

DESCRIPTION

You have been diagnosed with or are suspected of having a sexually transmitted disease (STD). These are infections usually passed by vaginal intercourse, but may also be passed by having oral or anal sex, or by skin to skin contact. Sexually transmitted diseases can be caused by bacteria, viruses or parasites.

COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Women May Experience:

- Vaginal pain or itching.
- Sores or lesions in or around the vagina.
- Pelvic pain or abdominal cramping.
- Nausea and/or vomiting.
- Irregular vaginal bleeding.
- Vaginal discharge or foul odor.

Men May Experience:

- Penile discharge.
- Testicular pain or swelling.
- Sores on the penis.

Both Women and Men May Experience:

- Oral pain or lesions.
- Unexplained fatigue or body aches.
- Weight loss.
- Fever, chills or night sweats .
- Sores or lesion in or around the anus.
- Pain when urinating or during sex.
- Unusual Infections or swollen glands.
- Light colored stools.
- Yellowing of the eyes or skin.

THE MOST COMMON STDs INCLUDE:

- **Chlamydia-** Symptoms range from none to severe pelvic pain and discharge in women. It may also cause Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID), a very painful condition in women that can cause scarring of the fallopian tubes and make it harder to become pregnant.
- **Gonorrhea-** Sometimes referred to as “the Clap”, gonorrhea is a bacterial STD. The most common symptoms associated with gonorrhea are excessive penile or vaginal discharge and painful urination. In women, it may cause significant vaginal or pelvic pain.
- **Syphilis-** Leaves a painless spot on the penis or vagina. If unnoticed or left untreated, syphilis may cause a variety of rashes, aches, joint pains, fever and a variety of other seemingly unrelated symptoms, including neurological injury.
- **Trichomoniasis-** Commonly called “Trich”, is not caused by bacteria but is a protozoan infection. It causes an irritating vaginal discharge in women and is often associated with abdominal pain and may also cause a fever. Men often experience no symptoms at all, making it easy to spread from one partner to another without knowing. Trichomoniasis is treated with a special antibiotic.
- **Herpes Simplex-** Most often referred to simply as Herpes, is a very infectious virus. It causes painful blisters that typically open and then scab over. Women in particular, may experience flu-like symptoms right before or during their first outbreak. Although most commonly found on the genitals and around the mouth, herpes can infect other parts of the body as well. There is no cure for herpes and the virus remains in the body for life. Antiviral medications may help shorten the length of an outbreak as well as suppress future outbreaks.
- **Genital Warts-** Caused by the Human Papillomavirus (HPV). If you contract HPV you may not experience symptoms for months or even years. HPV is associated with cervical cancer and rarely other types of cancer so having a Pap Smear performed every year at your gynecologist’s office or at the health department, to test for HPV, is important.
- **Hepatitis B-** “Hep B” is transmitted sexually or by sharing an infected needle when using IV drugs. Hep B affects the liver. Diagnoses requires special blood testing. While there is no cure for “Hep B” there is a vaccine available to prevent infection.
- **Human Immunodeficiency Virus-** “HIV” is the virus that causes AIDS. It attacks the immune system and makes you more vulnerable to other types of infection. HIV is passed by exposure to infected blood and other body fluids during sexual intercourse, sharing IV needles or blood transfusions. There is no cure for HIV but there are various treatments available to halt the progression of the disease.

PREVENTION

Safe-sex practices, including having only one sexual partner and using a latex condom every time you have sex, can help decrease your risk of contracting a Sexually Transmitted Disease. Although, it is important to remember that condoms do NOT protect you from coming into contact with herpes lesions or genital warts that may be left exposed even while using a condom.

TESTING

The test samples collected today will be sent to a laboratory for analysis. Results are usually reported between 2 and 7 days, depending on the test.

- A member of our staff will contact you regarding your results, as soon as we receive them. Please make sure to indicate to the front desk, which contact number is best for you. Our staff will not deliver results to anyone other than you. You may be asked for identifying information to ensure your test results remain confidential. Your doctor may begin treatment even before your test results are received.
- Viral testing takes much longer than other laboratory tests.

MEDICATIONS & TREATMENT

Different STDs require different treatments. Antibiotics are effective against bacterial and parasite infections but are not at all effective when treating a virus. Anti-viral medications may be helpful in shortening or suppressing future viral outbreaks but will not cure the infection. It is very important for you not to have any sexual contact until treatment is complete and you have been free of symptoms for at least 2 weeks. It is your responsibility to notify your sexual partners and refer them to their primary care physician or the local health department for testing and/or treatment. You may also be referred to a specialist for further treatment and evaluation. Occasionally, some bacterial STDs may be more resistant to antibiotics. Your doctor may advise a follow-up test after your treatment to make sure the infection has been cured.

- ↳ Unless your doctor tells you differently, always finish the full course of your antibiotic prescription, even if you start to feel better.
- ↳ Antibiotics may interfere with the effectiveness of birth control pills. Use an alternative method of contraception for the remainder of the month after finishing your antibiotic and/or steroid prescription.

SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION IF

- You experience increased pain in your abdomen, pelvis or back.
- You pass out.
- You develop a fever or chills.
- You begin vomiting.
- You are still experiencing symptoms after treatment.