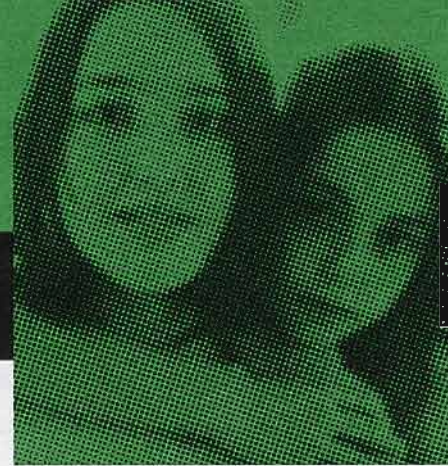


# tool kit for teen care

## fast fact Sexually Transmitted Diseases



### What are sexually transmitted diseases?

- Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are a group of infections that are spread through any kind of sexual contact, not just by intercourse.
- They are caused by tiny organisms passed between individuals through contact with the genitals, skin, mouth, rectum, or bodily fluids.
- Anyone having sex is at risk of contracting STDs.

### Are sexually transmitted diseases a big problem?

- Sexually transmitted diseases are a huge problem among teens.
- Each year 4 million teens—about 1 in 4 teens who have sex—get an STD.
- Almost 25% of all STDs occur in teens.

### Who is at risk for sexually transmitted diseases?

- Those who are having unprotected sex or close sexual contact with another person.
- Those who have had or whose partner has had sex with more than one person.
- Those who have had sex with someone who has an STD.
- Those who have had a previous STD.

### What are the effects of sexually transmitted diseases?

- Sexually transmitted diseases can make you sick or cause permanent harm to your body.
- Many STDs have no noticeable symptoms, but some can cause problems ranging from mild irritation to severe pain, illness, and even death.
- Some STDs, like herpes and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), have no cure.

- Even mild symptoms can cause permanent damage, including infertility.
- During pregnancy, STDs can harm the fetus.
- Early diagnosis and treatment offers the best chance for curing the disease and preventing further spread to others.

### What are some sexually transmitted diseases?

#### Chlamydia and Gonorrhea

- Teens with these diseases may have no symptoms or may have vaginal or penile discharge, itching, pelvic pain, joint pain, or sore throat.
- These diseases can spread to the uterus, fallopian tubes, and ovaries, causing severe illness, pain, and even infertility.
- Chlamydia and gonorrhea can be cured easily with antibiotics if the teen seeks early medical attention.

#### Genital Herpes

- Genital herpes is caused by a virus.
- It usually causes painful sores in the genital area that can last from a few days to weeks.
- The sores heal, but the virus remains in your body and the sores may come back again.
- Treatment can help the sores heal, but there is no treatment to kill the virus.

#### Hepatitis B

- Hepatitis B is a virus spread by bodily fluids and can destroy the liver.
- It can be prevented by vaccination.

#### Human Immunodeficiency Virus

- Human immunodeficiency virus is the virus that causes AIDS.
- Human immunodeficiency virus enters the blood stream through bodily fluids and invades and kills cells of the immune system, which will lead to AIDS.
- Although new medicines may slow the progression of HIV and AIDS, there is no cure.





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### Human Papillomavirus

- Human papillomavirus is a common viral infection in teens that can cause genital warts
- Some types of the virus may lead to cancer of the cervix.
- Warts may show up long after infection and may come and go for many years.
- There are several treatments available for the warts.

### Syphilis

- *Treponema pallidum* is a type of bacteria that can infect many parts of the body and causes syphilis.
- Syphilis may not cause symptoms, but sometimes a painless, smooth sore on the genital area can be an early sign of disease.
- If found early, by the use of a blood test, syphilis is treated easily.
- If not treated, all signs may disappear, but may return years later in advanced stages that can cause severe disease.

### Trichomonas

- Trichomonas infection can cause an unpleasant smelling discharge and vaginal discomfort and can be seen with other STDs.
- It can be cured with antibiotics.

