Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Sexually transmitted disease (STD) refers to any infection that is passed from person to person during sexual activity. This may happen by way of saliva, semen, blood, vaginal mucus, or urine. Infections are passed in many ways. For example, the common cold could be passed during sexual activity, but it is not considered a sexually transmitted infection.

Common STDs include:

- Gonorrhea.
- Chlamydia.
- Syphilis.
- HIV/AIDS (*human immunodeficiency virus / acquired immunodeficiency syndrome*).
- Genital herpes.
- Hepatitis B.
- Trichomonas.
- Human papilloma virus (HPV).
- Pubic lice.

SYMPTOMS

Some people may not have symptoms but can still transmit the disease.

- Painful or bloody urination.
- Pain in the pelvis, abdomen, vagina, anus, throat, or eyes, depending on the kind of sexual contact.
- Skin rash, itching, irritation, growths, or lesions (*sores*) in or around the vagina.
- Abnormal vaginal discharge.
- Fever.
- Pain or bleeding during sexual intercourse.

Diagnosis is done with blood tests, cultures for infection, Pap test, colposcopy (*looking at the cervix with a lighted, magnifying tube*), and laparoscopy (*looking into the pelvis at the female organs, with a lighted tube*).

Treatment will depend on the location and type of the STD.

PREVENTION

- Choose a safe partner. You and your partner should be each other's only sexual contacts.
- Practice safe sex. Use male or female condoms.
- Avoid risky sex acts that can break the skin, because it increases your risk of getting an STD.
- Oral, vaginal ring, patches, hormone injection contraceptives, spermicides, diaphragm, IUD, and cervical caps do not protect against STDs.
- Avoid illegal drugs and drinking too much alcohol. This includes your sex partner. It can lead to getting an STD.
- Get immunized with the vaccine for hepatitis B and HPV. This includes your sex partner.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- **Finish all medicine as prescribed.** Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- Only use latex condoms for men, and water soluble lubricants.
- **Do not have sex until treatment is completed** and you have followed up with your caregiver. This includes your sex partner.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop a temperature of 100º F (37.8º C) or higher.
- You think or know your sex partner has an STD, even if you do not have any symptoms.
- You have any of the symptoms mentioned above.

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