**Sexually Transmitted Infections**

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| **DISEASE** | **CAUSATIVE AGENT** | **SYMPTOMS + EFFECTS** | **TREATMENTS** | **CONTROL + PREVENTION** |
| **Chlamydia** | Chlamydia is caused by the bacteria *Chlamydia trichomatis*. Chlamydia can be contracted during oral, vaginal or anal sex with someone who has the infection. Chlamydia can also be passed to a mother’s baby during childbirth. Risk factors include getting it if condom use isn’t consistent, or if you have multiple partners. | Symptoms in **women** include;   * Abnormal vaginal discharge which may be potent * A burning sensation when urinating * Pain during intercourse   If the infection spreads, you may experience lower abdominal pain, pain during sex, nausea or fever. | Antibiotics will cure the infection, as it is bacterial.  Antibiotics may be given in a single dose, or it may need to be taken daily for 7 days. Antibiotics cannot repair any permanent damage caused by the STI. | The only way to ensure that chlamydia is 100% prevented is to abstain from having vaginal, anal or oral sex.  Correct usage of latex condoms reduces the risk of catching or spreading chlamydia, however it does not entirely eliminate the risk. |
| Symptoms in **men** include;   * Discharge from your penis * A burning sensation when urinating * Burning or itching around the opening of the penis * Pain and swelling in one or both testicles   If chlamydia infects the rectum, it can cause rectal pain, discharge and/or bleeding. |
| In women, an untreated infection can spread to your uterus and fallopian tubes causing **pelvic inflammatory disease** which can cause permanent damage to your reproductive system, leading to long term pelvic pain, infertility and ectopic pregnancy. |
| **Genital Herpes** | The causative agents of genital herpes include HSV1, which commonly causes cold sores on the lips or face, and HSV2 which causes most genital herpes. Genital herpes is spread by skin-to-skin contact with someone who has the HSV virus, usually during genital or oral sex. It can also be spread however through kissing, foreplay or non-penetrative sex. | Most people lack symptoms with genital herpes, but some may experience:   * Stinging or tingling in the genital area * Small blisters on genital area which develop into small and painful red sores * Sores that look like a rash or cracked skin on genitals * Difficulty passing urine   The first episode of infection can present as flu-like symptoms including:   * Fever * Headache * Swollen glands   The virus remains dormant in the body for the rest of your life, which means you can experience recurrent episodes which are usually shorter. More likely to occur when your immune system is weak, due to illness, lack of sleep or stress. | Genital herpes has no cure, but symptoms can be reduced using anti-viral medicine – this is most effective when started within 72 hours of initial symptoms.  Medicines can also help control outbreaks if frequent and can also reduce the risk of passing the virus on to a sexual partner.  Symptoms can also be helped by:   * Gently bathing the area with a warm salt solution * Pain medicine (paracetamol or ibuprofen) * Local anaesthetic (cream or ointment) * Urinating while sitting in a warm bath, if painful | Genital herpes can be prevented by practising safe sex. It is safest to:   * Always use dental dams + condoms, even when no sores or blisters are present * Avoid sex when blisters or sores are present, as you are most infectious at this period * Avoid sex with someone who has blisters or sores or other symptoms * - Avoid oral sex when a cold sore is present or developing |
| **Genital Warts** | Genital warts are caused by the human papilloma virus (HPV). Over 100 strains of HPV exist, but only certain types affect the genitals. HPV is spread by direct skin-to-skin contact during vaginal or anal sex. On a smaller scale, it can be contracted through oral sex. | Genital warts appear as painless growths, and may be:  - Flat or raised  - Single or multiple  - Clustered together with a cauliflower-like appearance  These warts can appear around the genitals and anus, or in the vagina, rectum or urethra. | Treatment does not get rid of the virus, but only treats the visible warts. The body’s natural immunity will rid of the virus over time. Treatment options for warts include:   * Cryotherapy – the warts are frozen off with liquid nitrogen - Podophyllotoxin – a lotion that can be applied at home but must be applied with caution – not to be used on pregnant women. * Imiquimod cream – applied once a day, 3 times a week for up to 3 months – not to be used with pregnant women * - Laser or diathermy treatment | Using condoms during sex and reduce the risk of spreading genital warts – however because condoms don’t cover all genital skin that is exposed during sexual contact, HPV may still be acquired through skin-to-skin contact. |
