

# What We All Need to Know About Sexually Transmitted Infections

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## HIV/AIDS

### What is HIV/AIDS?

The letters in AIDS stand for **A**cquired **I**mmuno-**D**eficiency **S**ndrome. It is a very serious infection. You get AIDS from a virus called HIV (**H**uman **I**mmuno-deficiency **V**irus). This virus harms your immune system which protects you against infections. Because people with AIDS don't have this protection, they can get and may die of different infections and cancers.

### How can I get AIDS?

You can only get AIDS if the HIV gets into your body. This can happen through the semen, the fluid in the vagina, or through blood. People can get HIV infection when they have sex, or when they share injection needles or syringes. A mother can pass the HIV to her baby.

### How do I know if I have an STI?

Some people who have STIs have no symptoms at all, so they don't know that they have the infection. But you should watch for any unusual fluids from the vagina or penis, a feeling of burning when you pass water, sores, itching, pain or rash on or near the sex organs. You may have none, only one, or a number of symptoms.

### What are the risks?

You risk getting an STI:

- If you have unprotected sex (sex without a condom).
- If you have more than one partner.
- When you have a new sex partner.
- If your partner has sex with others.
- If you or your partner use injection drugs.
- If you or your partner share needles or syringes for injection.

If you took any of these risks, see a doctor and ask for an STI check-up, even if you don't have any symptoms.

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### How can I not get an STI?

You can choose not to have sex.

You can avoid getting an STI by staying with one sex partner who is also having sex only with you. The more people with whom you or your partner have sex, the greater your risk of getting an STI.

If you or your partner does have sex with more than one person, you should protect yourself and others. If you don't protect yourself, you also risk the health of your partner and the health of babies you or your partner may have in the future.

- Use a latex condom every time you have sex, unless you know for sure that both you and your partner don't have STIs. It's never too late to start using a condom. Condoms can protect you from getting an STI.
- Never use the same condom more than once.
- Make sure you only have safer sex. That means, use a condom every time. Say "NO" to anyone who won't have safer sex. Remember, most people may not tell you with whom they had sex or if they have used injection drugs.

### STAGE TWO

Six weeks to six months after you had sex, you may feel you have the flu. Some people also get a rash on the palms of their hands and the soles of their feet, or over the whole body. The symptoms may go away again on their own, but the germs will stay in the body.

### STAGE THREE

If you don't get treatment for syphilis, years later you may have serious problems, such as heart disease, blindness, paralysis, brain damage, and then death.

# WHAT WE ALL NEED TO KNOW ABOUT STIs

## (Sexually Transmitted Infections)

A sexually transmitted infection (STI) is an infection you can get if you have sex with someone who has the infection. There are many kinds of STIs.

People from many cultures have difficulty talking about sex. If you have questions or concerns about STIs, please call your doctor/local health unit or STD/AIDS Control at the phone numbers at the back of this booklet.

You can get an STI from any person with whom you have sex. It does not matter if your partner is the opposite sex or the same sex as you.

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## Syphilis

### What is Syphilis?

Syphilis is a serious infection. It can harm your whole body. You can have syphilis without knowing it and pass it on to others. If a pregnant woman has syphilis, she can pass it on to her baby. The baby may be born with medical problems, or even die. If you took risks having sex without protection, you should see a doctor.

Antibiotics can cure syphilis.

### What are the symptoms?

#### Syphilis has three stages:

##### STAGE ONE

You may get a painless sore, usually from nine to 90 days after you had sex. The sore may be around or in the vagina, on the penis, or inside the mouth or anus. Often people do not notice a sore inside the vagina or the anus. The sore may go away even if you don't get treatment, but the germs will stay.

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## I think I have an STI

### What should I do?

Don't be shy or afraid to ask for help. See your doctor and ask for an STI check-up, or go to an STI Clinic. They will test you, and give you treatment if you need it.

Make sure you do what the doctor tells you. Take ALL your medicine, even if you feel well before you have finished it. Go back to the doctor if the problem doesn't go away.

