

## STD Awareness Month

### Chlamydia

- It is caused by a bacteria that can damage a woman's reproductive organs.
- Serious, irreversible complications can occur, such as infertility, before a woman even knows she has the infection.
- It is the most frequently reported bacterial STD in the US.
- Chlamydia can be transmitted during vaginal, anal, or oral sex. It can also be passed from mother to baby during vaginal birth.
- Chlamydia is easily treated with antibiotics.

### Gonorrhea

- It is caused by a bacteria that can grow in the warm moist areas of the reproductive tract and in the mouth, throat, and eyes.
- It can be transmitted during vaginal, anal, or oral sex. It can also be passed from mother to baby during vaginal birth.
- Gonorrhea infections can reoccur after treatment if exposed to the infection again.
- Antibiotics can treat the infection, but drug resistant strains of gonorrhea are increasing.
- According to the CDC, there are more than 700,000 new gonorrheal infections a year.

### HPV

- HPV stands for Human Papillomavirus.
- The virus infects the skin and mucous membranes.
- In women, HPV is the number one cause of cervical cancer.
- It is passed through genital contact during vaginal and anal sex.
- Some strains of HPV can cause genital warts.

### Genital Herpes

- It is caused by the herpes simplex viruses type 1 or type 2. Most genital herpes are caused by type 2.
- Symptoms are one or more blisters on or around the genitals. The blisters break, leaving sores that take 2-4 weeks to heal.
- Typically there is one or more outbreaks after the first that can occur weeks or months apart.
- There is no treatment to cure herpes, but medications can shorten and prevent outbreaks.

## Syphilis

- Syphilis is caused by a bacteria.
- It is passed person to person through direct contact with a syphilis sore. These sores are found on the genitals and anus. Sores can also occur in the mouth and lips.
- A lot of people infected do have symptoms for many years, but they are still at risk for late complications if not treated.
- Syphilis can have up to four stages without treatment. During the primary stage, sores will typically appear. Without treatment during this stage, the infection will progress into the secondary stage. This stage is characterized by a skin rash and mucous membrane lesions. With out treatment in the secondary stage, the latent and possibly late stages can occur. The latent stage begins when symptoms disappear. In the late stage damage to internal organs can occur, which could lead to death.

## HIV/AIDS

- HIV stands for human immunodeficiency virus. AIDS stands for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
- HIV is the virus that causes AIDS. The HIV virus attacks the immune system.
- AIDS means that the virus has weakened the immune system to the point in which the body has a hard time fighting infection.
- HIV can't be transmitted from day-to-day activities. It is primarily found in the blood, semen, or vaginal fluid of an infected person.
- A person infected with the HIV virus is considered to have AIDS when they have one or more specific infections, certain cancers or a very low number of T cells, a type of white blood cells..

## Preventing STDS

Annual screening for Chlamydia and Gonorrhea is recommended for sexually active women 25 years old and younger. An annual screening for HPV is recommended for all women. A vaccine can now prevent females from the four strains of HPV that cause most cervical cancers and genital warts. The vaccine is recommended for girls and women ages 11-26. People with herpes should abstain from sexual activity with uninfected partners when lesions and other symptoms are present. The best way to avoid transmission of and STD is to abstain from sexual contact or to be in a long term mutually monogamous relationship with a partner that has been tested and is not infected. Correct and consistent use of latex condoms can reduce the risk of transmission of STDs.



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