

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

1. What are STIs?

STI is a general term used for infections which are transmitted through sexual activity. There are many different kinds of sexual activity such as sex involving the vagina and penis, oral sex, and anal sex. In the course of these acts, semen, vaginal secretions, or other bodily fluids can contact bodily membranes, leading to infection.

In general the body can not develop immunity to STIs, so if someone has previously contracted an STI, they can contract the STI again. Anyone can become infected if they do not take proper preventative measures.

2. Types of Sexually Transmitted Infections

There are many different types of STIs. Some of the more common STIs and their symptoms, incubation periods, means of infection, and treatments are provided on the following list. There are individual differences and a difference between men and women in the appearance of symptoms. While many different symptoms are listed for the various diseases, many of them can develop without any noticeable symptoms.

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus)

Main Symptoms	Common in both men and women. A long time with no symptoms can pass after infection, and if one is not aware of infection the body's ability to resist disease becomes gradually weaker. As the body's ability to fight infection grows weaker, naturally other diseases will begin to take hold (called "opportunistic infection disease").
Incubation Period	If infection passes without notice and no treatment is undertaken, it can take anywhere from a few years to more than ten years until the onset of AIDS.
Means of Infection	Transmission is typically from sexual contact. There is also blood-based transmission and transmission from mother to child. Because HIV is found in blood, semen, vaginal secretions, breast milk, and other bodily fluids, there is no risk of infection from regular social contact.
Treatment	Anti-HIV drugs can be used to suppress the propagation of HIV.
Prevention	Condom

Syphilis

Main Symptoms	Common in males and females. Lumps appear in the crotch area and there may be swelling. Skin rashes appear all over the body three months after infection. Severe damage to nerves and blood vessels occur 3 to 10 years after infection.
Incubation Period	About 3 weeks
Means of Infection	Sexual contact. There is also blood-based transmission, and transmission from mother to child.
Treatment	Antibiotics
Prevention	Condom

Genital Chlamydial Infection

Main Symptoms	Females: In most cases there are no symptoms. It may cause pelvic inflammatory disease (PID, or salpingitis). If untreated it may cause infertility or pregnancy outside the uterus. If the infection spreads to the upper abdomen it may cause perihepatitis. Males: There may be pain when urinating. It may also cause inflammation of the prostate (prostatitis) or blood in the semen (hemospermia) if left untreated.
Incubation Period	2 days to 6 weeks (normally 10 to 12 days)
Means of Infection	Transmitted through sexual contact, including oral sex.
Treatment	Antibiotics
Prevention	Condom

Gonococcal Infection

Main Symptoms	Females: May have increased vaginal discharge, but there may be no symptoms. Left untreated it may cause inflammation of the cervix (trachelitis). Later, it may cause sterility or ectopic pregnancy. Males: Pain or itching when urinating. There may also be a discharge of pus. It may cause epididymitis (infection or inflammation of the coiled tube on the back of the testicle), and it may lead to an inability to ejaculate (aspermia) even after treatment. There are no symptoms when the anus and the rectum are infected.
Incubation Period	2 to 9 days
Means of Infection	Sexual contact. Oral sex can cause an infection in the throat. It may also cause infection in the anus and the rectum through anal sex.
Treatment	Antibiotics
Prevention	Condom

Genital Herpes

Main Symptoms	Common in males and females: Causes severe pain. Blisters can form around the genitals and become ulcers.
Incubation Period	3 to 7 days
Means of Infection	Sexual contact including oral sex and kissing.
Treatment	Antiherpesvirus drugs
Prevention	Condom

HPV (Human Papilloma Virus) :Condyloma Acuminatum, Cancer of the Cervix

Main Symptoms	【Condyloma Acuminatum】 Common in males and females: Warts of varying size come out. 【Cancer of the Cervix】 Female: There are no symptoms. It may cause a cervix cancer.
Incubation Period	1 to 6 months (Normally 2 to 3 months) * In case of the cancer of the cervix, it may cancerate after tens of years pass.
Means of Infection	Sexual contact
Treatment	【Condyloma Acuminatum】 Treatment with liquid nitrogen or carbon dioxide laser. 【Cancer of the Cervix】 Treatment by an operation, radiotherapy and a chemotherapy depending on the progress of the cancer. In the early stage of cancer, the womb can be saved.
Prevention	Condom, Vaccination

Yeast Infection (Genital Candidiasis)

Main Symptoms	Females: White yogurt-like discharge with severe itching. Males: White moss-like substance appears with itching.
Incubation Period	Several days. Symptoms may appear if the individual is unwell.
Means of Infection	Sexual contact. Because it is originally a bacteria inside the body, this can lead to the appearance of symptoms.
Treatment	Antifungal drugs
Prevention	Condom

Hepatitis B

Main Symptoms	Common in males and females: It may cause general malaise (fatigue), no appetite, brown-black urine, fever, jaundice (the color of the body and the white part of the eye change to yellow). Please note that these symptoms may appear suddenly.
Incubation Period	1 to 6 months
Means of Infection	Transmission is typically from sexual contact. There is also blood-based transmission and transmission from mother to child.
Treatment	Most of people make an antibody and heal spontaneously. An antiviral therapy and an immune therapy are given depending on the progress.
Prevention	Condom, Vaccination

Amebic Dysentery

Main Symptoms	Common in males and females: It may cause colitis (diarrhea, mucous & bloody stool, lower abdominal pain and etc.) and liver inflammation (fever, upper abdominal pain, a night sweat, and etc.).
Incubation Period	2 to 4 weeks (a few days at the earliest, a few months at the longest)
Means of Infection	Anal-to-mouth contact
Treatment	Medicinal treatment
Prevention	Use a condom when anal sex. Avoid anal-to-mouth contact.

*In addition, there are various other STIs such as pediculosis pubis ("crabs" or "pubic lice") or trichomonas vaginalis.

3. Prevention of STIs

There are only 2 ways to prevent STIs:

- (1) Abstain from all sexual activity.
- (2) Properly use a condom for all sexual activity, including oral sex and anal sex. If either you or your partner chooses to not have sex, or to use a condom you must respect that choice.
- (3) Receive vaccination

You must wear a condom when sex as well since you cannot prevent from all STI by vaccination.

4. If you contract an STIs

You should be examined at a medical facility as soon as possible if you had sex without a condom, or if the condoms you were using tore or came off during sex, or you have any symptoms of an STI.

Men can get tested at an urologist, and women at a gynecologist. For some STIs early treatment can result in a full recovery. For other STIs, even for those which cannot be cured completely, it may possible to control its progression or delay its onset if detected at an early stage.

If you are diagnosed with an STI, your partner must also be tested to check whether they have also contracted an STI. If your partner is diagnosed with the STI, you two must not stop the treatment until both of you have recovered. Of course, you must not have sex until both of you have recovered.

The Health Clinic offers health counseling on a variety of matters, including sexually transmitted infections. We can provide referrals to medical facilities as necessary. If you have any health concerns, don't hesitate – come to the Health Clinic for help.

APU Health Clinic

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