If you have an STI, tell your sex partners. They have to get an STI check-up. You must do this so that:

- They can get treatment if they need it.
- You protect them from contracting an infection.
- You protect any babies you or they may have in the future.
- They will not pass the infection to others.
- You will not get reinfected by them again.

You have to wait until the doctor or nurse tells you it is okay for you to have sex again.

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## Introduction

You have probably heard about STIs. The letters in STI stand for **S**exually **T**ransmitted **I**nfections. These are infections you can get from someone else, or pass on to someone, if you have sex with them.

Sex is a normal and healthy part of our lives. If you are having sex with someone, this booklet can help you to have safer sex and a better understanding of the infections that can make sex unhealthy or dangerous.

Many people get STIs. People of all ages and background can get STIs. Many people don't even know they have one. These people are mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, sons and daughters. Just like you. Even married people can have STIs.

Read this booklet so that you will know about STIs and what the risks are.

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## Hepatitis B

### What is Hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is an infection of the liver. A virus causes it. Often, there are no symptoms. Hepatitis B is the only STI for which there is a vaccine. It is an injection a doctor or nurse can give you so that you won't get hepatitis B. If you get hepatitis B, you have to rest, eat healthy food and not drink alcohol. If you have sex, you must use a condom.

### What are the symptoms?

You may get symptoms two to six months after being infected with hepatitis B. The symptoms can be:

- no appetite, feeling sick in the stomach, vomiting (throwing up)
- headaches
- a general feeling of not being well
- jaundice (yellowing of eyes and skin)
- dark, tea-colour urine (pee)
- light-colour stools (bowel movement)

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### What can Gonorrhoea do to me?

Most women who have gonorrhoea don't have symptoms. Most men who get gonorrhoea will have symptoms, but some don't. Doctors can cure gonorrhoea, but you must get treatment. If you don't, you can have these serious problems later:

#### For a woman

- pain in the area below the stomach that will not go away
- The germ can go into the uterus and fallopian tubes (see picture on page 7). You may not be able to have children later.
- You could get pregnant in the wrong place, in the fallopian tubes (see picture on page 7). The tube can burst and you can have serious bleeding inside.

#### For a man

- if the germs go to the testicles (see picture on page 10), you may not be able to have any children
- you may get swelling and pain in your joints

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**URINE** – the liquid waste you pass from the bladder and urethra (see female or male picture on pages 7 and 10). “pass water”, “pee”, “piss”.

**VACCINE/VACCINATED** – an injection that can protect you against an infection.

**VAGINAL FLUID** – the fluid in a woman’s vagina (see the picture on page 7).

**VIRUS** – a tiny living thing that can cause infection if it gets inside your body; viruses are smaller than germs.

**YEAST/FUNGUS** – tiny organisms that are often found in our bodies. Too much yeast or fungus can cause an infection.

STIs can be dangerous if they are not treated soon enough. Both men and women may become infertile. Some women may get cancer of the cervix from STIs. A mother can pass an STI to her unborn baby and the baby could be born with health problems or even die. The more people with whom you have sex in your life, the greater your chances of getting an STI.

The only sure way not to get an STI is NOT to have sex.

You can reduce your risk of getting or passing on an STI if you:

- Don’t have sex with many different people.
- Always use a condom. It’s the most important thing you can do to make sex safer.
- If you use injection drugs, don’t share needles with anyone.
- If you think you may have an STI, go to a doctor or to an STI clinic. Ask for an STI check-up. Remember, all the information you give is confidential.

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### **Symptoms to look for:**

#### **For a woman:**

- A new or different fluid from the vagina.
- A burning feeling when you pass water.
- Pain in the area below the stomach, sometimes with fever and feeling cold.
- Pain when you have sex.

#### **For a man:**

- A thick yellow or yellow-green fluid from the penis.
- A burning feeling when you pass water.
- Pain or swelling in the testicles (see picture on page 10).

You can get and pass on gonorrhea by vaginal, anal and oral sex. (see TYPES OF SEX in the glossary). If you have anal sex, the symptoms can be pain and blood or other fluid from the anus.

