



STIs

Sexually Transmitted Infections

What You Should Know

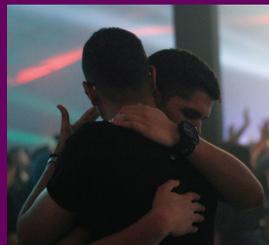
VDH: Division of Disease Prevention

There are over **20 MILLION** new sexually transmitted infections (STIs) reported in the United States every year.

Anyone who is sexually active can get an STI and may not know it. The only way to know you have an STI is to get tested.

You can get an STI:

1. from oral (mouth), anal, or vaginal sex
2. from skin-to-skin contact, even without sex
3. from a mother to an infant before or during birth



If you have questions about any STIs, including HIV or hepatitis, or if you would like the number to the local health department closest to you, contact:



Disease Prevention Hotline

(800) 533-4148

Monday - Friday

8am – 5pm

hiv-stdhotline@vdh.virginia.gov

SIDA Español:

1-800-344-7432



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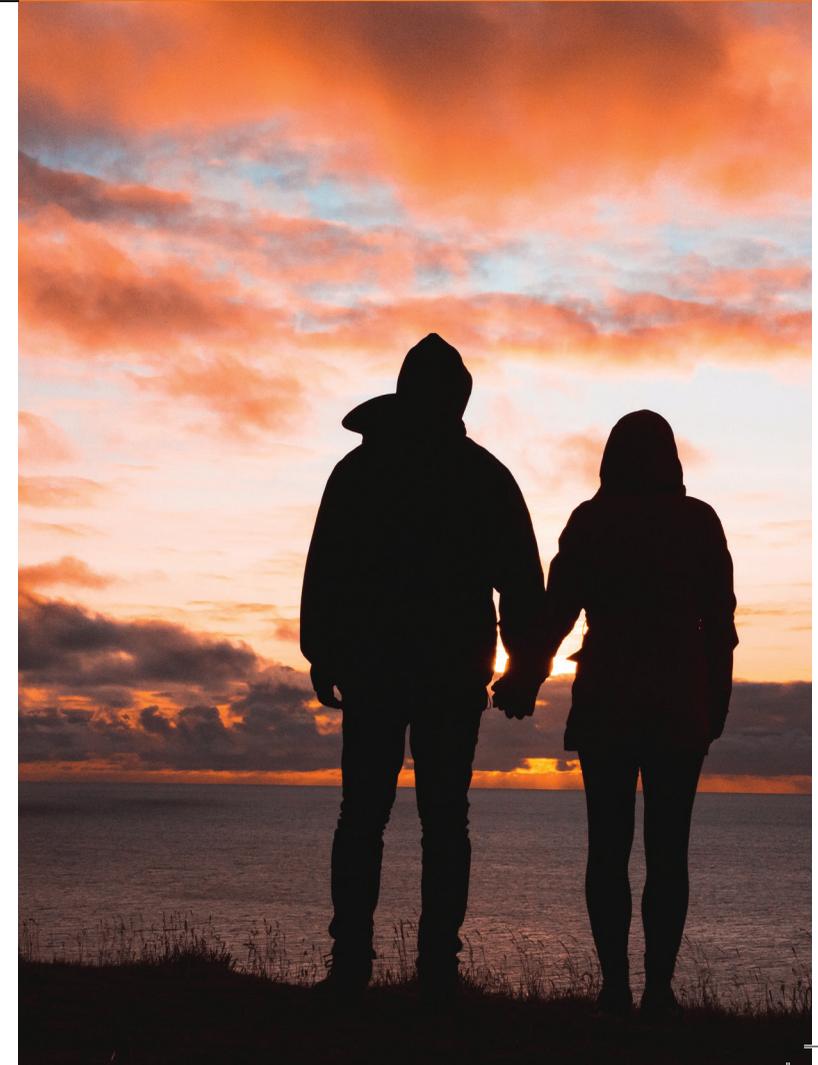
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What are the symptoms of an STI?

STIs may cause different symptoms including sores, rash, fever, or discharge (drip). Not everyone gets the same STI symptoms; sometimes people do not have any at all. Even without symptoms, STIs can cause health problems. Get tested for STIs to protect your health if you are having sex. Your health care provider will help you determine what tests you should get.

Pregnancy & STIs

Pregnancy does not protect you against STIs. If you are having sex, you are still at risk. You can spread STIs to an infant before or during birth. STIs can cause serious

An untreated STI can put you at greater risk of getting another STI. Get tested!

health problems for your baby. Getting prenatal care is very important! Your health care provider may test you for STIs throughout your pregnancy depending on your risk.

