

The background of the image is a high-contrast, black and white silhouette of a couple kissing. The couple's profiles are visible, with their lips pressed together. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the contours of their faces and necks against a bright, white background. The overall mood is intimate and romantic.

Diseases That Can Be Spread During

SEX

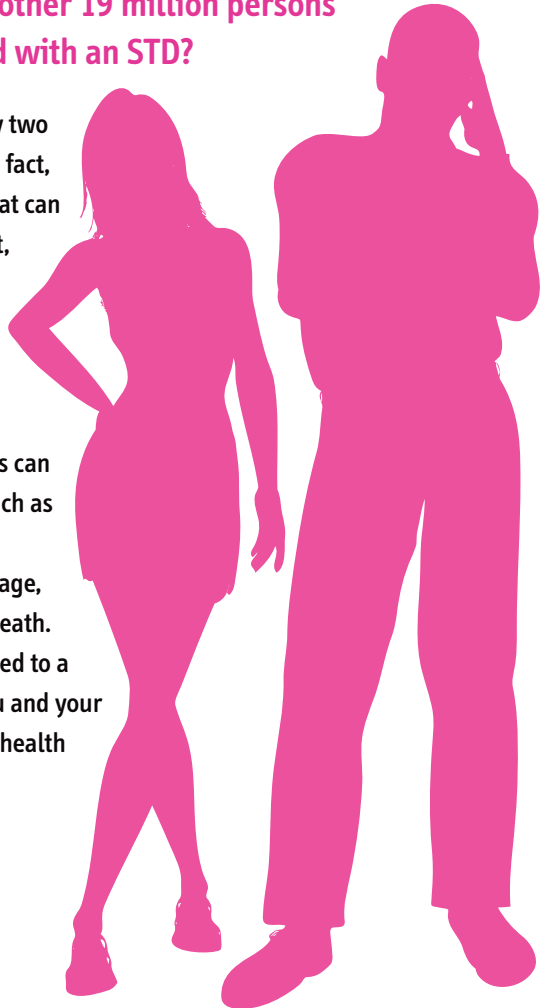
Diseases that can be spread during sex

Did you know...

- over 65 million people in the United States have a chronic, incurable sexually transmitted disease (STD)?
- and that every year another 19 million persons become newly infected with an STD?

Many people think there are only two STDs - syphilis and gonorrhea. In fact, there are many other diseases that can be spread through sexual contact, including herpes, chlamydia, genital warts, vaginitis, hepatitis B and HIV (the virus that causes AIDS).

Without treatment these diseases can lead to major health problems such as sterility (not being able to get pregnant), permanent brain damage, heart disease, cancer, and even death. If you think you have been exposed to a sexually transmitted disease, you and your sex partner(s) should visit a free health clinic or doctor for treatment.



You may have been exposed to an STD and should get tested if you have ever:

- had sex (vaginal, anal or oral) without using a condom with someone who has an STD or HIV, or whose status you do not know;
- had sex without using a condom with someone who has ever injected drugs; or
- had many sex partners.

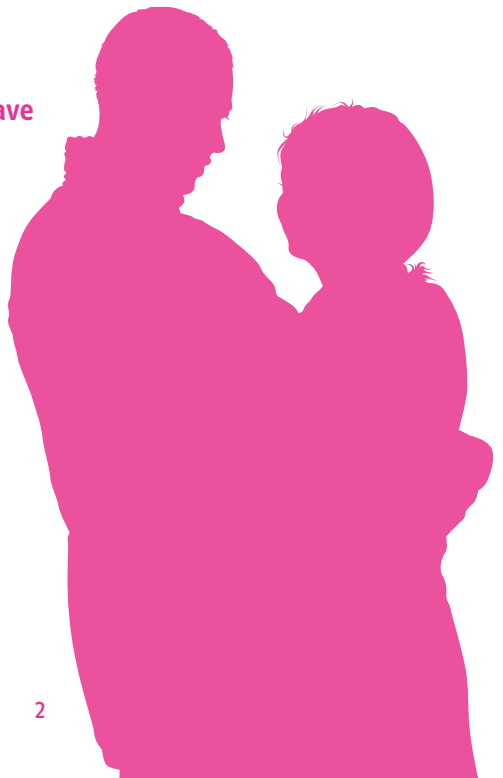
You can lower your risk for becoming infected with a disease spread during sex by:

- using a latex male condom or female condom the right way, every time you have sex;
- using the female condom which may offer better protection than the male condom against herpes and genital warts because it covers more of a woman's external genitalia and is very resistant to tears.
- not using drugs and alcohol; they can get in the way of you protecting yourself;
- having only one sex partner, whose status you know;
- not having sex with a person who shoots drugs or who ever did.

Remember:

Most people who have an STD have no symptoms.

Therefore, you can't tell by looking if a person is infected with a disease that can be passed to you during sex. Protect Yourself!