You can pass the virus to others even if you yourself don’t have any symptoms. Some people have the hepatitis B virus for life and pass it on to their sex partners without knowing it.

### **What can it do to me?**

Most people get well. A few people will have serious problems such as liver disease and cancer of the liver.

### **How do people get hepatitis B?**

You can get hepatitis B when you have sex with someone who has it, or from blood that has the hepatitis B virus in it. A woman with hepatitis B can pass it to her baby.

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- If you have an STI, you have to tell your sex partner. You must do this to protect your partner's health, and so they don't give the STI to others. If you need help telling your partner, ask the doctor or nurse about what to say.
- If you or your partner does not want to get pregnant, you need to use some kind of contraception.
- Remember, birth control pills DO NOT protect you against STIs!

You have to know about the dangers of STIs. Only you can protect yourself from getting and spreading STIs.

Some difficult words are included in the glossary at the end of this booklet.

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#### **To protect yourself and others from hepatitis B:**

- Do not share needles and syringes or tools for snorting drugs.
- Do not share the tools used for ear-piercing, tattoos or getting rid of hair.
- Do not share toothbrushes, dental floss or razors.
- If your sex partner had hepatitis B before, check with your doctor to find out if you should get vaccinated against it.

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#### **RISK**

- 1) The chance that something will happen.
- 2) To take a chance.

**SEMEN** – the white fluid that comes out of the man's penis during sex.

**STI** – a sexually transmitted infection; an illness you can get if you have sex with someone who has the infection.

**STOOL** – the waste that you pass from the anus.

**SYMPTOMS** – the signs which show that you have a particular infection. For example, sores, itching, pain or a rash on or near the sex organs are symptoms of STIs.

**SYRINGE** – the part of the injection needle that pushes the fluid medicine into your body.

**TYPE OF SEX** – people have sex in different ways:

**vaginal sex:** penis in vagina

**anal sex:** penis in anus

**oral sex:** penis in mouth or mouth on vagina

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## **Gonorrhea (Gon-a-ree-ah)**

### **What is Gonorrhea?**

Many people get this STI. If you don't get treatment for gonorrhea in time, you can have serious problems. This is especially true for women. A pregnant woman who has gonorrhea can pass the germ on to her baby at birth; then the baby may get a serious eye infection.

Antibiotics can cure gonorrhea.

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

You may not have any symptoms when you get gonorrhea. If you do see symptoms, it will be three to five days after you had sex. You can pass the germ on to others even if you don't have symptoms.

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## How do people get STIs?

**INFLAMMATION** – an infection in a part of your body where it may feel painful, hot, itchy and may also swell and look red.

### INJECTION DRUGS

- 1) Medicine a doctor or nurse gives you by needle
- 2) Drugs some people take by needle as a habit

**LUBRICANT** – a cream or gel for making something slippery.

**ORGANISM** – a living thing in our body which can only be seen under a microscope. Some organisms are good, some are neutral, and some are bad. A healthy body has mostly healthy organisms.

**PARALYSIS** – when a person cannot move.

**PREGNANCY/PREGNANT** – the time during which a baby is inside the mother, usually nine months.

**REDUCE RISK** – make less likely to happen, but NO guaranteed protection.

### You can get STIs in different ways:

- Most often, you get an STI by having sex with someone. The germs travel in the semen, in the vaginal fluid or in the blood.
- Mothers who have STIs can pass them to their babies. This can happen during pregnancy or during the birth.
- You can get some STIs by injection if the needle or syringe has been used before and has infected blood in it. For example, you can get hepatitis B and HIV this way.

There are NO vaccines for STIs, except for Hepatitis B.

Many STIs can be easily cured. All STIs can be dangerous if you don't get treatment. For some STIs, there is no cure.

## What can Chlamydia do to me?

Most women who have Chlamydia have no symptoms. Men who have it usually have symptoms, but some don't. You have to get treatment for Chlamydia. If you don't, it can cause serious problems, especially for women. If you have Chlamydia and do not get treatment, these things may happen:

### For a woman:

- Pain in the area below the stomach that will not go away.
- The germ can go into the uterus and fallopian tubes (see picture on page 7). You may need to go into the hospital. You may not be able to have children in the future.
- If a pregnancy starts outside the uterus, in the fallopian tubes (see picture on page 7), the tubes can burst and you can have bleeding inside.

