



Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs or STDs)

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are infections that are passed from one person to another during sex. They are also called sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

You can get an STI from penis in vagina sex or penis in anus sex, or occasionally from oral sex.

Some common STIs in the Pacific are:

- ▶ Gonorrhea
- ▶ Syphilis
- ▶ Chlamydia
- ▶ Hepatitis B
- ▶ Genital herpes
- ▶ HIV



There are many different STIs and they can be in different parts of the body.

STIs can be in and around:

- ▶ the penis
- ▶ the vagina
- ▶ the anus (bottom)
- ▶ in the mouth and throat

If you get an STI it can take 3 days to 2 months to show signs. Many people will not have any signs or symptoms when they have an STI, but they can still pass it on to others.

Signs of STIs

- ▶ Itching or pain in or around the penis, vagina or anus
- ▶ Yellow or white fluid or clear fluid from the penis or anus
- ▶ Strange (different to normal) fluid from the vagina, especially if it has a bad smell
- ▶ Swelling around the groin (genital) area
- ▶ Sores, blisters or lumps around the penis, vagina, anus or mouth
- ▶ Rash on the hands, feet or chest
- ▶ Pain when peeing (pissing)
- ▶ Sore throat

Signs of STIs

If a man has an STI, he may have pain in the testicles. If a woman has an STI, she may have pain in the lower stomach or back, pain when having sex, or bad smells from the vagina.

Some signs of STIs go away by themselves, or may not show any signs but you still have the STI and can still pass it on to other people.

Long-term effects of STIs

- ▶ STIs can make men and women very sick – they can even die
 - ▶ They can make men and women infertile (unable to have babies)
 - ▶ They can cause problems for babies including miscarriages and babies being born too soon
 - ▶ They can make it harder for men to piss
 - ▶ If a woman is pregnant and has an STI, she can pass the STI on to her baby.
- ▶ **Having an STI makes it easier to get HIV.**

STIs must be treated!

- ▶ Most STIs can be easily cured
- ▶ Some STIs cannot be cured but the signs and symptoms can be treated.
- ▶ If you think you might have an STI, go to a hospital or health clinic for testing and treatment.
- ▶ Do not have sex again until the STI has been treated.
- ▶ The sooner you get treatment, the less harm the STI will do to you.
- ▶ STIs don't go away without treatment.
- ▶ If you have an STI, your sex partners should get treatment too.

You are at risk of having or getting an STI if:

- ▶ You have ever had sex without a condom
- ▶ You or your partner has more than one sex partner
- ▶ You are starting a new sexual relationship

Safe sex stops STIs

You can stay safe from getting or passing on STIs by practising safe sex. This means

- ▶ If you are not having sex yet, then delay having sex.
- ▶ Do other less risky sex activities like rubbing, kissing, masturbation, fingering, body rubbing without penetration, breast fondling, nipple sucking – where no semen, vaginal fluid or blood passes from one person to another.

Safe sex stops STIs

- ▶ Use a condom properly every time you have penis in vagina or penis in anus sex or oral sex .
- ▶ Stick to one partner – have sex with only one partner (and they only have sex with you) when both partners are certain that they are not infected with HIV or another STI (this means both being tested and getting the results).
- ▶ Get tested for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs or STDs).

Who can I talk to?

Get help and advice about STIs from:

- ▶ A health worker, youth or community worker or peer educator
- ▶ Family planning/Family Health clinic or center
- ▶ Your local health clinic or hospital

BE WISE – PRACTISE SAFE SEX

This pamphlet was adapted from the original developed by *Save the Children*, Solomon Islands.

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