treated as soon as possible.

The virus that causes genital warts is spread by vaginal or anal intercourse and by oral sex. Warts may appear within several weeks after sex with a person who has HPV; or they may take months or years to appear; or they may never appear. A person can be infected and pass on the virus without knowing it. Approximately 5.5 million new cases of sexually transmitted HPV (one third of all new STDs) occur in the U.S. each year, with at least 20 million people currently infected. Three out of four Americans between the ages of 15 and 49 have been infected with genital HPV in their lifetimes.

SYMPTOMS:

- Usually the warts look like tiny cauliflowers, but sometimes they are flat.
- The warts may cause itching, burning and some pain, but often don't cause any pain at all.
- Warts may be inside the vagina or on the cervix, or in the rectum or throat, so you might not notice them.
- They might also be so small that you cannot see them.

Can genital warts be cured? Yes! There are several treatments for genital warts. The goal of any treatment should be to remove visible genital warts to get rid of annoying symptoms. No one treatment is best for all cases. There are many ways to treat genital warts. They may be removed by applying certain liquids, surgically removing them, or freezing the wart.

The guidelines of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) include the following:

- Podofilox liquid or gel is a self-applied treatment for external genital warts. It doesn't cost much, is easy to use and safe.
- Imiquimod cream (Aldara®) is a self-applied treatment for external genital warts, including warts near the anus. It is safe, effective and easy to use. The cream is not harsh on the skin and does not cause scarring like some other treatments.

- Cryotherapy (freezing off the wart with liquid nitrogen) is relatively inexpensive, and is done by a trained doctor or nurse.
- Podophyllin is a chemical compound that must be applied by a doctor or nurse.
- Trichloroacetic acid (TCA) is another chemical applied to the surface of the wart by a doctor or a nurse.
- Laser therapy (using an intense light to destroy warts) or surgery (cutting off warts) has the advantage of getting rid of warts in a single office visit. However, treatment can cost a lot. Most doctors do not have lasers in their office and the doctor must be well-trained in these methods.
- The drug interferon is sometimes used, but less expensive therapies work just as well with fewer side effects.

None of the treatments listed above is a cure for HPV. The virus can remain in nearby skin even after treatment. Because the virus can lie dormant in cells, warts can return months after treatment. Sometimes warts may come back years after they've cleared, but that doesn't happen very often.

More and more researchers are finding a link between genital cancer and infection with wart viruses. There may be an extra risk of cancer of the cervix, vulva, penis, or anus among people who have and warts in these places.

CRABS (Pubic Lice):

Pubic lice are called "crabs" because they look like crabs when examined under a magnifying glass. Crabs are frequently the color and size of small freckles. These very small lice (crabs) usually attack the sexual (pubic) areas of the body. Sometimes they are found under arms, on eyelashes and on moustaches. Crab lice are spread through direct physical contact. Specifically, close body contact with an infected person. Occasionally, crab lice can be spread through the use of someone

else's infested person. Occasionally, crab lice can be spread through the use of someone else's infested clothing, towels, bedding and sometimes contaminated toilet seats.

SYMPTOMS:

A terrible, persisting itch in the genital, rectal (sexual) area.

Can lice cause serious harm? Left unchecked, body lice have been the cause of widespread epidemics (typhus and trench fever).

A lice problem can be easily cured by using a non-prescription lice killing liquid such as TRIPLE X. This liquid will kill all three types of lice: head, body, and crab lice.

CANDIDIASIS (can-di-die-a-sis):

Is a yeast fungus that may or may not be transmitted by sexual intercourse. It may also be caused by high doses of antibiotics. It is usually caused by altering the Ph of the vagina. It causes much discomfort due to the intense itching. It is often called "Housewives' Itch".

SYMPTOMS:

A thick cheesy vaginal discharge

Severe itching

Douching and the use of antibiotics may actually increase the problem rather than helping to relieve it.

Can Candidiasis be dangerous? No.

The discomfort is the worst part of this disease.

TRICHOMONIASIS / Trick (trick-e-men-ni-e-ses):

Very much like gonorrhea in its symptoms. It is NSU nonspecific urethritis (NSU). Trick can effect men as well as women. The bacteria can live outside the human body and can be picked up from a towel or toilet seat. Sexually transmitted disease, abstinence or monogamy is the only prevention (also condoms). An estimated 5 million new cases occur each year in women and men. Occurs in vagina of women so may be sexually transmitted to men using infected washcloths and towels. It is

transmitted to the baby during delivery. It also can occur in the urethra (carries urine to penis) in men, doesn't have symptoms usually.

SYMPTOMS:

symptoms usually appear within 5 to 28 days of exposure in women. Women usually have a vaginal discharge that also has an odor.

FEMALE SYMPTOMS:

Itching and burning at the outside of the opening of the vagina and vulva.

Painful and frequent urination

Heavy, unpleasant smelling greenish, yellow discharge

MALE SYMPTOMS:

Usually nothing, or discomfort in urethra, inflamed head of the penis.

Treatment: both partners, if not symptoms reappear.

NONGONOCOCCAL URETHRITIS / NGU (non-gon-o-cok-al):

An inflammation or infection of the urethra (the tube that carries the urine from the bladder) caused by something other than the germ that causes gonorrhea.

This is usually a sexually transmitted disease. It is passed from person to person during intimate physical contact, usually during sexual intercourse.

FEMALE SYMPTOMS:

Pain

Itching or burning around the vagina

Any discharge may be a sign of NGU. (because the disease is internal, women sometimes do not show any obvious symptoms.)

MALE SYMPTOMS:

Discharge from the penis (this may be thin and watery or thick and white)

Burning and itching around the opening of the penis

Sometimes the signs appear only in the morning, then go away and come back.

About 10% of men show no symptoms

HIV:

Acquired immune deficiency syndrome was first reported in the United States in mid 1981. At the present time there is no cure for this virus-caused disease. AIDS attacks the immune system of the body so that the person cannot fight off even mild infections. The person eventually becomes vulnerable to life threatening infections and cancers. This disease is caused by the Human Immuno-deficiency Virus, HIV. An estimated 500,000 to one million people have been infected by the virus that causes AIDS, but have no symptoms of illness. In fact, the incubation period for AIDS may be from seven to ten years.

How do you get AIDS?

The following information was taken from "AIDS weekly Surveillance Report", Center for Disease Control. (NOTE: teacher should up-date this information with current statistics, as necessary. Research and terminology change daily. It is vital to keep current. Contact your local AIDS specialist for further information.)

- Homosexual / Bisexual Males 64%
- Infants infected during pregnancy or at birth 1%
- Undetermined 3%
- Heterosexual cases 4%
- Transfusion of blood or blood components, including coagulation disorders 4%

- Intravenous IV drug abuse 14%
- Homosexual male and IV drug abuse 7%

There are two main ways you get AIDS. One way is by having any type of sex (vaginal, oral, anal, digital, etc.) with someone who is infected with the AIDS virus. Another way to become infected is by sharing drug needles and syringes with an infected person.

<http://www-nehc.med.navy.mil/hp/sharp/Shrpfact.htm>