### For a man:

- If the germs go into the testicles (see picture on page 10), you may not be able to have any children.

## Hepatitis C

### What is Hepatitis C?

Hepatitis C is an infection of the liver. The hepatitis C virus (HCV) causes it. This virus was only identified in 1989. Since 1990, all blood that people get in hospitals has been tested for hepatitis C.

### What are the symptoms?

You can have hepatitis C and not have any symptoms. You can pass the virus to others even if you yourself don't have any symptoms.

You may have a short illness with symptoms of hepatitis six to nine weeks after you have been infected with hepatitis C. The symptoms can be:

- Fever
- Feeling tired
- Jaundice (yellowing of eyes and skin)
- A pain in the area below the stomach
- Dark, tea-color urine (pee)
- Nausea (feeling sick in the stomach)

Some people will have less clear symptoms over a long time, such as low energy, feeling tired, not wanting to eat.

## What is Safer Sex?

You can enjoy your sex life and at the same time protect yourself and your sex partner(s) from STIs. The most important thing you can do to make sex safer is to use a condom every time you have sex. Condoms can also protect you against cancer of the cervix and infertility caused by STIs.

### Important Facts About Condoms:

- A condom is a barrier preventing the exchange of body fluids and the transmission of sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy.
- Use only water based lubricants with the male latex condom. Oil based lubricants like Vaseline, lotion, baby oil, etc. can weaken and destroy latex
- Female condoms are made of polyurethane. This material can withstand any type of lubricant, water or oil based.
- Some lubricants contain chemicals (spermicides) to help protect against unwanted pregnancy. If they irritate your genitals, don't use them.
- DO NOT use a male condom together with a female condom.
- Condoms do not offer 100% protection from STI and unwanted pregnancy. It will not prevent transmission of STI passed through skin to skin contact, i.e. Syphilis, Human Papilloma Virus (Warts) and Herpes. But, if used properly, they are very effective and can reduce the risk of transmission of these STIs.

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### How can I tell if I have hepatitis C?

Ask your doctor or a health clinic for a blood test. If you ever had the hepatitis C virus (HCV), this will show up on the test. But the test does not show if you still have the virus in your body. At this time, there is no test for that. So if you tested positive to HCV, act as if you have the infection.

### What can it do to me?

If you have hepatitis C, you can get cirrhosis (liver damage). A few people will have liver failure or liver cancer.

### How do people get hepatitis C?

You can only get hepatitis C if the virus gets into your blood. This could happen:

- If you share or have shared needles for injecting drug.
- If your partner shares or has shared needles for injecting drug.
- If you had a blood transfusion or a transplant before June 1990 in Canada.
- If you accidentally poked yourself with a used injection needle.

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**CONFIDENTIAL** – the doctors and other health workers will not give personal information about you to anyone without your written permission.

**CONTRACEPTION** – device (e.g. a condom) or a drug (birth control pills) that stops a woman from getting pregnant.

**ERECTION/ERECT PENIS** – when the penis gets hard, a “hard-on”.

**EXPIRY DATE** – the date after which it may not be safe to use a condom, medicine or food. Usually, what you buy is guaranteed up to the expiry date.

**GENITAL WARTS** – small bumps that can grow on or around the sex organs.

**GERMS** – tiny living things that can cause infection if they get inside your body.

**INFECTION** – a condition caused by a germ or bacteria; fever can be a symptom of infection. **TO INFECT** – to pass a germ (bacteria or a virus) to another person.

**INFERTILE/INFERTILITY** – not being able to have children.

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### Symptoms to look for are:

#### For a woman:

- A new or different fluid from the vagina.
- A burning feeling when you pass water.
- Pain in the area below the stomach, sometimes with fever and feeling cold.
- Pain when you have sex.

