

sexually transmitted infections (STI)



We are here to help – our caring staff can talk with you about sexually transmitted infections and help you get any testing or treatment you may need.

types of sexually transmitted infections

Type	Details	Common Symptoms	Transmission / Effects
Chlamydia	Chlamydia is caused by bacteria. Its symptoms may show up 7 – 28 days after sex. <i>Chlamydia's most common symptom is NO symptoms at all.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discharge from the vagina Bleeding from the vagina between periods Watery, white drip from the penis Swollen or tender testicles Burning or pain when urinating Need to urinate more often Pain in the abdomen, sometimes with fever and nausea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chlamydia is spread through oral, anal or vaginal intercourse with an infected partner. Untreated Chlamydia can lead to more serious infections of the reproductive organs that can result in difficulty or inability to have children. Chlamydia can be passed from mother to child during birth.
Gonorrhea	Gonorrhea is caused by bacteria and its symptoms may show up 2 – 21 days after having sex. <i>Gonorrhea's most common symptom is NO symptoms at all.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thick yellow or gray discharge from the vagina or the penis Swollen or tender testicles Need to urinate more often Burning or pain when urinating or having a bowel movement Abnormal periods or bleeding between periods Cramps and pain in the lower abdomen (belly) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gonorrhea is spread through oral, anal or vaginal intercourse with an infected partner. Untreated gonorrhea can lead to more serious infections of the reproductive organs that can result in difficulty or inability to have children. Very serious cases that are untreated can cause heart trouble, skin disease, arthritis and blindness. Gonorrhea can be passed from mother to child during pregnancy or birth.
Hepatitis B	Symptoms show up 1 – 9 months after contact with the hepatitis B virus. Hepatitis B cannot be cured, but for some people, the symptoms may go away. Even without symptoms those infected can still give hepatitis B to others. It is rare, but there are people who recover completely. <i>Many people with hepatitis B have no symptoms or mild symptoms.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flu-like feelings that don't go away Tiredness Jaundice (yellow skin) Dark urine, light-colored bowel movements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hepatitis B is spread through oral, anal or vaginal intercourse with an infected partner. Hepatitis B can also be spread by sharing needles to inject drugs, piercings or tattoos through contact with infected blood. Hepatitis B can cause permanent liver damage or liver cancer. Hepatitis B can be passed from mother to child during birth.
Hepatitis C	If symptoms occur, the average time is 6-7 weeks after exposure to the virus. Even without symptoms, those infected can still give Hepatitis C to others. <i>Many people with Hepatitis C have no symptoms or mild symptoms.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flu-like symptoms Fever Fatigue Loss of appetite Dark colored urine Jaundice Joint pain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hepatitis C is spread when blood from a person infected with Hepatitis C enters the body of someone who is not infected. Hepatitis C can be spread by sharing needles to inject drugs, piercings or tattoos through contact with infected blood. While the risk of transmission from sexual contact is believed to be low, the risk increases for those who have multiple sex partners, those who are infected with HIV and those who have a sexually transmitted infection.
Herpes	Genital herpes is caused by the herpes simplex virus-2 (HSV-2) but can be the herpes simplex virus-1 (HSV-1), the virus usually responsible for cold sores. <i>Symptoms, if present, may appear 1-30 days after sex.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flu-like feelings Small, painful blisters on the sex organs or mouth called an outbreak Itching or burning before the blisters appear Blisters that last 1-3 weeks When the blisters go away, people continue to carry the herpes virus and it is possible to have another outbreak and pass the virus on to their partner(s) even if there is no blister. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Herpes is spread through oral, anal, vagina intercourse or skin-to-skin contact with an infected partner. Herpes can be spread when there is no active outbreak. Herpes cannot be cured, but medicine can help control outbreaks, blisters and pain associated with the blisters. Even with medication, herpes can be transmitted to sex partner(s). Herpes can also be passed from mother to child during birth.
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is the virus that can lead to Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Symptoms appear several months to several years after contact with HIV. HIV typically takes 8-12 weeks following initial transmission to show up on most tests. HIV tests are also sold over the counter at most pharmacies and can be administered at home. <i>The virus can be present in people for many years with no symptoms.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unexplained weight loss or tiredness Flu-like feelings that don't go away Diarrhea White spots in mouth and on genitals Yeast infections that don't go away 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HIV is spread during vaginal, anal or oral sex. HIV and AIDS cannot be cured, but medicine can help control how fast HIV damages one's immune system, reduce the likelihood of transmitting and manage symptoms of AIDS HIV can be passed to children during pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding.
HPV/ Genital Warts	There are many different kinds of human papilloma virus (HPV). Being tested for HPV is important so that people can determine if they are infected with cancer causing types and begin treatment. <i>Most people have no symptoms at all, but some symptoms may appear weeks, months or years after contact with HPV.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small, bumpy warts in or around the genitals and anus Itching or burning around the genitals After warts go away, the virus can stay in the body without symptoms and warts can come back HPVs that can lead to cancer must be detected by a health care provider 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HPV can be spread through oral, anal or vaginal intercourse or skin-to-skin contact. Sometimes, HPV might go away on its own. HPV can be passed from mother to child during birth.
Syphilis	Syphilis is caused by a bacteria and the symptoms depend on what stage a person is in. Early syphilis can be cured with antibiotics but if left untreated can cause permanent damage. Many people have no symptom or mild symptoms that resolve and are unaware they are infected. <i>After the initial infection, the syphilis bacteria can lie dormant in your body for decades before becoming active again.</i>	<p>1st Stage: symptoms appear 1-12 weeks after having sex</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A painless sore or sores on the mouth or genitals Sore lasts 2-6 weeks Sore goes away without medication <p>2nd Stage: after the initial sore heals...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rash may develop on the bottom of hands and feet, in the genital area or other places on the body Flu-like feelings Rash and flu-like feelings go away without medication <p>3rd stage: there are no sores or rashes present, however...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The virus attacks the central nervous system of the body <p>4th stage: includes serious symptoms such as...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tremors, loss of vision, dementia and even death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Syphilis can spread through oral, anal or vaginal intercourse or skin-to-skin contact. Syphilis can be passed from mother to child during pregnancy. Syphilis in pregnancy may also cause miscarriage. Untreated long-term syphilis can cause heart disease, brain damage, blindness and death.
Trichomoniasis ("Trich")	Trichomoniasis is an infection caused by a protozoan – a microscopic, one-cell animal called a trichomona. Symptoms appear 5-28 days after having sex. <i>Many people have no symptoms.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Itching, burning or irritation in the vagina Yellow, greenish or gray discharge from the vagina Watery, white drip from the penis Burning or pain when urinating and the need to urinate more often 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spread during vaginal or anal sex. Male bodies may experience infections in the prostate gland. Can live in the bladder so medications inserted into the vagina are not effective for treatment.



