

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus)

Most commonly caught from unprotected sex or sharing needles infected with the virus.

Symptoms men and women:

Early symptoms are flu-like, followed by mild muscle ache, low-grade fever, rash and swollen glands for up to four weeks. Some new infections have no symptoms.

Effects on Health:

AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) is the final stage when the body can no longer fight infections.

Treatment:

No cure. Emergency HIV drugs can be given within 72 hours of known exposure. Long term treatment with antiretroviral drugs can slow down the damage the virus does to the immune system. This helps infected people to live longer healthier lives.

Syphilis

Numbers have risen substantially in the last 10 years in UK. Caused by a bacteria.

Symptoms:

Men and women: Develops in three stages: 1st stage develops an ulcer at the site of infection and swollen glands. If not treated the ulcer heals and moves into the 2nd stage: rash, tiredness, headaches, swollen glands, fever, hair loss, joint pains and weight loss. Without treatment the disease falls latent with no symptoms and will move to the 3rd stage: causes devastating effects on health.

Effects on Health:

Stroke, dementia, loss of coordination, numbness, paralysis, blindness, deafness, heart disease and skin rashes.

Treatment: 1st and 2nd stages treated with antibiotics. 3rd stage requires longer courses of antibiotics but this cannot reverse any damage already caused.

If you think you may have an STI you could do one of the following...

- Visit your doctor
- Visit your local GUM clinic (genito-urinary medicine clinic)
- Visit your local Contraceptive and Sexual Health Clinic (family planning clinic)
- Call NHS direct on 0845 4647
- Call the Sexual Health Line on 0800 567 123

No information is given to your GP, parents, relatives or partner without your consent.

You can scan the **QR** code with your Smartphone to be directed to the CareConfidential website.



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The evidence sources for this leaflet can be accessed by visiting:
sevidence.careconfidential.com



We are not able to refer directly for termination. We offer clients information on all the options and are well resourced to provide both immediate and long-term support as necessary, directing to other agencies as appropriate.

Sexually Transmitted Infections

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What is a Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI)?

STIs are passed on by unprotected vaginal, anal and oral sex and genital skin to skin contact. Some people carry more than one STI.

Some STIs caused by bacteria can be cured, while treatment for those caused by a virus controls symptoms of the infection only, as the virus may stay

How can I avoid an STI?

The World Health Organisation has stated that the best way to avoid an STI is to delay having sex, have sex with fewer partners, don't have sex at all, or to stay faithful to an uninfected long term partner.

They also state that using a condom correctly every time means that you are less likely to get an STI but it is not 100% effective.

It is possible to get an STI from just one partner, if they have one already.

I might have an STI

Many STIs have no symptoms. If you think you have an STI because the following may have happened, you should have a check-up:

- You have had unprotected sex or the condom has broken, even once
- You have had genital skin contact with someone who may be infected
- You have had previous partners who might have been infected
- If you don't know how many or who the others are that your partner has had sex with

What you need to know about...

Chlamydia

This is the most common STI in UK. The highest rate of infection is amongst the under 25s.

Symptoms: Many people who have it have no symptoms. Those that do, have:

Men: Pain passing urine, discharge from penis, burning/itching in genital area, painful swelling of the testicles.

Women: pain and/or bleeding during or after sex. Pain passing urine. Pelvic pain, and vaginal discharge. Heavier periods.

Effects on Health:

Men: Inflammation of urine tract and testicles.

Women: Can lead to painful pelvic inflammatory disease causing ectopic pregnancy, and infertility.

Treatment: Is easy to diagnose and treat with antibiotics.

Genital Herpes

Is highly contagious.

Symptoms:

Men and Women: Painful blisters on the genital and surrounding area, pain passing urine, vaginal discharge and flu-like symptoms. A long term condition that will happen 4-5 times in the first two years. Can be passed on even if there are no symptoms.

Effects on Health:

Women: Can be passed to a baby around the time of birth. Also a risk of miscarriage.

Treatment: Anti-viral tablets can prevent the severity but doesn't clear the virus from the body.

Genital Warts

A viral skin infection caused by the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), the second most common STI, but the most common viral STI.

Symptoms:

Men and Women: small lumps or warts on the genitals and surrounding areas. Usually painless but can be unsightly and cause irritation. Can make passing urine difficult.

Effects on Health:

Women: HPV is not a single virus, there are over 100 different strains. Some strains can cause cervical cancer.

Treatment: Warts can be removed by a liquid chemical, freezing, heat, laser or surgical treatment. Treatments can take up to three months to be effective.

Gonorrhoea

Caused by a bacteria. Ages 16—24 are most affected.

Symptoms:

Men: 10% get no symptoms. Pain passing urine, discharge from penis, pain in the testicles and swelling of foreskin.

Women: 50% have no symptoms. Vaginal discharge, pain passing urine, pelvic pain and bleeding between or heavier periods.

Effects on Health:

Women: Can lead to pelvic inflammation, ectopic pregnancy and reduced fertility. Can be passed to baby during childbirth.

Men: testicular or prostate inflammation, reduced fertility.

Treatment: A course or single dose of antibiotics is 95% effective.