Hepatitis

Hepatitis B is a liver disease caused by a virus carried in the blood, saliva, semen and other body fluids of an infected person. Like HIV, it is spread by sexual contact or sharing works to shoot drugs. It can also be passed from mother to baby around the time of delivery. Symptoms may include tiredness, poor appetite, fever, vomiting, joint pain, hives, rash, or jaundice – a yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes. Doctors prescribe bed rest for those with hepatitis B. Most people recover, but some become long-term carriers of the virus, and can spread it to others through sex and needle sharing. Hepatitis B vaccine is recommended for anyone at risk. Hepatitis B vaccine is required by New York State Public Health Law for all children entering kindergarten or the seventh grade. It is recommended that adults who are at “high risk” for hepatitis B (they have had unprotected sex or shared needles, syringes or other works to inject drugs) get the hepatitis B vaccine. Most doctors or clinics have this vaccine.

Having oral sex after anal sexual contact can also spread Hepatitis A, another viral liver disease. Hepatitis A can be prevented by vaccination. A combined hepatitis A and B vaccine is also available for those at risk.

AIDS

AIDS is the end result of infection with the virus HIV. HIV attacks the body’s defense system, making the body less able to fight off infections or cancers. People with HIV may have no symptoms, or may not even know that they have HIV. To cause infection, HIV must enter the bloodstream. This can happen during anal, vaginal and oral sex, or by sharing needles or works with a person who has HIV. HIV can also be passed from a mother who has HIV to her baby during pregnancy, delivery or breastfeeding. Medicines given to a woman who has HIV during pregnancy and delivery, and to her baby at birth, can greatly lower the chances of her baby becoming infected with HIV.

There is no vaccine or cure for HIV. But there are medicines that can help infected people stay healthy longer. People who may have been exposed to HIV should be tested. If they find out they have the virus, they can start treatment early.

Gonorrhea

Gonorrhea is caused by bacteria spread from one infected person to another during sex. It can attack the urethra in a man's penis, the cervix in a woman's vagina, and the rectum and throat.

In men, the disease may cause burning during urination and discharge (drip) from the penis. Women often have no symptoms at all and may not know they are infected unless the disease is found during an examination.

Untreated gonorrhea can cause sterility in both women and men. In women, it can lead to Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID) - an infection which causes severe lower abdominal pain and fever, and can result in sterility or miscarriage.

Infants born to women with gonorrhea can develop severe eye infections and meningitis.

Syphilis

Syphilis is caused by an organism that enters the body through the skin, the mouth, or the anus during sex. Within 10 to 90 days after infection, a sore may appear anywhere on the body including on or around the genitals, the rectum, or mouth. The sore is painless and it usually heals in two to three weeks even without treatment. Sometime after the sore appears, the organism enters the bloodstream and spreads throughout the body. This may be followed by a fever, headache, swollen glands, or rash especially on the palms of the hands or soles of the feet.

During its later stages, untreated syphilis can cause damage to the brain, heart, eyes and other body parts. Although syphilis must be treated with antibiotics at this stage, no medicine can repair damage that syphilis has already done.

In a pregnant woman, untreated syphilis can cause birth defects and even death to her unborn baby. It is very important for pregnant women to have a blood test for syphilis as soon as they know they are pregnant.

Herpes

Herpes is a viral disease. It produces groups of blister-like sores on the genitals about two to 14 days after a person is exposed to the virus. Sometimes a fever is present. The sores will break open and become painful, especially if they come in contact with urine. Even though the herpes sores may disappear, the virus is still present and the sores can return with little warning.

Most people infected with genital herpes have no symptoms and do not know they have the virus. Herpes can spread even when there are no sores or signs of the disease. In fact, most transmission of herpes happens in this way.

Cold sores are also a form of herpes. People with sores on the mouth or lips should not have oral sex because this may cause genital herpes in their sex partners.

A pregnant woman with genital herpes should tell her doctor. If precautions aren't taken during childbirth, herpes can cause serious damage or even death to her baby.

There is no known cure for herpes. But new drugs are helpful in treating the symptoms.



Chlamydia

Chlamydia produces an infection that is very similar to gonorrhea. Men may experience burning during urination and discharge from the penis. However, up to 50% of men may have no symptoms or the symptoms are so mild, they may be ignored. In women, chlamydia causes an inflammation of the cervix (cervicitis).

Symptoms of this infection in women when present are mild and usually include a vaginal discharge or spotting (blood-tinged discharge), but the vast majority (approximately 75%) have no symptoms at all. Untreated chlamydia can cause Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID) with pain, fever, miscarriage and infertility in women.

Infants born to women with chlamydia can develop eye infections and pneumonia.

Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID)

Untreated gonorrhea and chlamydia can cause sterility in both women and men. In women, it can lead to Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID). PID is an infection that causes severe lower abdominal pain and fever, and can result in infertility (inability to have children), ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy outside the womb), miscarriage, or chronic pain.

Non-gonococcal Urethritis (NGU)

NGU is an infection that may cause burning upon urination and discharge from the penis. It is not caused by gonorrhea, even though the symptoms are similar. In the past, chlamydia was the most common cause, but now with screening and treatment, this infection is becoming more commonly caused by other sexually transmitted bacteria (Ureaplasma and mycoplasma) and viruses (Herpes and HPV - see genital warts). Symptoms of an NGU infection can sometimes be so slight that the infected person may not even suspect an illness.