#### For a man:

- A watery or milky fluid from the penis.
- An itchy feeling inside the penis.
- A burning feeling when you pass water.
- Pain or swelling of the testicles (see picture on page 10).

Like other STIs, you can get and pass on Chlamydia by anal as well as vaginal sex (See TYPES OF SEX in the GLOSSARY). The symptoms can be pain and blood or other fluids from the anus.

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## GLOSSARY

IF THE WORD OR INFORMATION YOU ARE LOOKING FOR IS NOT HERE, MAKE SURE YOU ASK A DOCTOR OR A NURSE. DON'T LEAVE ANY QUESTION UNANSWERED.

**ANTIBIOTICS** - medicines used to treat infections caused by germs.

**ANTIBODIES** – protection that your own body makes against infections caused by germs and viruses.

**CERVIX** – part of a woman's sex organs (see the picture on page 7)

**CIRCUMCISED** – the skin is cut off from around the head of the penis, usually when a boy is a baby.

**CONDOM** – latex protection that fits over a man's penis, a "rubber" or "safe"

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## Chlamydia (Chla-mid-ee-a)

### What is Chlamydia?

Many people get Chlamydia. It is one of the more serious STIs. If you have it, you may become sterile. Mothers can pass the germ to their babies when they are born. Many of these babies will get infection of the eyes or the lungs.

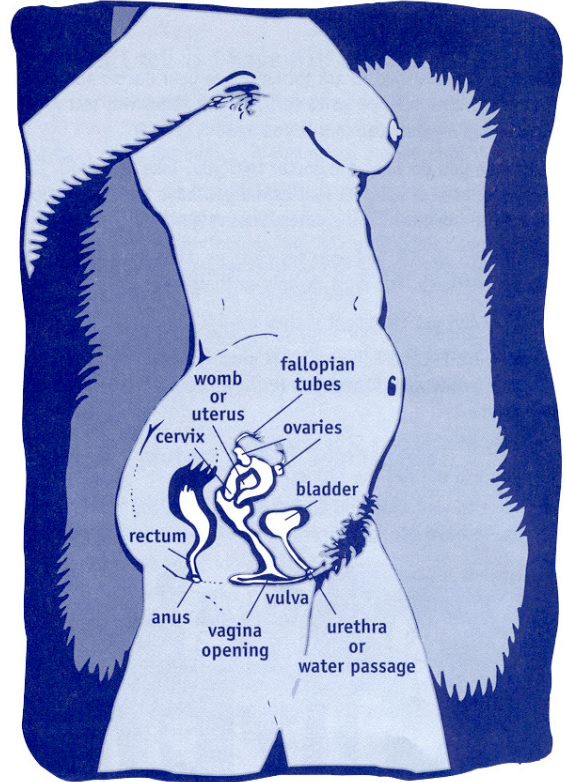
Antibiotics can cure Chlamydia.

### What are the symptoms?

Some people have Chlamydia but have no symptoms. If you get symptoms, it will be from one to three weeks after you had sex with a person who had Chlamydia. You can pass the germ on to others even if you don't have symptoms.

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## Woman's body



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There is a small risk of getting hepatitis C from a sex partner, or from a mother passing the infection to her baby. Talk to your doctor about this.

### To protect yourself and others from hepatitis C:

- Do not share needles and syringes or other tools for injecting drugs.
- Do not share the tools for ear-piercing, body-piercing, tattoos and getting rid of hair.
- Do not share toothbrushes, dental floss or razors.
- Use a condom every time you have sex.

### If you have tested positive to hepatitis C:

- Tell your sex partner.
- Use a condom every time you have sex.
- Cover all cuts and sores until they are healed
- Put all garbage with your blood on it in a separate plastic bag before you put it in the regular garbage (for example, Band-Aids, Kleenex, tampons, razors, dental floss, etc.)
- Use bleach to clean places where your blood has dropped, e.g. cutting boards, kitchen sinks. (use nine parts water to one part bleach).
- Never donate blood, semen or body parts (organs).
- Discuss pregnancy or breast feeding with your doctor.

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## How to use a Female Condom

A new condom should be used each time a couple has sex. The condom should be inserted before the erect penis comes into contact with the partner's body.



