



UNIVERSITY OF EMBU

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

HEALTH EDUCATION ON SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

- Sexually transmitted infections (STI) continue to be a public health crisis worldwide. They affect the quality of life and can have a far-reaching consequence on the victims: impacting on their reproductive health, causing severe pregnancy complications and causing cancer.
- Sexually transmitted infections are caused by viral, bacteria, or parasitic microorganisms that spread from person to person during sexual contact.
- Common sexually transmitted infections include: syphilis, gonorrhoea, chlamydia, candidiasis, trichomonas, hepatitis B, human papilloma virus, HIV&AIDS, genital herpes.

Effects of sexually transmitted infections include:

- Affect the quality of life of the infected individual.
- Having a direct impact on reproductive health, through infertility.
- Risk of cervical cancer.
- Pregnancy complication.

When to seek medical attention as a male partner:

- Abnormal discharge from the penis (colored or foul smelling).
- Painful ejaculation.
- Frequent urination.
- Painful urination.
- Genital papules, vesicles, blisters, sores
- Swelling of inguinal lymph nodes.

- Scrotal pains -unilateral testicular pains /swelling, fever.
- Anorectal discharge, bleeding, itch and/or growth in anal/genital region.

When to seek medical attention as a female partner:

- Abnormal vaginal discharge (colored or foul smelling).
- Pelvic pains (lower abdominal pains).
- Painful urination.
- Pain during intercourse.
- Abnormal vaginal bleeding.
- Anorectal discharge, bleeding, itch and/or growth in anal/ genital region.

Risk factors that may lead to STI:

- Engaging in unprotected vaginal, oral or anal sex.
- Having multiple sexual partners.
- Inconsistent and irregular use of condoms during sex.
- Previous history of sexually transmitted infections.
- Use of injection drugs, alcohol or other substance that can impair decision making ability.
- Use of non-barrier contraceptive such as spermicides due to disruption of genital epithelium.
- Vaginal douching.

How you can prevent sexually transmitted infections?

✓ Use of condoms:

- Correct and consistent use of the male/female latex condom every time you have sex is highly effective in reducing STI transmission.
- If you use a lubricant, make sure it is water based.
- Use condoms for entire sex act.
- Condoms are effective at preventing disease(s) and pregnancy, if you have latex allergies, synthetic non-latex condoms can be used –but it is important to note that these condoms have higher chances of breakage rates than latex condoms. However, they are extremely effective if used properly.

- ✓ **Vaccines** are safe, effective and recommended way to prevent hepatitis B and Human Papilloma Virus, genital warts and some cancer(s). HPV vaccination is recommended for preteens ages 11 or 12 (or can start at age 9) and everyone through age -26, if not vaccinated already.

- ✓ Get tested for Human immunodeficiency virus-visit your nearest health clinic and talk to your health care provider, knowing your STI status is a critical step to stopping STI transmission. If you know you are infected, you can take steps to further protect yourself and your partner(s).
- ✓ If you have a problem with drug or alcohol abuse –visit your nearest health clinic and talk with your health care provider.
- ✓ Abstinence-most reliable way to avoid infection(s) i.e. this means not having anal, vaginal or oral sex.
- ✓ Avoid sharing cloths or under cloth.
- ✓ Wash before and after intercourse.
- ✓ Reduce number of sex partners.
- ✓ Mutual monogamy (having one wife or partner) you agree to be sexually active with only one person, who has agreed to be sexually active only with you.
- ✓ Talk with your partner(s) about STI'S and staying safe before having sex it might be uncomfortable to start the conversation, but protecting your health is your responsibility.
- ✓ If you test positive –getting an STI is not the end, many sexually transmitted infections are curable and all are treatable, if either you or your partner is infected with an STI that can be cured, both of you need to start treatment immediately to avoid getting re-infected.

N/B If 2 people who don't have STI have sex it's not possible for either of them to get one. A couple can't create an STI from nothing –they have to get spread from one person to another.

*** You have the facts, now protect yourself and your sexual partners ***