

Reducing Your Risk of STIs

What are sexually transmitted infections?

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are infections spread during unprotected sexual contact, pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding, and through infected blood or blood products.



Sexually Transmitted Infection
Awareness

Are STIs harmful to our health?

Yes! STIs can cause a long list of permanent complications, and even lead to death. The good news, though, is that all STIs are treatable or curable, especially when caught early. However, prevention is key to staying as healthy as possible.

How can I prevent getting an STI?

- **Get Tested Routinely** – The only way to know if we're infected is to get tested. Early detection means less long-term impacts and less spread.
- **Use Protection** – Condoms and dental dams prevent skin-to-skin contact and the transmission of many infected body fluids.
- **Get Treatment if Positive** – The sooner infections are treated, the sooner we're back to healthy. And some infections, like HIV, cannot spread to others if they are properly medically under control.
- **Talk Openly with your Partner/s** – Communicating with our partners is key. Be open and honest about risks, symptoms test results, and concerns.
- **Learn about PrEP and DoxyPEP** – PrEP is a daily medication that protects us from HIV infection, while DoxyPEP can help prevent contracting other STIs.

For more information: Visit www.cdc.gov/std or speak with your medical provider or local health department for more information .on sexual health, testing, treatment, and prevention.



5/24

Health  Whys
A public health message from
BlueRidgeHD.org



VDH VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH
To protect the health and promote the
well-being of all people in Virginia.

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