- (1) Open the packet carefully.



- (2) Hold the condom with the open end hanging down. While holding the outside of the condom, squeeze the small ring between the thumb and the middle finger.



- (3) Find a comfortable position, either lying down, sitting with your knees apart or standing with one foot raised on a stool. Squeeze the small ring and insert it into the vagina as far you can.

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You now know how to lower your risk of getting STIs. If you had sex and took a risk, see a doctor or nurse, or go to an STI clinic and ask for a check-up.

Don't get talked into having sex before you feel ready. If you are going to have sex, think about the risks.

For more information on STIs, HIV and AIDS, go to the doctor or phone your local health unit or call:

### **B.C. Centre for Disease Control Clinical Prevention Services – STI Control**

655 West 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Vancouver BC V5Z 4R4  
Tel: (604) 707-5600  
Fax: (604) 707-5604  
Email: stdinfo@bccdc.ca

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## What can I do to stay as healthy as possible?

If you have tested positive to hepatitis C, you should see your doctor regularly and have your blood tested to see how your liver is doing. Also,

- Don't drink alcohol.
- Don't smoke and don't do drugs.
- Don't take lots of vitamins or any "health food" medicines without talking about it with your doctor.
- Talk with your doctor about any medicines you use, even those you don't need a prescription for.
- Ask about getting a vaccination for hepatitis A and B.
- See your doctor at once if you have any symptoms of hepatitis (see page 19).

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## I think I have herpes. What should I do?

- Don't panic, but see a doctor.
- Keep the area with the infection clean and dry.
- Use a hair dryer instead of a towel to dry around the sores.
- Don't wear tight pants, panty hose or underwear made of nylon, polyester or acrylics. Wear loose clothing and underwear made from cotton.
- Don't share bath towels.

If passing water is painful for you, try to do it sitting in warm water. Only use medicine that a doctor or nurse gives you. Don't try to treat genital herpes on your own.

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### What about my sex partners?

If you have the HIV, you must tell your sex partner or anyone with whom you have shared injection needles. They should be tested for HIV infection.

### Who will tell my sex partners?

You may want to tell them yourself. If you can't or don't want to do it yourself, talk to the doctor or nurse. They can help.

### What can be done about HIV/AIDS?

There is no cure for HIV or AIDS. The virus stays in your body. Doctors are using different medicines against the infections and illnesses that people with HIV may get. But there is no cure yet.



- (4) Put a finger inside the condom and push the small ring inside as far as possible.
- (5) Make sure that the part of the condom with the outer ring is outside the body. The outer ring will lie flat against the body when the penis is inside the condom
- (6) Squeeze a few drops of lubricant to the inside of the condom and apply some to the penis. When the penis enters the vagina, make sure that the penis is inside the condom.
- (7) After intercourse, remove the condom before you stand up. Squeeze and twist the outer ring to keep the sperm inside the condom. Pull out gently.
- (8) Dispose of the used condom hygienically. Wrap the condom in a tissue and place it in the trash.

If the condom breaks during sex, it should be removed immediately, and a new one be put on.

### Can Herpes be passed on?

You can get genital herpes if you kiss or have sex with someone who has this STI. Most often, it happens when someone has open sores. But it can also be passed on when there are no visible sores. If you touch herpes sores, wash your hands with soap and water so you don't pass the virus to other places, like your eyes.

You CANNOT get herpes from toilet seats, bathtubs, swimming pools or whirlpools. But you could get it if you share bath towels with someone who has herpes.

You can pass the herpes virus to your sex partners even if you don't have symptoms.

## Genital Warts

### What are Genital Warts?

Genital warts are small bumps that grow on or around the sex organs. They look like ordinary skin warts. A virus causes them.

