



How do I know if I have a sexually transmitted infection?

What are signs and symptoms of these diseases?

GONORRHEA - Symptoms may appear 2-21 days after having sex, although most women have no symptoms. Possible symptoms may include thick yellow or white discharge, burning with urination, abnormal periods or “spotting,” and cramps in the lower abdomen. It is spread during vaginal, anal and oral sex, and can lead to more serious infection, sterility, and could cause heart trouble, skin disease, arthritis and blindness. Men can carry this infection without symptoms.

CHLAMYDIA - Symptoms show up 7-28 days after having sex, but most women have no symptoms. Possible symptoms that could occur include discharge, spotting, burning with urination, urinary frequency, abdominal pain, fever, and nausea. This disease can lead to sterility, more serious infection, and damage to your reproductive organs. It is spread during vaginal, anal and oral sex, and men can carry this infection without symptoms.

TRICHOMONAS - This can cause itching, burning or pain in the vagina, although some women have no symptoms. There is usually more discharge than normal in the vagina, which may look and/or smell different. It is spread during vaginal, anal and oral sex, and men can carry the infection without symptoms. Uncomfortable symptoms will continue if left untreated.

HERPES - Symptoms may occur 1-30 days or longer after exposure. You can have no symptoms, or possible flu-like symptoms. Small, painful blisters on the mouth or sex organs may appear, which last 1-3 weeks. The blisters will go away, but may recur. It is spread during vaginal, anal, and oral sex with someone who has herpes. This disease cannot be cured, but outbreaks can be controlled or limited by medication.

HPV (Human Papilloma Virus) or GENITAL WARTS - Symptoms show up 1-8 months after contact with the virus that causes genital warts. Small, bumpy warts may appear on the sex organs or anus, which may itch or burn. After the warts are treated and go away, they may return. This virus is spread during vaginal, anal and oral sex with someone who has genital warts. Sometimes they go away on their own, remain unchanged, or grow and spread. Human Papilloma virus is spreading rapidly in the under-25 population. Men can carry HPV and not have any symptoms.

HEPATITIS B - Symptoms occur 1-9 months after contact with this highly contagious and dangerous virus. Many people have no symptoms, or flu-like symptoms that don't go away. Fatigue, yellow skin, dark urine, and light-colored bowel movements can occur. This

virus is spread by vaginal, anal and oral sex with someone who has Hepatitis B. It also can be spread by sharing needles, blood contact, or just very close contact with an infected person. Some people recover completely, but others can never be cured. Symptoms may disappear, but certain people can still transfer Hepatitis B to others. It can cause permanent liver damage and death. There is, however, a very effective vaccination for this virus, which we offer at the Campus Health Center and encourage everyone to receive.

SYPHILIS - There are 2 stages to this disease. First stage symptoms show up 3-12 weeks after exposure. A painless, reddish-brown sore can appear on the mouth, sex organs, breasts, or fingers, which lasts 1-5 weeks. This sore may disappear, but you still have the disease. The second stage shows up 1 week to 6 months after the sore heals. It could involve a rash anywhere on the body and flu-like feelings. Even when these disappear, you still have syphilis. It is spread during vaginal, anal, and oral sex with someone who has syphilis. This disease can cause heart disease, brain damage, blindness and death.

HIV/AIDS - Symptoms may not show up for several months to several years after contact with HIV, the virus which causes AIDS. It can cause unexplained weight loss, fatigue, flu-like symptoms, diarrhea, white spots in the mouth, or in women, yeast infections that don't go away. This deadly disease is spread by vaginal, anal, and oral sex with someone who has HIV, by sharing needles, or by contact with infected blood. HIV cannot be cured, and can cause illness and death.

VAGINITIS - Bacterial vaginosis and monilia (yeast) are two types of vaginal infections that are not sexually transmitted. The provider can test, treat and help with prevention. These may also require a speculum exam of the vagina. Symptoms can include vaginal discharge, itching or burning. They are treated with medication.

What do I do if I may have been exposed to a sexually transmitted infection?

STI Treatment

If you think you might have a sexually transmitted infection, it is vitally important that you get treatment. Even if it is difficult for you or you feel embarrassed, please know that we, at the Campus Health Center, fully understand and will do all we can to help you, in a totally confidential manner. Many Sexually Transmitted Infections can be treated with antibiotics. Do exactly as you are instructed by your provider and be sure to use all of your medicine. You also must tell your sexual partner(s). If they aren't treated, they can get sick and spread the STI. We will be glad to discuss testing, treatment and prevention of these infections. As for testing, some of these require a speculum exam of the vagina and some require a blood test.