| **HIV (Human Immuno-deficiency virus)** | HIV is a causative agent itself for AIDS. The two types that have the same modes of transmission are HIV-1 and HIV-2. HIV can be contracted through unprotected sex. | People may present with flu-like symptoms within 2-4 weeks after infection (known as acute HIV infection) which may last for days to weeks including:   * Fever * Chills * Rash * Night sweats * Muscles aches * Sore throat * Fatigue * Swollen lymph nodes * Mouth ulcers   Some people however may not feel sick right away or at all. This is known as stage 1.  Stage 2 of HIV is called Chronic HIV infection, also known as asymptomatic HIV infection. It is still active but reproduces at very low levels and can still transmit HIV at this stage. Stage 3 can be prevented entirely if HIV medicine is taken. | The treatment for HIV is known as antiretroviral therapy (ART) which involves taking a combination of HIV medicines every day. ART cannot cure HIV, but HIV medicines help HIV victims live longer, healthier lives and also reduces the risk of HIV transmission. | A number of strategies can be used to prevent HIV, including abstinence (not having sex), limiting the number of sexual partners you have, never sharing needles, and using condoms consistently and the right way every time you have sex. Another more popular method of HIV prevention is known as PrEP or PEP, pre-exposure prophylaxis and post-exposure prophylaxis. |
| **AIDS** | The causative agent for AIDS (acquired immuno-deficiency syndrome) is HIV and is the late stage of HIV. HIV can be transmitted via the exchange of a variety of body fluids from infected people, such as blood, breast milk, semen and vaginal secretions. | When HIV becomes AIDS, the Infection progressively weakens the immune system. This can lead to the development of other signs and symptoms, like swollen lymph nodes, weight loss, fever, diarrhoea and cough. Without treatment, AIDS victims may develop severe illnesses like TB (tuberculosis), cryptococcal meningitis, severe bacterial infections and cancers like lymphoma and Kaposi’s sarcoma. | The treatment for HIV is known as antiretroviral therapy (ART) which involves taking a combination of HIV medicines every day. ART cannot cure HIV, but HIV medicines help HIV victims live longer, healthier lives and also reduces the risk of HIV transmission. | A number of strategies can be used to prevent HIV, including abstinence (not having sex), limiting the number of sexual partners you have, never sharing needles, and using condoms consistently and the right way every time you have sex. Another more popular method of HIV prevention is known as PrEP or PEP, pre-exposure prophylaxis and post-exposure prophylaxis |
| **Trichomoniasis** | Trichomoniasis is caused by infection with a protozoan parasite called *Trichomonas vaginalis*. The parasite passes from an infected person to an uninfected person during sex – it can be spread from penis to vagina, vagina to penis and vagina to vagina. It may other infect other body parts. | Roughly 70% of infected people do not exhibit signs or symptoms of the infection. Some people with symptoms get them between 5-28 days of infection, and others don’t develop symptoms until much later. In men:   * Itching or irritation inside the penis * Burning after urination or ejaculation * Discharge from penis   In women:   * Itching, burning, redness or soreness of the genitals * Discomfort with urination * A change in vaginal discharge (i.e. thin discharge or increased volume) that can be clear, white, yellowish or greenish with an unusual fishy smell.   Trichomoniasis causes sex to feel unpleasant in most cases. | Trichomoniasis can be treated with medicated (either metronidazole or tinidazole), which are pills taken orally. These are safe for pregnant women. Alcohol consumption within 24 hours of taking the pill is not recommended. | The only way to avoid trichomoniasis is abstinence. If sexually active, you can do the following to reduce the risk and chances of getting this infection;   * Be in a long-term mutually monogamous relationship with a partner who has been tested and has negative STD results * Use latex condoms the right way consistently * - Discuss about STI risk prior to sex with a new partner |