Men who have sex with men & STIs

While anyone who has sex can get an STI, sexually active gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (MSM) are at greater risk. Your healthcare provider can offer you the best care if you discuss your sexual history openly.

What do I do if I think I have an STI?

The only way to know for sure if you have an STI is to get tested. Your tests results are confidential. Talk to your health care provider or find a testing site near you at <https://gettested.cdc.gov/>.

What if I test positive?

Some STIs can be cured. For others, you will always have the condition, but medical treatments can help you manage the disease. Follow your health care provider's directions.

Who should get tested for STIs?

If you have sex, talk honestly with your health care provider to see if you need testing. Testing is especially important if you or your partner has other partners.

Make sure your partner is treated if you have an STI. Otherwise, you may get infected again.

- **All adults and adolescents from ages 13 to 64** should be tested at least once for HIV.
- Annual chlamydia screening of all **sexually active women** younger than 25 years, and older women with risk factors such as new or multiple sex partners, or a sex partner who has a sexually transmitted infection.
- Annual gonorrhea screening for all **sexually active women** younger than 25 years, as well as older women with risk factors such as new or multiple sex partners, or a sex partner who has a sexually transmitted infection.
- Syphilis, HIV, and hepatitis B screening for **all pregnant women**, and chlamydia and gonorrhea screening for at-risk pregnant women starting early in pregnancy, with repeat testing as needed, to protect the health of mothers and their infants.
- Screening at least once a year for syphilis, chlamydia, and gonorrhea for **all sexually active gay, bisexual, and MSM**. MSM who have multiple or anonymous partners should be screened more frequently for STIs (e.g., at 3-to-6 month intervals).
- **Sexually active gay and bisexual men** may benefit from more frequent HIV testing (e.g., every 3 to 6 months).
- **Anyone who has unsafe sex or shares injection drug equipment** should get tested for HIV at least once a year.

How can I lower my risk of getting an STI?

STIs are preventable. There are steps you can take to keep yourself and your partner(s) healthy.

- **Don't have sex.** The most reliable way to avoid infection is to not have sex (anal, vaginal, or oral).
- **Have fewer partners** – agree to have sex with one person who agrees to have sex with only you.
- **Talk with your partner(s)** about STIs and staying safe before having sex.
- **Use a condom** every time you have sex. Male and female condoms help prevent infection with many STIs. You can still get some STIs, like herpes or genital warts from contact with your partner's skin even when using a condom.
- **Get tested & treated** – many STIs do not have symptoms, so the only way to know is to get tested. Getting treatment reduces the chance your partner has of getting the infection.
- **Get vaccinated** against hepatitis B and human papillomavirus (HPV).

People who have an STI are two to five times more likely to get HIV if exposed to the virus than uninfected people.