Genital Warts

Genital warts are caused by a virus, Human Papillomavirus (HPV). There are over 70 types of HPV that infect humans including 35 that infect the genitals. Most people (about 75%) with HPV have no obvious signs of infection. When present, visible warts usually develop on the genitals one to three months after exposure. Small warts are treated with medicine applied directly to the warts. Left untreated, the warts can spread or in some people, such as pregnant women or HIV positive persons, they can become so large that surgery is necessary. They can also bleed and become very painful.

The sexual partners of a person infected with genital warts have about a 60% chance of getting them too. Women with genital warts are urged to have a yearly Pap smear because the virus has been strongly linked with cervical cancer. Anal warts are also caused by the same virus and have been linked to anal cancer. Women and men with anal warts should be monitored by their health care provider.

A new HPV vaccine is available for females aged 9-26 years and is effective against four types of HPV. The HPV vaccine is the first vaccine developed to prevent most cervical cancers and genital warts. Doctors recommend this vaccine for 11 and 12 year-old girls. Ideally, girls should get this vaccine before their first sexual contact, when they could be exposed to HPV. This is because the vaccine prevents HPV in females who have not yet been exposed to the HPV types covered by the vaccine. Consult your doctor for details.

Latex male condoms and female condoms (made of polyurethane), when used consistently and correctly, are highly effective in preventing transmission of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, and gonorrhea, chlamydia, and trichomoniasis.

Herpes, syphilis and genital warts or HPV are STDs that are passed mainly through skin-to-skin contact either with sores or with infected skin that may look normal. Correct and consistent use of latex male condoms and female condoms can reduce the risk of these STDs only when the infected area or site of potential exposure is protected. While the effectiveness of condoms in preventing transmission of human papillomavirus (HPV) infection is less than 100%, condom use has been associated with a lower rate of cervical cancer and HPV-associated disease.

Vaginitis

Vaginitis is an inflammation of a woman's vagina caused by tiny organisms that can be passed during sex. Three of the most common types of vaginitis are:

Trichomonal Vaginitis

The symptoms include vaginal discharge with an unpleasant odor, intense itching, burning and redness of the genitals, and pain during intercourse. This type of vaginitis usually responds to a drug available with a physician's prescription. If untreated, trichomonal vaginitis can result in infections of the uterus and fallopian tubes (Pelvic Inflammatory Disease) or, if pregnant, premature delivery. Men having sexual contact with infected women are usually asymptomatic. However some men may develop a minor urinary tract infection and less frequently a more severe form of urethritis. All men who have sex with women who have trichomoniasis must be treated not only to treat infection, but also to prevent reinfection of the woman.

Yeast Vaginitis

This infection is also called candidiasis or monilia. It's caused by an overgrowth in the vagina of a yeast-like fungus normally present in the body. A woman with yeast vaginitis may have a white, cottage cheese-like discharge and itching or burning that can be so intense that it interferes with sleep. It is usually treated with anti-fungal vaginal suppositories or creams. While yeast infections are more common in sexually active women, many women get these frequently and they are not related to sexual transmission.

Bacterial Vaginosis (BV)

BV affects 1 out of every 5 women of reproductive age. The infection is associated with a loss of the normal pH and balance of bacterial growth in the vagina. As a result, an overgrowth occurs of some bacteria that are normally present in small quantities. While it is unclear if this infection is spread through sex, women who are sexually active are much more likely to have BV. Symptoms include an unpleasant, fishy or musty odor, a heavy vaginal discharge, vaginal itching, and irritation. BV has been associated with an increased risk of Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID) and premature delivery in women who are pregnant. Treatment is with an antibiotic either taken orally or vaginally.

Get Tested: Get Treated

It's possible to have more than one sexually transmitted disease at the same time. It's also possible to get the same disease again. The longer you postpone treatment, the greater the damage caused by the disease. So, if you even suspect that you've been exposed to a sexually transmitted disease, visit your doctor or clinic immediately. You and your sex partner should be checked and treated at the same time to avoid reinfecting each other.

For more information, or for the location of your nearest free clinic, call your local health department or the information numbers below. Clinic treatment is completely confidential and persons under 18 can be treated without their parents' consent or knowledge. The test for HIV is also free and confidential. Ask about it at your clinic.

For STD information and testing sites near you, call:

- CDC National STD Hotline,
(English/Spanish) 1-800-232-4636
- TTY 1-888-232-6348
- NYS Dept. of Health Bureau of STD
Control 1-518-474-3598
- NYC Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene
STD Education Office 1-212-427-5120

For HIV/AIDS information and testing sites near you, call:

- NYS HIV/AIDS Hotline (English)
1-800-541-AIDS
- Spanish 1-800-233-SIDA
- TTY 1-212-925-9560

Voice callers can use the New York Relay System:

Call 711 or 1-800-421-1220 and ask the operator to dial 1-212-925-9560.



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Department of Health

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