

CERTIFIED WOMEN'S HEALTH COUNSELOR ONLINE COURSE: SESSION 5

- Sexual Health and Herbal Programs

7 Most Common STDs to Watch Out For

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are becoming increasingly common. Both men and women – gay or straight – may be vulnerable to STDs when they engage in vaginal, oral or anal sex. It's important to know about some of the most common STDs, including how to recognize and treat them.

1. Chlamydia
2. Herpes
3. HPV (Genital Warts)
4. HIV
5. Gonorrhea
6. Hepatitis
7. Syphilis

Sexually Transmitted Diseases - Infections - Venereal Diseases

Once known as venereal diseases or VD and now called sexually transmitted diseases or STDs and sometimes sexually transmitted infections or STIs discussed in clear language. Be prepared to protect yourself from the many sexually transmitted diseases in the world today. Discover the facts about STDs from causes, symptoms, and diagnosis, to treatments and prevention.

AIDS

AIDS stands for acquired immune deficiency syndrome, and is the condition that is caused by the final and most severe stage of the HIV virus. AIDS is the sixth leading cause of death among people between the ages of 25 and 44. This is an improvement. In 1995, it was the number one cause of death among people in the same age group. There is an estimated 35 million people worldwide living with HIV/AIDS, including more than 2 million children under the age of 15.

What Is It?

AIDS begins with a person contracting HIV. In the initial stage of the infection, a person can display a host of flu-like symptoms. However, it is possible that HIV can go completely unnoticed for many years, with an infected individual showing no signs or symptoms at all. During the time that HIV is undetected, it is slowly destroying the body's ability to fight off even the simplest of infections. The end result of this process, and the final stage of HIV, is what has come to be known as AIDS. With early treatment, the development of AIDS can be stalled for decades.

AIDS is defined by a person's CD4 cell count, also known as T-cell count, which are cells that belong to the body's immune system that detect bacteria and viruses. When the CD4 cell count drops below 200 cells/ mm³, an HIV infected person is considered to have developed AIDS.

Symptoms

There are some symptoms associated with the development of AIDS. They include:

- Chills
- Fever
- Sweats (particularly at night)
- Swollen lymph glands
- Weakness
- Weight loss

Sometimes when a person develops AIDS, they don't experience any symptoms directly associated with the disease. Instead, they find themselves constantly afflicted by ailments and diseases that they contracted due to their severely weakened immune system. Once the CD4 cell count drops below 350 cells/mm³ the following conditions can develop:

- **Herpes Simplex Virus:** this is the STD that most people think of when they think of herpes. This virus causes lesions in the genital area as well as in the mouth.
- **Herpes Zoster Virus (Shingles):** this is the type of herpes that is associated with chicken pox. Even if someone has had chicken pox, those with HIV/AIDS are much more susceptible to this type of infection.
- **Kaposi's Sarcoma:** this is a type of cancer caused by the herpes (HHV-8) virus. This virus can affect people with any CD4 count but those with a low count are much more susceptible.
- **Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma:** cancer of the lymph nodes.
- **Vaginal and oral yeast infections**
- **Tuberculosis:** a highly contagious bacterial infection that typically affects the lungs, but can affect other organs as well.

When the CD4 cell count drop below 200 cells/mm³ the following conditions can develop:

- **Bacillary Angiomatosis:** this is an infection of the skin caused by the Bartonella bacteria, which can be caused by scratches from a cat.
- **Candida Esophagitis:** this is a type of yeast infection of the esophagus.
- **Pneumocystis Jiroveci Pneumonia:** called PCP pneumonia, is a type of pneumonia caused by a fungus. This type of pneumonia was often what killed most early AIDS patients.