### What is hepatitis C?

- Hepatitis C is a very dangerous infectious disease that affects the liver and often results in death.
- It is transmitted mainly from the blood of one person to the blood of another person (blood to blood transmission).
- Various risky behaviors may place teens at risk for contracting hepatitis C, including sharing straws during cocaine use. Other ways to get hepatitis C include being tattooed with unsterilized needles, body piercing, and using intravenous drugs.
- Hepatitis C usually is not spread by having sex with an infected person, but it can happen.

### How can STDs be prevented?

- The only sure way to prevent an STD is to not have sexual contact with another person.

- If sex occurs, there are things that can be done to decrease the risk of contracting STDs, such as:
  - Remember that STDs can be contracted through oral sex and genital and skin contact.
  - Ask the partner if he or she has or had an infection or any symptoms that could mean infection. If he or she has, avoid sex and have them make an appointment with a physician.
  - Limit the number of sexual partners.
  - Use a condom correctly every time vaginal, oral, anal, and genital sexual contact occurs.
  - Avoid risky sexual practices, like anal intercourse. (Sexual acts that cause even small breaks or tears in the skin can increase the risk for STDs by letting germs in and out more easily.)
  - Visit a health care practitioner for screening and prompt treatment and get rescreened when there is a change in partners.
  - Get immunized against hepatitis B.

### For More Information

We have provided information on the following organizations and web sites because they have information that may be of interest to our readers. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists does not necessarily endorse the views expressed or the facts presented by these organizations or on these web sites. Further, ACOG does not endorse any commercial products that may be advertised or available from these organizations or on these web sites.

**Advocates for Youth**  
1025 Vermont Avenue, NW, Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20005  
Telephone: (202) 347-5700  
Fax: (202) 347-2263  
[www.advocatesforyouth.org](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org)

**Alan Guttmacher Institute**  
120 Wall Street, 21st Floor  
New York, NY 10005  
Telephone: (212) 248-1111  
Fax: (212) 248-1952  
[www.agi-usa.org](http://www.agi-usa.org)

**American Academy of Pediatrics**  
141 Northwest Point Boulevard  
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007-1098  
Telephone: (847) 228-5005  
Fax: (847) 228-5097  
[www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)

**American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists**  
409 12th Street SW  
PO Box 96920  
Washington, DC 20090-6290  
Telephone: (202) 863-2497  
Fax: (202) 484-3917  
[www.acog.org](http://www.acog.org)

**American Social Health Association**  
PO Box 13827  
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709  
Telephone: (919) 361-8400  
Fax: (919) 361-8425  
[www.ashastd.org](http://www.ashastd.org)

**AWARE Foundation**  
1015 Chestnut Street, Suite 1225  
Philadelphia, PA 19107-4302  
Telephone: (215) 955-9847  
[www.awarefoundation.org](http://www.awarefoundation.org)

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**  
National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion  
4770 Buford Highway, NE, Mail Stop K-32  
Atlanta, GA 30341-3717  
Telephone: (770) 488-3168  
[www.cdc.gov/nccddp/dash/](http://www.cdc.gov/nccddp/dash/)

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**  
Office of Women's Health  
600 Clifton Road, MS: D-51  
Atlanta, GA 30033  
Telephone: (404) 639-7230  
Fax: (404) 639-7331  
[www.cdc.gov/od/owh/whhome.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/od/owh/whhome.htm)

**Johns Hopkins AIDS Service**  
[www.hopkins-aids.edu](http://www.hopkins-aids.edu)

**National Women's Health Information Center**  
Telephone: 800-994-WOMAN  
[www.4woman.org](http://www.4woman.org)

**Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc.**  
810 Seventh Avenue  
New York, NY 10019  
[www.plannedparenthood.org](http://www.plannedparenthood.org)

**Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States**  
130 West 42nd Street, Suite 350  
New York, NY 10036-7802  
Telephone: (212) 819-9770  
Fax: (212) 819-9776  
[www.siecus.org](http://www.siecus.org)

**Sexually Transmitted Disease Information Line**  
Telephone: 800-227-8922

**The Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada**  
[www.sexualityandu.ca](http://www.sexualityandu.ca)