



The Problem

Anyone who has sex or sexual contact is at risk of getting a Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD). Teenagers are at higher risk. Of the 12 million people who get STDs each year, around 3 million are teenagers. If you're thinking about having sexual contact, here are some facts about STDs that should make you reconsider.

STDs At-a-Glance

- A person may have an STD and not know it, because many STDs show no signs or symptoms.
- Anyone who has sexual contact is at risk of getting an STD.
- Penetration is not needed to pass some STDs, like herpes or genital warts.
- The only sure way to know if a person has an STD is by having a medical exam.
- Many STDs cannot be cured or treated.
- Avoiding sex (abstinence) is the best way to prevent disease.

[More on STDs](http://www.intheknowzone.com/stds/info)

www.intheknowzone.com/stds/info

Prevention is the Key

STDs can be prevented. It's up to you! Some STDs can't be cured, so it's important to avoid them altogether.

Remember, abstinence (not having sex) is the best way to stay healthy.

STDs can affect anyone. The best choice is to wait until you are involved in a lifelong, mutually monogamous relationship with an uninfected person. In a committed relationship, like marriage, two people only have sex with each other and are not at risk of getting STDs.

[Avoiding Sex](http://www.intheknowzone.com/stds/abstinence)

www.intheknowzone.com/stds/abstinence



For More Information

Go to www.intheknowzone.com for an extension of this pamphlet. Increase your knowledge using the information, statistics, images, and links.

Test your understanding with a quick quiz.



National STD Hotline:
(800) 227-8922

Don't stay in
the dark.

Get In the Know!

STDs and Abstinence

the safest choice



in the know

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Being at Risk

Many young people think that nothing bad will ever happen to them. But the reality is that young people who are sexually active are putting themselves at great risk of catching an STD. In fact, about 25% of new STD cases are in people under the age of 20.

You're Not Really Having Sex, Right?

Wrong! Being sexually active doesn't necessarily mean having actual intercourse. Touching someone's genitals and even kissing can spread some STDs, like genital warts, herpes, or hepatitis. There are plenty of "virgins" who are sexually involved. In one study, over one-third of teens who considered themselves to be virgins admitted to having some type of sexual contact. Any one of those teens was at risk of catching an STD. You should avoid having any type of sexual contact.

Don't Judge a Book by Its Cover

STDs are easy to spread by exchange of body fluids, or contact with infected skin. Anyone who has been sexually active can have one. You usually can't tell if a person has an STD or not. The only way to know is for the person to be tested by a health care professional.

People Might Think They're Being Careful...

People might think that they are being safe by using a condom. But some STDs like herpes, genital warts, and syphilis can be transmitted even if a person uses a condom. Condoms don't always cover infected areas completely. The best way to protect yourself from STDs is to make the healthy choice not to have sex. Even if you have had sex before, you should wait for a lifetime relationship before having sex again. It's never too late to be a virgin again.

R-E-S-P-E-C-T

It's easy to make good choices when you respect yourself and others. Waiting to have sex until you are in a committed, long-term, mutually monogamous relationship shows not only respect for yourself, but for your partner too. You are worth the wait.



So, Remember...

- Abstinence, not having sex, is the best way to prevent an STD.
- Delay having sex. Younger people can get STDs more easily.
- Penetration is not needed to pass some diseases like herpes or hepatitis.
- Alcohol and drugs affect how you think, leading to poor decision making. Stay smart, stay sober.
- Needles, syringes, body piercing, and tattooing can lead to infection.
- Don't be embarrassed or afraid to ask questions. Health care professionals are there to help. Someone who might have been exposed to an STD should get tested. Young women should have a Pap test and check-up at least once a year whether or not they're sexually active.

Playing it Safe

www.intheknowzone.com/stds/prevention



Common STDs

Chlamydia and Gonorrhea

Many young people have these very common diseases and don't know it! Girls may have vaginal discharge, pain during sex, pain in the lower belly, bleeding between periods (spotting), or fever. Guys may feel itching or burning in their penis. May cause infertility (inability to have or father babies).

Genital Herpes

Sores or lesions found around the genital area. These might seem to disappear, but they are really hiding in the body. Herpes can be passed, even when hiding (latent), sexually or through heavy petting (touching someone's genitals).

Genital Warts

Look similar to warts on hands, but are found in genital areas and passed sexually or by touching someone's genitals. The virus that causes genital warts can lead to cervical cancer.

Hepatitis A, B, and C

Hepatitis A, B, and C, can be passed sexually or through contact with infected blood. Signs include: tiredness, poor appetite, yellow skin and eyes (jaundice), dark urine, and vomiting.

Pubic Lice (Crabs)

Small insects that suck on a person's blood in genital areas. Can be easily passed through clothes, towels, and bedding. Causes extreme itching.

Common STD Facts

www.intheknowzone.com/stds/facts

Syphilis

Painless sores appear first in mouth or genital areas, leading to a rash with fever and aches. The symptoms then disappear. Untreated, it can damage the brain, heart, spinal cord, and bones. May cause death.

Trichomoniasis

Women show a heavy, yellowish-green, bad smelling discharge (liquid) from the vagina, and itchiness and pain when urinating or having sex. Passed during sex, or in damp towels, washcloths, and bathing suits.

HIV and AIDS

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is the virus that causes AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome). AIDS attacks the immune system, so that any simple infection can result in death. Transmitted through sexual contact and contact with infected blood. There is no cure, but some medications may extend life.