know what to watch for

The most common symptom of STIs is not to have any symptoms at all! People who do experience symptoms should be aware of the following possibilities:

If you have a Vagina

- An unusual discharge or smell from the vagina (different from typical vaginal odors)
- Pain in the pelvic area – between one's belly button and vulva
- Burning or itching in or around the vagina
- Bleeding from the vagina that is not a regular period
- Pain deep inside the vagina during sex

If you have a Penis

- A drip or discharge from the penis

All Bodies

- Sores, bumps or blisters near the genitals, rectum or mouth
- Bowel and pain when urinating (peeing) or having a bowel movement (pooping)
- Needing to pee more often
- Itching around the genitals
- A swelling or redness in the throat
- Flu-like feelings, with fever, chills and aches
- Swelling in the groin – the area around your sex organs

If you or someone you know experiences any of the above symptoms, it is important to contact a health care professional as soon as possible to be screened for STIs.

protect yourself from STIs

Many forms of birth control do not offer protection against sexually transmitted infections.



Talk to your partner(s) about sex before you have it

How will you protect each other from STIs?

Talk to your partner about past sex partners and injection drug use. Ask if your partner(s) has ever had an STI that they know about. If you have an STI, you'll need to tell your partner(s) before you have sex.

Don't have sex with someone you who think may have an STI. Remember, most people don't have symptoms, so a good practice is to get tested with each partner before having sex.