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Infection	How will my health care provider test me?	Symptoms	Treatment
Chlamydia	Urine sample OR a swab from your genitals, throat, and/or rectum	Symptoms may not appear until several weeks after you have sex with an infected partner. Chlamydia may cause pain or burning during urination or a discharge from your genitals. Most people have no symptoms. Did you know that you could also have a chlamydia infection in your throat or rectum? Symptoms include rectal pain, discharge, and/or bleeding. Some people have no symptoms.	Cured with the right antibiotic medication. Take all the medication your health care provider prescribes to cure your infection. It's important to wait 7 days after finishing your medicine before having sex.
Genital Warts	Visual inspection	Genital warts are small, bumpy growths in or around your genitals or anus of varying color and size. You can have one wart or many. Warts usually appear 3-6 months after infection. Genital warts are caused by the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). HPV can cause cancers on the cervix, vulva, vagina, penis, anus, and the back of the throat.	While there is no cure for HPV, genital warts can be treated by your healthcare provider or with prescription medication. If left untreated, genital warts may go away, stay the same, or grow in size or number. A Pap test (or Pap smear) looks for cell changes on the cervix that might become cervical cancer if they are not treated appropriately. There is a vaccine to prevent some kinds of HPV.
Gonorrhea	Urine sample OR a swab from your genitals, throat, and/or rectum	Symptoms may appear 2-10 days after you have sex with an infected partner. Gonorrhea may cause pain or burning during urination, discharge from your genitals, or sore throat. Some people have no symptoms. Did you know that you can have a gonorrhea infection in your throat or rectum? Symptoms include rectal pain, discharge, and/or bleeding. Some people have no symptoms.	Cured with the right antibiotic medication. It is important you take all the medication prescribed by your health care provider to cure your infection. It's important to wait 7 days after finishing your medicine before having sex.
Hepatitis B Virus (HBV)	Blood draw from your arm	HBV is 50-100 times more infectious than HIV. Some people have no symptoms. If you do have symptoms, they may appear 45-180 or more days after infection. Symptoms can include tiredness, vomiting, stomach pain, loss of appetite/weight, aching muscles/joints, fever, yellowing of skin or eyes, or dark-colored urine.	Treatable with medications to control liver damage, make symptoms less severe, and help prevent liver cancer. A vaccine is available to prevent HBV infection.
Hepatitis C Virus (HCV)	Blood draw from your arm or a finger stick	Some people have no symptoms. Symptoms may appear 14-180 or more days after infection. Symptoms can include tiredness, vomiting, stomach pain, loss of appetite/weight, aching muscles/joints, fever, yellowing of skin or eyes, or dark-colored urine.	Cured with medications. Treatment can be complex and may require multiple drugs and careful monitoring. You may have to take some medications for several months to get rid of the virus.
Herpes (Herpes Simplex Virus –HSV)	Blood draw from your arm OR a sample taken from sore	Herpes sores usually appear as one or more blisters on or around the genitals, rectum, or mouth. The blisters break and leave painful sores that may take weeks to heal. You can get genital herpes from an infected partner, even if your partner has no symptoms.	There is no cure for herpes. Medicine can make outbreaks less frequent. When you take medicine, it is less likely you will spread herpes to a sex partner.
HIV	Blood draw from your arm, finger stick, OR a cheek swab	Some people may have flu-like symptoms such as rash, fever, sore throat, or swollen lymph nodes when they first become infected. Other symptoms may include night sweats, unexplained weight loss, diarrhea, tiredness, or nausea. Some symptoms might show up several months or years after infection.	There is no cure for HIV. Medications can help manage HIV and treat the infections caused by a weakened immune system. Always taking your medications for HIV can help them work better, allow you to live a healthier life and prevent the transmission of HIV to your partners.
Pubic lice “crabs”	Visual inspection	Crabs spread by sharing personal items such as clothing, towels, or bedding infested with crabs or crab eggs. Symptoms appear quickly after infection and may include intense itching in the genital area. Often you can see the crabs or their eggs in the infected area.	Cured with prescription and over-the-counter medicated creams, lotions, or shampoos. Follow the instructions carefully and wash all bedding, clothes, towels, etc. at the time of treatment.
Syphilis	Blood draw from your arm OR a finger stick	1st stage: 1-12 weeks after infection, a painless sore may appear where you were infected. The sore can be anywhere in the genital area, inside the vagina, rectum, or mouth. The sore will go away without treatment, but the infection is still causing damage to your body. Because the sore is painless and may not be visible, many people with syphilis do not recall noticing a sore. 2nd stage: 2-12 weeks after the sore has healed, you may get a rash on your hands, feet, or whole body. A red, blotchy rash is common with this stage and sometimes called a “palmar-plantar rash” because of the location on the palms of your hands and soles of your feet. You might have flu-like symptoms, or rapid patchy hair loss. Even though the symptoms will go away, you still have syphilis until you are treated. 3rd stage: After the second stage, many people with syphilis can go a long time with no symptoms at all. This “latent period” does not mean you no longer have syphilis. The infectious sores may return. Untreated syphilis can damage your internal organs. Syphilis can continue to cause damage to your body for decades if untreated. Syphilis can eventually cause death. Neurological symptoms: Neurological symptoms can happen at any stage of syphilis. Some people with syphilis may have confusion, depression, headaches, or numbness. Syphilis can also cause serious permanent eye damage or blindness.	Cured with prescription antibiotic medication, often as an injection. Treatment cannot fix the damage caused, so it is important to get treated quickly. See your health care provider immediately if you have a sudden change in your eyesight. Eye damage or blindness caused by syphilis is permanent. Treatment stops more damage to your eyesight.
Trichomoniasis “Trich”	Urine sample or swab from your genitals	Symptoms can include itching or irritation of the genitals, burning or discomfort when urinating, and an unusual discharge. Some people with symptoms get them within 5 to 28 days after being infected. Others do not develop symptoms until much later. Symptoms can come and go. About 70% of infected people do not have any signs or symptoms.	Cured with medication prescribed by your health care provider.

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