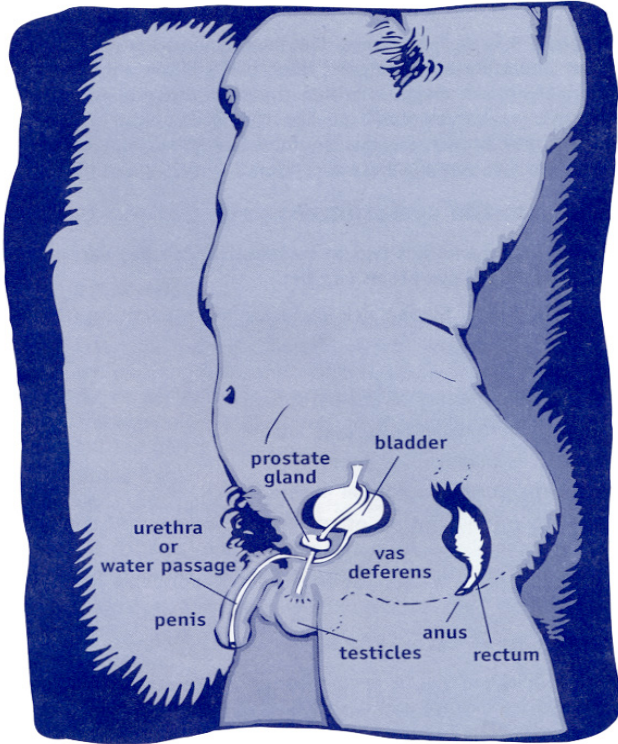
### What are the Symptoms?

You may get genital warts from two weeks to eight months after you had sex with someone who had the infection.

They look like a very small cauliflowers and grow on damp areas such as the penis, vagina and anus. They do not hurt. If you have oral sex, you may get warts in or around the mouth.

Some people who have the infection do not have the cauliflower like growth on or around their sex organs. They can still pass the infection to their partners.

## Man's body



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### What can genital warts do to me?

Genital warts can be dangerous, especially for women. Women who have genital warts are more likely to get cancer of the cervix (see picture on page 7). People who have the warts in the anus (see picture on page 7 and 10) are more likely to get cancer there. If the mother has genital warts, the baby may get them in the throat during birth.

### What can I do about genital warts?

If you think you have genital warts, you must see a doctor or go to an STI clinic. They will check you for warts inside the vagina, or on the penis and in the anus. The doctor may put medicine on the warts or you may need other special treatment.

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Remember, if you take risks in sex, you can get infections and you can pass the infections on to people who have sex with you, and to their unborn babies. Protect yourself and others by having safer sex (see pages 6, 8-9, 11-12).

### Is deep kissing, or "French Kissing" safe?

You cannot get HIV or AIDS from kissing. Deep kissing or "French Kissing" is safe.

### I think I may have HIV or AIDS. What should I do?

If you think you have symptoms, or if you took a risk during sex, see your doctor or go to an STI clinic. You may need to have a blood test. If your blood test is positive, it means you have been infected with the HIV, and you can pass it on to others. It does not mean that you have AIDS, or that you will get it.

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Women can have herpes sores inside or around the vagina, near the anus, or on the thighs and buttock (see picture on page 7). Men can get herpes sores on the penis, around the testicles, near the anus, or on the thighs and buttocks (see picture on page 10). Both men and women can get sores on the mouth after oral sex with someone who has herpes.

Many people who get herpes will have them repeatedly. For those who get herpes again, usually it is not as bad as the first time.

### What can Herpes do to me?

For most people, herpes is not a serious problem. But it can be serious if a woman is pregnant. A mother can pass the herpes virus to her baby when the baby is born. The baby can get very sick. If the mother has herpes for the first time, the baby could die. If you are pregnant, and you or your partner has had herpes, make sure you tell your doctor.

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## How can I tell if I have HIV infection?

There is a blood test for HIV. It's called the HIV antibody test. If you have the HIV, your body makes antibodies against it. If you have these antibodies, it means you are infected.

If your HIV test result is POSITIVE, it means you are infected with the HIV. If the test result is NEGATIVE, it means you don't have the HIV antibodies. But HIV antibodies can take as long as 12 weeks or longer to show up. So your test can be negative, but you can still have the virus.

AIDS is the last stage of the HIV infection. People who have AIDS become more and more sick. They can get so sick that they die. But you can protect yourself against the HIV and AIDS.