Choose to say no or practice monogamy

Abstinence – not having sex – is the best protection against STIs. To use abstinence effectively, you should not have oral, vaginal or anal sex. Monogamy – not having overlapping partners – is also safe.



Use inside or outside condoms or dental dams

A new condom should be used every single time you have any kind of sexual activity.

Plastic (polyurethane) condoms can be used for people who are allergic to latex.

- Condoms can be used for oral, vaginal or anal sex.
- Condoms should be stored in a cool dry place.
- Condoms should only be used with water-based or silicone lubricants. Anything with oil in it will weaken the condom and could make it break during sex.



Get vaccinated

Vaccines are a good way to help prevent STIs. There are vaccines available for hepatitis B and some types of HPV. There are also two types of medications available to reduce the chance of getting HIV – pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for use prior to possible exposure and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) can be used within 72 hours of a possible exposure.



Get tested regularly

Get tested for sexually transmitted infections and encourage your partner to do the same before you have sex. Ask your health care provider how often and which tests they recommend.

Know the signs and symptoms of STIs. If you notice a symptom that is worrisome...

get tested

STIs must be treated with medication. STIs caused by bacteria are curable with the right antibiotics. STIs caused by viruses remain in the body, but their symptoms can be managed with medications.

Planned Parenthood's professional health care teams can help! If you are experiencing symptoms that are not typical for you, call your local Planned Parenthood health center for information and to make an appointment. Even if you're not experiencing symptoms, it's important to get tested for STIs regularly. Your information will be kept private.

Many county health departments have special STI clinics. Private health care providers also treat STIs. Some people may feel embarrassed about contracting an STI and want to avoid going to a provider or clinic for help. The only way to get well is to see a health care provider.

testing positive

Communicate it to sex partner(s). They should get tested and treated too; otherwise the STI can be passed back and forth between partners. It's also important to ask your provider how long after treatment you must wait until you can have sex again.

Communicate before sexual behaviors about what prevention methods will be used. Agree to use condoms or dental dams with each sex act.

get treated

It is very important to get treated if you are diagnosed with an STI.

Bacterial STIs can be cured with antibiotics when taken as directed. Remember to take all of the prescribed medicine to be sure that the bacteria has been killed.

Viral STIs can be treated with different medications that ease the pain or discomfort of symptoms but are incurable. Each viral STI is different, so you must be sure to take your medication as directed.



what is an STI/STD?

A sexually transmitted infection (STI), sometimes referred to as a sexually transmitted disease (STD), is an infection caused by a bacteria or virus that can be passed during sexual contact (oral, vaginal, anal, genital rubbing or toy sharing) if one partner carries the infection. Some STIs infect only the sexual and reproductive organs, some can infect the mouth or throat and others (HIV, hepatitis B, syphilis) can cause infections that impact the entire body. Most of the time, STIs show no signs or symptoms. Other times the symptoms appear and then may go away. Regardless of whether a person has symptoms, they should be tested (and treated as needed) for STIs after unprotected sex and before initiating sexual contact with a new partner.

how are they spread?

STIs can be spread during vaginal, anal or oral sex and sometimes by genital touching (make out behaviors). Some STIs (HIV and hepatitis B and C) are also spread by contact with infected blood. The bacteria and viruses that cause STIs live in warm, moist areas of the body. That's why they can infect the mouth, throat, rectum and sex organs (vagina, vulva, penis and testes).

center locations

- Cincinnati Surgical Center**
513.287.6488
2314 Auburn Avenue | Cincinnati, Ohio 45219
- Dayton Health Center**
937.226.0780
224 N. Wilkinson Street | Dayton, Ohio 45402
- Hamilton Health Center**
513.856.8332
11 Ludlow Street | Hamilton, Ohio 45011
- Mt. Auburn Health Center**
513.287.6484
2314 Auburn Avenue | Cincinnati, Ohio 45219
- Springfield Health Center**
937.325.7349
1061 North Bechtel Avenue | Springfield, Ohio 45504

www.ppswo.org

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Rev 6/20

It's very important to treat any STI right away!

Please visit our website at www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/stds-hiv-safer-sex

or the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/std to learn more about STIs.