



## SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS a fact sheet for teens

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) don't discriminate: **One in five people in the United States has an STI.** Even though STIs are common, you don't have to get one. Learn how to protect yourself and your partner.

**How do STIs spread?** There are many different kinds of STIs, such as HIV, chlamydia, gonorrhea and herpes. STIs are also called sexually transmitted diseases or STDs. STIs are spread through sexual contact with an infected person. **STIs pass from one person to another through:**

### How To Use A Male Condom

1. Before sexual contact, place rolled-up condom on the head of an erect (hard) penis.
2. Leave a half-inch space and squeeze out any air.
3. Hold in place with one hand and roll down the condom to the base of the penis with your other hand. Smooth out any air bubbles.
4. After ejaculation (coming) and before the penis softens, pull out with the condom still on while holding on to the rim of the condom.

#### Tips:

- Check the expiration date on the wrapper.
- Use a new condom for each sex act.
- Open the package carefully to not tear the condom.
- Don't use oil-based lubricants, like massage oil, vaseline or hand cream. Instead, use water-based lubricants like KY or personal lubricant.

\*The most common cause of a broken condom is friction. To prevent this, do not use a male and female condom or two male condoms at the same time. Extra lubrication will also help. For vaginal sex, give more stimulation to the woman or use a water-based lubricant. For anal sex, use a water-based lubricant every time.

- **Blood, semen and vaginal secretions.** A person can pass these fluids during vaginal, anal and oral sex, and by sharing needles.

- **Skin-to-skin contact** with a person's genital area or mouth. Herpes, in particular, can spread when an infected person's genital area or mouth touch another person's genital area or mouth.

**Protect Yourself** The only 100% way to not get an STI is by being abstinent (not having vaginal, anal or oral sex). When you do have sex, you can significantly reduce your chances of getting an STI by using a condom every time.

Another great way to protect yourself is through open communication with your sexual partner. Talk about STIs before having sex. And don't assume your partner doesn't have an STI – many STIs do not have symptoms! You and your partner could be infected and not even know it. **Get tested to be sure.**

You can also reduce your risk of getting an STI by limiting your sexual partners. The fewer people you have sexual contact with the less likely you are to have sex with someone who may be infected.

And if you have oral sex, use an unlubricated



condom (on a man) or a dental dam (on a woman). This can prevent an infection from passing from genitals to mouth, or mouth to genitals. Dental dams are pieces of latex covering the vaginal or anal area for oral sex. (You can buy dental dams at drug stores or cut a condom lengthwise.)

**How can I tell if I have an STI?** The most common sign of an STI infection is nothing! Usually a person will have **no symptoms**. But there are signs of STIs you can look out for. If you or your partner experience any of these, call your local health clinic as soon as possible:

- Abnormal discharge from the vagina or penis
- Sores, warts or rashes
- Abnormal bleeding
- Itching, pain or burning during sex or urination (peeing)
- Sore throat or cold sores after oral sex

**Testing Positive** If you test positive for an STI, your health care provider can help you with treatment. The two basic types of STIs are bacterial and viral. Bacterial STIs, such as chlamydia, are curable with antibiotics. Viral STIs, such as herpes, cannot be cured — but treatment can lessen the symptoms.

Some STIs can cause infertility in men and women. Regular testing allows you to treat and possibly cure an STI. But STI testing is not part of your annual or physical exam! Be sure to ask your health care provider if you want to be tested.

## For More Information

- **Cedar River Clinics** offers STI testing and treatment, birth control, abortion and gynecological care. 1-800-572-4223.  
[www.CedarRiverClinics.org](http://www.CedarRiverClinics.org)  
[www.Birth-Control-Comparison.info](http://www.Birth-Control-Comparison.info)  
[www.FWHC.org](http://www.FWHC.org)
- **Feminist Women's Health Center's** informative Web site has detailed information about each STI, including their symptoms and treatment. [www.fwhc.org/std.htm](http://www.fwhc.org/std.htm)
- **Scarleteen** shares advice and accurate information about STIs and sexual health. [www.scarleteen.com](http://www.scarleteen.com)

Visit [www.CedarRiverClinics.org/Connect](http://www.CedarRiverClinics.org/Connect) to download and order more **CONNECT** sexual health resources. Made possible by The Burning Foundation.

## Teens and STIs

Every year one in four sexually active teens gets an STI. The most common STIs for teens are HPV, chlamydia and gonorrhea. Young women are more likely to get these STIs than older women because their bodies and genitalia are still developing.

In Washington state, STI or HIV testing can be anonymous and confidential. If you are over age 14, you can get treatment without your parents' knowledge or permission.