## How can I protect myself against HIV?

- Use a condom every time you have sex.
- Have as few sex partners as possible.
- Do not share injection needles.
- Do not share razors or toothbrushes.

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## Genital Herpes

### What is Genital Herpes?

Genital herpes is an STI that causes painful sores on and around the genitals. It is the same kind of virus that causes cold sores or fever blisters on or around the mouth. You can also get genital herpes from oral sex. After the sores have healed, they can come back from time to time. There is no cure for genital herpes, but you can get medicine that will make the sores last a shorter time and also make them less painful.

### What are the symptoms?

You may feel a tingling or itching in the genital area a few days to a week after you had sex. Then you will see a group of tiny blisters. The blisters burst and become painful sores. These can last from two to four weeks. The first time you get this, you may also have a fever and headache.

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## How to Use a Male Condom

A new condom should be used each time a couple has vaginal or anal sex. The condom should be put onto the erect penis before the penis comes into contact with the partner's body.



(1) Open the package carefully.



(2) Put the condom on the tip of the penis when it is hard and erect, but before it touches the partner's body. Make sure that the rolled-up condom rim faces outward.



(3) With the other hand, pinch the tip of the condom to remove any trapped air, and unroll the condom to cover the penis.

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## Vaginitis/Bacterial Vaginosis

### What is Vaginitis?

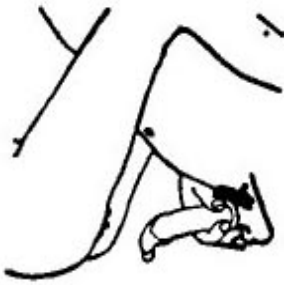
Vaginitis is an inflammation of the vagina.

### What are the symptoms?

Women may have different symptoms including:

- Unusual fluid from the vagina which may smell bad.
- Itchiness or pain in the vagina or around it.
- Redness and swelling on the outside of the vagina.
- Pain when you have sex or when you pass water (pee).

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- (4) After intercourse and before the penis becomes soft, withdraw the penis carefully by holding the rim of the condom against the penis, so that semen does not spill out.



- (5) Slide the condom gently off the penis, and knot the open end.



- (6) Dispose of the used condom hygienically. Wrap the condom in a tissue and place it in the trash.

If the condom breaks during sex, it should be removed immediately, and a new one be put on.

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## How can I NOT get AIDS?

You cannot get the HIV from other people unless you have sex or share injection needles with them. It is safe to touch, shake hands with and hug a person who has AIDS. You can't get the HIV from pets or biting insects such as mosquitoes.

Some people think they may get the HIV if they give blood. This is not true, because the nurse who takes your blood uses a new needle for each person. You do not touch anyone else's blood when you give blood.

The blood that people give is always checked for HIV, so the risk of getting HIV from blood they give you in a hospital is very low.

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## What causes Vaginitis?

### A yeast (or fungus) infection

Yeast or fungus can grow in the vagina and not cause any problems. But too much can cause vaginitis. If you are pregnant, or you take birth control pill or antibiotics, or if you have other health problems, you can get too much yeast. If you have sex when you have a yeast infection, your partner will probably not get it. But some men can get an itch or redness of the penis, especially if they are not circumcised.

### Trichomonas

A woman can get this germ when she has sex with a man who has it. Often men do not have symptoms and can spread the germ without knowing it. Some men have a little fluid discharge which is not urine from the penis, and/or a burning feeling when they pass water (pee).

### Bacterial Vaginosis

A woman gets this when there is an imbalance in the vagina and too many normal bacteria growth. The male partner does not need treatment.

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## What can I do about vaginitis/bacterial vaginosis?

You can get creams or pills for vaginitis and bacterial vaginosis. If you have Trichomonas, then your partner(s) also need treatment, even if they don't have symptoms. If they are not treated, you can get the infection back again.

## What else should I do?

It is best to wear loose clothing and underwear made of cotton. Don't wear tight pants, panty hose or underwear made of nylon, polyester or acrylics.

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