Once the CD4 cell count drops below 100 cells/mm³ these conditions are possible:

- **AIDS Dementia:** this affects the mental functions of the patient.
- **Cryptococcal Meningitis:** fungal infection of the lining of the brain.
- **Cryptosporidium Diarrhea:** severe diarrhea caused by a parasitic infection in the digestive tract.
- **Progressive Multifocal Leukoencephalopathy:** a disease of the brain that is caused by the JC virus that results in a decline in mental functions.
- **Toxoplasma Encephalitis:** this is an infection of the brain that is caused by the toxoplasma gondii that is commonly found in cat feces and causes lesions in the brain.
- **Wasting Syndrome:** severe weight loss caused by the virus itself.

Once CD4 count drops below 50 cells/mm³ the following conditions can develop;

- **Cytomegalovirus Infection:** this viral infection affects most of the organ systems of the body
- **Mycobacterium Avium:** this is a serious blood infection caused by a bacterium related to tuberculosis.

Treatment

There is no cure for AIDS. Highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART) has been an effective treatment for HIV and has prolonged the lives of millions by keeping AIDS from ever developing. However, once AIDS develops, there is no way to stop it.

The AIDS virus is not what causes death. What causes death are opportunistic infections, such as those listed above. An infection that wouldn't cause much of a problem in a healthy person can be fatal to an AIDS patient. If left untreated, AIDS is always fatal. With treatment the patient's lifespan can be extended, but not cured. Research is ongoing to find a cure.

Prognosis

The prognosis for AIDS patients is grim. Eventually a person with AIDS will die. Those who suffer from AIDS will, eventually, contract an infection that their body cannot fight off. However, thanks to HAART, this doesn't happen as quickly as it once did. People are living for decades before AIDS develops, instead of the mere months or a few years that they lived in the late 80's and early 90's.

Prevention of HIV is the best medicine. Hopefully one day research will provide a cure, but by preventing the spread of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, we can prevent the development of and deaths associated with AIDS.

10 Common Myths about HIV and Aids

The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is a very serious virus that cannot be cured, while acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) is the final stage of HIV. There are many myths about HIV and AIDS that have been spread around over the years. The following are some of the most common myths along with the truth about these two conditions.

Myth #1: HIV is the same thing as AIDS.

This is a common misunderstanding. HIV is actually a virus that can lead to AIDS. Therefore, not all people with HIV have AIDS. In fact, many people live with HIV for many years without having AIDS.

Myth #2: You can get HIV from kissing or other casual contact.

Because people hear that HIV is spread by bodily fluids, they assume that kissing is one of the ways that the virus can be transmitted. Fortunately, saliva is not one of the bodily fluids that can carry the virus (only semen, vaginal secretions, blood and breast milk can). Likewise, you can't get HIV from other forms of casual contact like sharing food utensils, sharing bedding, using the toilet or swimming in public pools.

Myth #3: You can tell if someone has HIV.

HIV is associated with some symptoms. For example, people normally display flu-like symptoms within a month or two of becoming infected. These symptoms are often very mild and often go unnoticed or are assumed to be symptoms of another condition. Unfortunately, the period immediately following initial infection is when a person is most likely to spread the virus to another person. In addition, there are many people who experience no symptoms of the virus for up to 10 years after infection.

Myth #4: If both my partner and I have HIV, we don't need to use protection.

Two individuals infected with HIV should still use a condom when having sex due to the fact that there are different strains of the virus. Getting multiple strains of HIV, especially those which are drug-resistant, can make difficult for treatments to work.

Myth #5: If a pregnant woman has HIV, she will spread the disease to her baby.

Women with HIV are faced with the risk of transmission to their child when they become pregnant. In fact, HIV can be spread during pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding. However, if a woman is aware of her HIV status early in the pregnancy and it is treated, the risk of the baby being infected with the virus is only about 2 percent. Without treatment, the risk is about 25 percent. Women with HIV should not breastfeed their children to reduce the risk of transmission.

Myth #6: Women can't give men HIV.

