

Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD)

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Sexually transmitted diseases (STD) are infections that are most commonly spread through sexual activity. In a lot of cases STDs initially do not cause any symptoms. This does not mean that it is not dangerous or transmittable.

Symptoms

Symptoms, such as the following, may be experienced late:

- Vaginal discharge
- Genital ulcers
- Pelvic pain
- Painful sexual intercourse
- Burning & pain during urination
- Bleeding in between periods
- Fever
- Headache
- Backache
- An itching or tingling sensation in the genital or anal area

If some of these symptoms are present you have to go and see a doctor as soon as possible. Also remember that if you have no symptoms it does not exclude a STD infection. If a STD are left undiagnosed and untreated, it can lead to various other diseases and even death.

Safe Sex

STDs can also be transmitted to your baby during pregnancy or prevent you from falling pregnant. For this reason safe sexual activity is extremely important. Safe sexual activity include the following:

- The use of condoms
- Having only one sexual partner
- Knowing you and your partner's STD and HIV status

Transmission

Most STDs are transmitted through contact with the infected person's body fluids, such as genital secretions during sexual intercourse or blood. Some STDs can also be transmitted through contact with the infected areas.



Diagnosis

The best way to prevent and diagnose STDs are through testing and knowing your and your partner's STD status. You can get tested for HIV at any clinic, hospital or testing station (See page 67). The earlier a STD are detected, the better the outcome of the treatment will be. The chance of you spreading the disease to other people are also lower when you know your status and inform your sexual partner of your status.

Treatment

Most STDs are curable and treatable, other will however affect you lifelong. Curable STDs will resolve completely after medical treatment thereof. Syphilis and gonorrhea are, for example, curable, while herpes, HPV (See page 76) and HIV/AIDS (See page 67) will infect you lifelong.

Now what?

If you have been diagnosed with a STD, especially a non-curable STD, it might seem like the end of the world. It is, however, definitely not. There are various places where you can find support, counseling and help to manage your STD. **YOU ARE NOT ALONE!** Help and counseling can be found at any social worker at a hospital or clinic.

