

## **Sexually Transmitted Infection Health & Prevention**

### **What are Sexually Transmitted Infections? How do you get STI'S?**

Sexually transmitted infections (STI's) are infections that are spread through having sex with someone who has an STI. They can be spread through vaginal, oral (mouth) or anal sex. Some STI's can be spread through any contact with the penis, vagina, mouth or anus, even if you don't have intercourse. These infections can be spread from man to woman, woman to man, man to man or woman to woman. Some STI's, like HIV, can be spread by needles. It is hard to tell who has an STI because many look healthy and feel well. They may not even know that they are infected.

### **What are the dangers?**

Chlamydia and gonorrhea can make women unable to have babies or cause problems with pregnancies. Herpes can cause painful sores in the groin, genital and rectal area that come back again and again. Some types of HPV (human papilloma virus) can cause warts and others can cause cervical cancer, untreated HIV can cause serious illness and death. Women with STI's can also give them to newborn babies which can be very dangerous.

### **What are the symptoms?**

It is important to remember that many people who have an STI have no symptoms. This is why it is important to practice safe sex and to see your medical provider twice yearly to make sure you don't have an infection so you can stay healthy.

#### **Symptoms for woman:**

- \* Pain, burning with urination
- \* Sores, bumps on the genital area or mouth
- \* Unusual discharge from the vagina or anus
- \* Bleeding between normal periods
- \* Pain in the lower abdomen
- \* Pain during intercourse
- \* Sore, swollen joints

#### **Symptoms for men:**

- \* Pain, burning with urination
- \* Sores, bumps on the genital area or mouth
- \* Discharge from the penis
- \* Discharge, itching or pain from the anus
- \* Sore swollen joints

### **How can you prevent STI's?**

Avoiding sex is one sure way to prevent STI's. If you choose to have sex, talk about it with your partner and consider getting tested beforehand. Always use a condom. Do not use Vaseline or creams with the condom. Limit the number of sex partners that you have. Never share needles. Go to see your medical provider if you have any symptoms. See your medical provider for routine six-month check-ups for STI and HIV testing and get vaccinated against HPV. There is also daily medication called PrEP that can prevent HIV.

### **How are STI's treated?**

Treatment involves taking medicine to kill the germs that are causing the infection. Some STI's cannot be cured, but treatment helps to relieve the symptoms. To get better it is important to do the following:

- \* Take all of your medicine as directed by the medical provider.
- \* **Do not have sex until your treatment is finished, and any symptoms are resolved.**
- \* Go back to your medical provider when instructed to do so.
- \* Follow up with your clinic in 3 months to get a repeat STI test to make sure the infection is gone.
- \* If positive for an STI, notify your sexual partners from the past 60 days

**Expedited Partner Therapy (EPT):**

EPT is available for partners of patients with certain sexually transmitted infections (STIs). If partners are unable to be seen by a healthcare provider, please ask about treatment and education without an in-person exam. The treatment will reduce the chance of spreading infections and can reduce the chance of serious health problems.

**To Schedule a Follow-up Visit:**

**Contact Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Karabots or Cobb's Creek Family Planning Sites- 267-425-3210**

or

**Access Matters-**

**Southeastern Pennsylvania Hotline- 215-985-3300**

Monday-Thursday: 9am-6pm; Friday 9am-5pm

Text Option- 833-667-3377

**Scan to find out more.**



**Call your medical provider or return to the Emergency Department if:**

- \* Your symptoms are not getting better in 24-48 hours.
- \* You have worsening of your abdominal pain.
- \* You have worsening of your vaginal bleeding.
- \* You are unable to take your medicine.
- \* You develop a high fever or chills.