Some people are under the impression that women can't give HIV to a man when having vaginal or anal sex. Women can pass HIV to a man through sexual contact, but the risk for woman-to-man transmission is much lower than man-to-woman transmission in these circumstances. The reason is that when an infected man has sex with a woman, the semen can remain inside her body for several days, increasing her risk of infection. However, it's still important to use protection when an infected woman has sex with a man since the virus could enter the body through the penis while it is in a woman's vagina or rectum.

Myth #7: If I have HIV, I don't need drug therapy until I get sick.

Many people with HIV feel perfectly fine even though they are infected with the disease. However, even those who feel great should begin drug therapy for HIV as soon as possible to help protect their immune system. Otherwise, the body will be much weaker by the time an infected person does get sick. The medications used in HIV drug therapy help reduce the amount of the virus in your blood while also reducing the risk of passing HIV onto another person.

Myth #8: HIV and AIDS are a problem in Africa, but not in the rest of the world.

It's true that the majority of people with HIV and AIDS live in sub-Saharan Africa. However, it is still a problem in other areas of the world, especially those where there are issues of poverty, conflict or inequality. In addition, tourism, migration and business travel can transport HIV across national boundaries.

Myth #9: HIV would go away if people stopped using illegal drugs and having promiscuous sex.

Although unprotected sex and drug use are the main methods of transmission, the problem is not as simple as it appears. HIV is often spread due to lack of education regarding prevention along with problems with gender or racial inequality, economic insecurity or armed conflict.

Myth #10: We are close to finding a cure for HIV and AIDS.

Researchers are constantly working towards a vaccine or a cure for HIV and AIDS. Unfortunately, none have been successful thus far and most experts agree that an effective HIV or AIDS vaccine is many years away.

Bottom Line

The CDC recommends that everyone get tested for HIV at least once. Knowing your HIV or AIDS status is one of the best ways of preventing the spread of the virus to others and to protect your health. Ask your doctor or contact a local health clinic for information about getting tested for HIV.

Chlamydia

Often considered a silent disease, as many as 1 out of 4 men who are infected with chlamydia will show no symptoms, while only an estimated 30 percent of women will show signs or symptoms of the infection, says the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Chlamydia is the most common sexually transmitted infection (STI), where individuals who engage in sexual activity with multiple partners are the most at risk. Read on to learn more about this STI and what you can do to prevent it.

Definition

Chlamydia is an STI that is caused by the *chlamydia trachomatis* bacterium. It can be spread through vaginal, anal or oral sex with an infected individual. Women who are pregnant can also pass the infection to their babies during childbirth. Even though the symptoms associated with this infection are typically mild or absent all together, serious complications can arise from them that result in irreversible damage, including infertility. However, there is a substantial amount of underreporting and information on chlamydia because so many men and women who have chlamydia are completely unaware of it and are not seeking testing or treatment.

Symptoms

Chlamydia is often regarded as a silent disease because a vast amount of affected men and women will have no symptoms of chlamydia to speak of, meaning that they are completely unaware of having the infection. When symptoms do occur, they usually only appear within one to three weeks following exposure to the infection.

In women, the primary infection points are the cervix and the urethra. Women who have symptoms usually experience:

- Abnormal vaginal discharge
- Painful urination, often described as a burning sensation
- Lower abdominal pain that can go all the way to the lower back
- Fever
- Nausea
- Vaginal bleeding between periods
- Painful intercourse

Men with chlamydia may experience the following symptoms:

- A discharge from the penis
- Burning sensation during urination
- Burning, itching and irritation around the opening of the penis
- Pain and swelling of the testicles

Other symptoms of chlamydia can appear in other areas of the body aside from the genitalia. This includes:

- Pain and discharge from the rectum when the infection is obtained via anal sex.
- Signs and symptoms that appear around the throat due to an infection obtained through oral sex.

Individuals who learn that they may have been exposed to chlamydia should seek medical attention immediately. Though they may not be experiencing symptoms, early diagnosis and treatment is crucial for preventing the spread of the infection.

