

What Are Sexually Transmitted Infections? (STIs)

A sexually transmitted infection (STI) is a disease that is spread during sex. You can become infected with an STI if you have sex with someone who has an STI. Any sex that involves the penis, vagina, anus, or mouth can spread the infection. Some STIs spread through body fluids such as semen, vaginal fluid, or blood. Others spread through contact with affected skin.

Who is at risk?

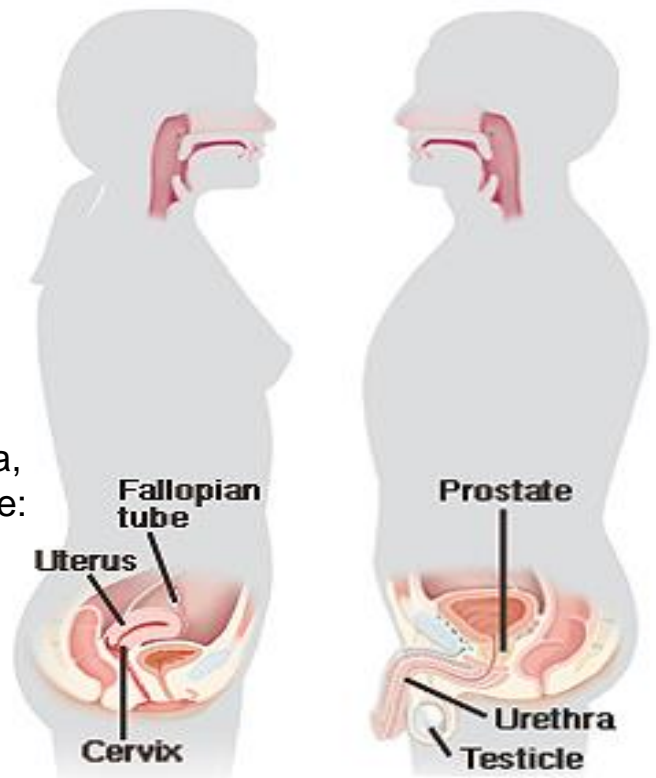
It doesn't matter if you're straight or gay, male or female, young or old. Any person who has sex can get an STI. Your risk increases if:

- Unprotected Sex
- Multiple Sexual Partners
- Prior history of STI
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Being an adolescent female

Common symptoms

Be alert to any changes in your body. Symptoms may appear in or near the vagina, penis, rectum, mouth, or throat. They include:

- Unusual discharge
- Lumps, bumps, or rashes
- Sores that may be painful, itchy, or painless
- Itchy skin
- Burning with urination
- Pain in the pelvis, belly (abdomen), or rectum



Places on or in the body where STIs cause damage include reproductive organs, the rectum, and the mouth.

Major Complications

Left untreated, certain STIs can:

- lead to cancer
- can harm unborn babies whose mothers are infected
- can cause you to not be able to have children
- Can change in behavior or your ability to think



Prevention

You can prevent these problems by abstaining from having sex with multiple partners. Always using condoms when having sex. Get tested for STIs if you're at risk. And get treated early if you have an STI.

Getting checked

The only sure way to know if you have an STI is to get checked by a healthcare provider. If you notice a change in how your body looks or feels, have it checked out. But keep in mind, STIs don't always show symptoms. So if you're at risk of STIs, get checked regularly. If you find you have an STI, be sure your partner gets treatment, too. If not, his or her health is at risk. And left untreated, your partner could pass the STI back to you, or on to others.

Even if you don't have symptoms

You may have an STI, even if you don't have symptoms. If you think you are at risk, get checked. Go to a clinic or to your healthcare provider. If your partner has an STI, you need to be tested too, even if you feel fine.



How to Use A Condom

Before You Wear a Condom

- Try to keep condoms stored in a cool, dry place – keep it away from direct sunlight.
- Pay attention to the expiration date and never use a condom past that date.
- **Do not** use your teeth to tear the condom package.
- If you can do not use a condom that looks discolored, damaged, or brittle.
- If you can use a drop of lube inside the condom

To Put a Condom On

1. Pinch the tip of the condom with one hand to ensure there is space for the ejaculate.
2. Use your other hand to roll the condom to the base of the penis.



3. Guide any air bubble out of the condom using the same hand.
- If available apply some lube to the outside of the condom to limit excess friction.

After Sexual Intercourse

- Make sure to hold the base of the used condom to avoid any slippage.
- Throw it in the trash – do not throw it in the toilet.