| **Public Lice** | Public lice are small, flat, light-brown parasites that cling to pubic hair and suck blood for nourishment. The infection is called pediculosis pubis and the lice are called Phthirus pubis. Pubic lice are usually transmitted through skin-to-skin contact during sexual activity, but can be spread by contact with towels, undergarments and bedding of an infected person. | The main symptom is itching of the affected area, which is often worse at night. Lice and nits (lice eggs) can sometimes be seen, especially stuck to pubic hairs. Some people are asymptomatic and may be unaware of a lice infestation. | Applying topical creams or lotions containing permethrin to the whole body from neck to toes is the most commonly recommended treatment. | Avoid having sexual contact or sharing bedding with anyone who has an infestation. |
| **Scabies** | Scabies is caused by a small mite called *Sarcoptes sacbiei*. The mites burrow under the skin to lay egg, and newly hatched mites are spread over the body by scratching. | Scabies causes intense itching and in some cases rash – it appears as tiny red lumps and threadlike tracks on the skin. The rash is the result of an allergic reaction to the mite. | Scabies is easily treated with permethrin cream or lotion, which works best if lotion is applied after a shower. Application of the cream may need to be repeated. | * Try not to scratch the skin – this can cause the infestation to spread to other parts of the body and may also cause scarring. * Don’t share personal items such as towels, bed linen and clothing items until infestation is clear * - Remain home from work, school or day care until 24 hours after treatment. |
| **Gonorrhoea** | Gonorrhoea is caused by the bacterium Neisseria gonorrhoeae. This bacterium is most often passed from one person to another during sexual contact, including oral, anal or vaginal intercourse. | Men may be asymptomatic, but those with symptoms often have:   * A burning sensation when urinating * A white, yellow or green discharge from the penis * Painful or swollen testicles   Women may also be asymptomatic but are at risk of developing serious complications from the infection. Symptoms include:   * Painful or burning sensation when urinating * Increased vaginal discharge * Vaginal bleeding between periods   Rectal infections may either cause no symptoms or symptoms in men and women that could include:   * Discharge * Anal itching * Soreness * Bleeding * - Painful bowel motions | Gonorrhoea can be cured with the right treatment – the CDC recommends a single dose of 250mg of intramuscular ceftriaxone and 1g of oral azithromycin. All medication must be taken to cure gonorrhoea.  The medication will stop the infection but will not repair any long-lasting damage done by the STI. | Frequent testing for gonorrhoea along with practising safe sex consistently are effective in preventing gonorrhoea. |
| **Syphilis** | Syphilis is caused by a bacterium called Treponema pallidum, and is transmitted through close skin-to-skin contact and is highly contagious when the syphilis sore or rash is present. | There are three stages of syphilis – only the first 2 are infectious and symptoms vary.  In the first stage (4-12 weeks), you may be asymptomatic – if symptoms present, you may have a sore that is;   * Difficult to notice * In the mouth or rectum on the vagina or cervix * is more likely to occur as a single sore * Is usually painless * Usually heals completely within 4 weeks with no treatment   In the second stage (up to 2 years), you may have:   * A flat, red skin rash on the palms of your hands or soles of your feet or your entire body which is highly contagious and may be mistaken for measles if not tested for properly * Swollen lymph nodes * Other symptoms such as hair loss (especially in the eyebrows), pain in the joints or flu-like symptoms.   The third stage of syphilis (10-30 years after initial infection) can affect various organs, especially the brain and the heart. This stage occurs in a third of untreated people. Severe brain or heart complications may occur during this stage. | Penicillin is an extremely effective treatment for syphilis regardless of the stage. Other treatments are available if allergic to penicillin. Early treatment is needed to help prevent further complications and avoid passing the infection on to sexual partners. | There are a number of ways to reduce the risk of catching syphilis including:   * Always practising safe sex, using a condom and water-based lubricant * If you are a gay man or a man who has sex with men, get a syphilis test and other STI checks at least yearly * - Seek early advice if you notice oral, genital or anal sores, or rashes on your body, hands or feet |

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