

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTION (STI)

What You Need to Know

What is a Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI)?

An STI is a viral or bacterial infection that is passed from person to person through sexual contact. They cause uncomfortable symptoms and can result in permanent, and in some cases, fatal health problems. The most common STIs include gonorrhea, chlamydia, herpes, genital warts, syphilis and HIV/AIDS.

How can I get an STI?

You can get an STI by having vaginal, anal, or oral sex with someone; sharing needles to inject drugs; or getting a body piercing or tattoo with tools that haven't been cleaned properly. Some STIs can be passed from parent to child during pregnancy and childbirth.

How can I tell if I have an STI?

Many times people don't have symptoms, especially females. Some signs are:

- Unusual discharge or blood from the vagina or penis
- Sores, bumps or blisters in or near the mouth, anus, vagina or penis
- Burning or pain when you urinate or have a bowel movement
- Urinating often
- Itching around the vagina or penis
- Flu like feelings-fever, chills and aches
- Pain in the pelvic area

If you have any symptoms, stop having sex. Go to a doctor or health clinic right away for testing and possible treatment.

How can I tell if I have an STI?

STIs can cause future health problems including infertility, cervical and other cancers, miscarriage, infant death, and pregnancy problems. STIs also increase a person's risk of getting HIV/AIDS.

I didn't know I had an STI. Can I still give it to my partner?

Yes. Even if you have no symptoms, you could still give the disease to a partner.

Can STIs be treated?

Yes. When diagnosed and treated early, many STIs can be cured.

How can I protect myself?

- The best way to prevent STIs is by not having sex.
- Know your partner's history of STIs and drug use before having sex.
- Use a new, latex condom with a water-based lubricant every time you have sex. Condoms don't offer 100% protection but they do offer the best protection we have.
- Anyone sexually active should carry condoms.
- Have sex with only one partner who is having sex only with you. The more partners you have the greater the likelihood of getting an STI or HIV.
- Make sure your partner has been tested for STIs and is STI free.
- Never have sex with someone who uses needles to take drugs or who has sex for drugs and/or money.
- Have STI exams and HIV tests regularly. Consider being tested before having sex.

I have an STI, what should I do?

Get treated and tell your partner right away. Your partner must get tested and treated too. During treatment, wait to have sex until your health provider says you are no longer affected.

Oakland County Health Division offers testing, diagnosis and treatment for various STIs. Testing is available for HIV infections (AIDS) and referrals may be given for treatment.

Clinic Hours

Visit oakgov.com/health for clinic hours and information.

24-483, Rev. 10/10/2024

NURSE ON CALL PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION
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OAKGOV.COM/HEALTH



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