



## Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) What Should I Know?

**Sexually transmitted infections (STIs)**, also known as sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), are infections passed from one person to another through sexual contact (vaginal, oral, or anal sex). Some can also spread through skin-to-skin contact, blood, or shared needles. Understanding STIs helps you stay informed, take precautions, and seek treatment when needed.

### Common STIs & Their Symptoms

STIs don't always cause symptoms, so regular testing is essential. Here are some common STIs and their signs:

- ◆ Chlamydia & Gonorrhea
  - Symptoms: Burning during urination, abnormal discharge, pain during sex, or lower abdominal pain. Often no symptoms in early stages.
  - 👉 Treatment: Antibiotics (curable).
- ◆ Human Papillomavirus (HPV)
  - Symptoms: Often none, but some strains cause genital warts or cervical cancer.
  - 👉 Prevention: HPV vaccine available.
  - 👉 Treatment: No cure, but warts can be treated, and regular screenings help detect cervical changes.

- ◆ Herpes (HSV-1 & HSV-2)
  - Symptoms: Painful blisters or sores around the mouth or genitals, flu-like symptoms.
  - 👉 Treatment: No cure, but antiviral medication helps manage outbreaks.
- ◆ HIV/AIDS
  - Symptoms: Flu-like symptoms early on, then no symptoms for years before weakening the immune system.
  - 👉 Treatment: No cure, but antiretroviral therapy (ART) helps manage the virus and prevent progression.
- ◆ Syphilis
  - Symptoms: Starts as a painless sore, then progresses to rashes, fever, and organ damage if untreated.
  - 👉 Treatment: Antibiotics (curable if caught early).
- ◆ Trichomoniasis
  - Symptoms: Itching, burning, unusual discharge, but often no symptoms.
  - 👉 Treatment: Antibiotics (curable).

---

◆ Hepatitis B & C

● Symptoms: Jaundice (yellowing of skin/eyes), fatigue, nausea.

📄 Prevention: Hepatitis B vaccine available.

👤 Treatment: Antiviral medication; hepatitis C can sometimes be cured.

**How to Protect Yourself from STIs**

✓ Use Protection – Condoms & dental dams reduce STI risk but don't eliminate it.

✓ Get Vaccinated – The HPV and Hepatitis B vaccines can prevent infections.

✓ Regular STI Testing – Many STIs have no symptoms, so testing is essential if you're sexually active.

✓ Limit Multiple Partners – Fewer partners lower your risk.

✓ Avoid Sharing Needles – Protects against HIV and Hepatitis B/C.

✓ Have Open Conversations – Talk to your partner(s) about STI status and protection.

**When to Get Tested**

✓ If you have new or multiple partners

✓ If you have symptoms (burning, pain, sores, unusual discharge, etc.)

✓ If you've had unprotected sex

✓ As part of routine health checkups (especially for HPV, HIV, and syphilis).

**Bottom Line**

STIs are common but preventable. Safe sex, regular testing, and early treatment help protect your health and prevent complications. If you're sexually active, staying informed is key!

