

Hope & Healing

Sexually Spread Diseases

A heart at peace gives life to the body — Proverbs 14:30

Introduction _____

More than 30 million Americans are estimated to have diseases that are spread through sexual intercourse. Syphilis, like HIV, however, can be spread by infected blood. And, the herpes virus, if mouth sores are present, can be spread by kissing.

But sexually transmitted diseases are not spread from toilet seats, towels, dishes, or other objects; neither are they spread by ordinary contact such as shaking hands, sharing meals, or by using the same telephone nor by using mosquitos or other insects. In fact, germs and viruses that cause sexually transmitted diseases usually die within a minute outside the body.

If you have had sex with only one partner and your partner hasn't had sex with anyone else but you, diseases spread through sex are not likely to be a big worry for you. But anyone who has had multiple sexual partners, or is having sex with someone who has multiple partners, does have something to worry about.

Note: All Sexual Diseases Are Preventable.

Most sexually transmitted diseases are also treatable. Syphilis, gonorrhea and chlamydia can be cured with antibiotics. Genital herpes, genital warts, and HIV cannot be cured, but they can be accurately diagnosed and treated with professional help. Remember, no sexually transmitted disease can be accurately diagnosed and treated without your doctor's help. There are no home remedies.

HIV, the most serious and the most catastrophic of diseases spread through

sex, is considered in another Healthnote. Here we shall consider the more common, and far less serious, sexually transmitted diseases.

Herpes Simplex _____

Herpes infection is a common sexually transmitted disease. It is caused by the herpes virus which produces small blisters or shallow ulcers on the head or shaft of the penis in men. In women, similar lesions appear on the tissues at the opening to the vagina.

These lesions can vary from being extremely painful to being unnoticed. The first infection is usually the worst, and causes fever, chills and intense inflammation of the tissues around the vagina or on the penis.

Herpes infection usually lasts for about a week, during which time sexual activity should be stopped, both because of pain and because of the danger of spreading the disease. Several drugs in capsule form can be used to shorten the duration of the initial infection and lessen the severity of the infection when it returns, as it usually does. Drugs can also be effective in preventing recurrences. They, however, do not offer a cure.

Genital Warts _____

Genital warts are also caused by a virus. They are usually small warty growths on the penis, or, in the woman, at the opening of the vagina, or around the anus or between these two points.

There are many forms of treatment; all are successful except when the warty growths are allowed to become huge. This is why early treatment is so

important.

A liquid called podophyllin is often effective but is painful and irritating. Freezing the warts with liquid nitrogen or using laser surgery can also remove the warts.

Gonorrhea _____

In the woman, gonorrhea may be present but silent. In the man gonorrhea causes a painful discharge from the penis. It is so severe that it literally drives the man to seek treatment.

The infected man usually infects women, but women may not have symptoms. The infection is usually diagnosed after the man's disease becomes evident. Some women infected with gonorrhea will develop vaginal discharge with itching, pain on intercourse, burning on urination, and lower abdominal pain. In advanced infection gonorrhea may produce fever, nausea, abdominal pain and a form of painful arthritis. Effective antibiotic therapy is available.

Trichomoniasis _____

Trichomonas infection is caused by a small one-celled organism which is a Protozoan, neither virus or germ. The infection is spread through sexual intercourse. In women the infection causes vaginal itching, a discharge that smells, and pain on intercourse. In men the infection is usually silent.

The diagnosis depends on identifying the organism in the woman's vaginal discharge. Treatment is with metronidazole (Flagyl) and should include the infected woman and her sexual partner if there is one.

Chlamydia _____

Chlamydia infection doesn't have to happen through sexual intercourse, although women with multiple sexual partners are more likely to be infected. Symptoms are often mild and frequently go unnoticed. If symptoms do appear, they usually occur within 1 to 3 weeks after sex with an infected partner.

Women may experience pain when urinating, a vaginal discharge or abdominal pain. About 4 million new cases of Chlamydia occur each year and there are many women who don't seek treatment; leaving them in danger of developing pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). 100,000 women become infertile each year because of PID. In men, Chlamydial infections can cause a discharge from the penis, or pain when urinating, and a crusting at the tip of the penis. Chlamydia is treated with Doxycycline or Tetracycline; both are very safe antibiotics except in pregnant women, who should be treated with sulfonamides.

Syphilis _____

Syphilis was about to become an uncommon disease but recently the number of new cases shows that it has increased again.

Syphilis goes through several stages and early symptoms may be mild. The first symptom may occur 1 to 12 weeks after sex and is a painless sore on the genital area. It may also occur at other sites on or in the body (mouth,anus) and go unnoticed and disappear. But the disease progresses. The secondary phase of Syphilis may occur weeks to months after the initial contact. This stage may feature a skin rash. The rash may involve a few areas of the body,

including the palms and soles or it may cover the body. Fever, fatigue, weight loss and headache are quite common. The diagnosis is made at this stage by a blood test for Syphilis. Penicillin still gives excellent results when used for treatment.

Summary _____

Naturally, the best way to prevent a disease spread by sex is by not having sex. You can also reduce your risk by having sex with one faithful uninfected partner, or by using a condom during sex. Remember: The more sexual partners you have, the greater your risk of getting a sexually transmitted disease. And the cautions to avoid HIV bear repeating here: Don't have sex with people who shoot drugs, or who engage in anal sex, or who have vaginal, oral, or anal sex with an infected person.

Awaken the Miracles Within You

The Miracle of Love

Love doesn't mean the passion of the bedroom. Love is passion but it's passion for thinking of the needs of others. But, thinking without action isn't love, it's thinking. Love acts out the thought.

If you're a grumpy person who thinks only of yourself, you can't possibly have a heart of gold. But, don't despair, even grumpy people can change and they can change now.

Here are several ways to change:

- Show your husband or wife love by being kind.
- Show your children love by upholding and encouraging them.
- Show your country love by trying to improve things.
- Show love by remembering special times, fulfilling your responsibilities.
- Show love without seeking advantage, without bragging, without hurting the one loved. Love acts the part, otherwise the words are a lie.

The recommendations and information in this handout are appropriate in most cases. However, for specific information concerning your personal medical condition,