

What Are Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)?

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are infections that you can get from having sex or intimate contact. You can get an STI if you have sex with someone who has an STI. It does not matter if you are straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. Any person who has sex (vaginal, anal or oral) can get an STI. HIV is an STI caused by a virus. It stands for human immunodeficiency virus. HIV harms your body's immune system that protects you against infections. The latest stage of HIV is called AIDS. The same actions that put you at risk of getting an STI may also put you at risk for getting HIV.



Some common STIs are:

- Chlamydia
- Gonorrhea
- Genital Herpes
- HPV
- HIV/AIDS
- Syphilis

What puts me at risk for STIs and HIV?

- Having anal, vaginal, or oral sex without a condom
- Having many sex partners
- Having sex while using drugs or alcohol. Drinking or taking drugs may affect your judgement.

If you think you are at risk of getting an STI or HIV get checked by a doctor. If pregnant, some STIs, such as Syphilis and HIV, may pass to your unborn baby through body fluids or the baby may get the infection during the delivery. Passing the infection to your baby may be avoided with early treatment. Please see your doctor for treatment as soon as you can.



How can I prevent getting STIs and HIV?

The only way to prevent STIs is to abstain from vaginal, anal or oral sex.

If you are having sex, here are some things you can do to have safer sex:

- Use a condom any time you have sex
- Have fewer sex partners
- Limit or don't use drugs or alcohol before or during sex
- Have sex with only one person, who has agreed to have sex only with you
- Have your sex partner go to a doctor and get checked

You can avoid getting STIs and HIV by having safer sex, regular checkups, and early treatment.

What are the common signs and symptoms of STIs?

- Unusual discharge from the penis or vagina
- Sores or warts on the genital area
- Painful or frequent urination
- Itching and redness in the genital area
- Blisters or sores in or around the mouth
- Vaginal odor
- Anal itching, soreness, or bleeding
- Stomach pain
- Fever

Be aware of any changes in your body and your partner's body. In some cases, there are no symptoms. It is common for people to have an STI and pass it on to others without knowing.