Causes and Risk Factors

The primary cause of chlamydia transmission is having unprotected sex with someone who is infected. Symptoms do not have to be present in order for chlamydia to be transmitted. The surest way to prevent the spread of *chlamydia trachomatis* is simply to abstain from sex or to always have protected sex. It is also important to keep in mind that the infection can be transmitted through all forms of sex, including anal and oral sex. Those most at risk for becoming infected by chlamydia are:

- Individuals who are sexually active
- People who sex with multiple partners
- Anyone who has unprotected sex

Tests and Diagnosis

Because most chlamydia infections do not show symptoms, the best way to diagnose the presence of chlamydia bacteria is through laboratory tests. A physician is likely to test any discharge from the penis or vagina for the presence of *chlamydia trachomatis*. Urine samples can also be tested to help with diagnosis. Individuals who may have obtained chlamydia through anal sex may require samples from the rectum to be taken to assist with diagnosis.

Treatment

Fortunately, chlamydia can be treated and cured through the use of antibiotics. A single dose of an antibiotic like azithromycin or a weekly routine of doxycycline is usually enough to rid the body of a chlamydia infection. For treatment of chlamydia, it is recommended you see a physician first for the right chlamydia antibiotics and diagnosis. Since chlamydia is often accompanied by other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), like gonorrhea or syphilis, you may be screened for other STDs during your doctor's visit.

It is also important that your partners also get screened and treated for chlamydia to prevent the spread of the infection. According to the NIH, it is possible to become infected by *chlamydia trachomatis* since there is no significant immunity after becoming infected. This is why it is so important to practice safe sex.

Prevention

Individuals who are sexually active, have multiple partners, and/or have had unprotected sex should be screened regularly for chlamydia. The proper and consistent use of condoms during intercourse is the best way to prevent infection. If you discover that you are infected with chlamydia, it is important to notify your sex partner(s) so that they may be screened and treated to prevent the STI from spreading any further.

Gonorrhea

Known colloquially as "the clap", gonorrhea is one of many, widespread sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Though it is easily treated, many don't seek treatment, which can have devastating long-term side effects. Here you'll find all the information needed to understand and seek treatment for gonorrhea.

What Is It?

Gonorrhea is a disease that is easily transmitted through any type of sexual contact. Oral, anal or vaginal sex will spread the disease if one partner is infected. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there are more than 700,000 cases of gonorrhea/year.

Gonorrhea is caused by the bacteria *Neisseria Gonorrhoeae*. This bacterium thrives in warm, moist environments including the female reproductive tract, urethra, mouth, anus, and even the eyes if exposed. Ejaculation is not necessary for gonorrhea to spread. Those who are most likely to be diagnosed with gonorrhea are those who:

- Have multiple sexual partners
- Abuse alcohol or other drugs
- Have a partner with a previous history of STDs
- Do not use condoms

If someone is diagnosed with gonorrhea, the Board of Health for the state that they live in will be contacted. This is done to ensure follow-up care is obtained as well as to find past partners to test them in an effort to prevent further spreading of the disease.

Symptoms

The symptoms of gonorrhea can be somewhat deceptive. They are often so mild that people don't know there is a problem. Here is a comprehensive guide to the various symptoms of gonorrhea between men and women:

Men: Some men have no symptoms at all, while others will develop symptoms 1 to 14 days after infection, though it can take up to a month for symptoms to appear.

- Burning during urination
- Increased frequency of urination
- White, yellow or green discharge from the penis
- Red or swollen urethra (opening in the penis)
- Painful or swollen testicles

Women: Most women have no symptoms at all. If they do, they are often mild and are easily misdiagnosed as a vaginal or urinary tract infection. Symptoms usually appear within 2-5 days, though it can take longer.

- Burning during urination
- Increased frequency of urination
- Increased vaginal discharge
- Bleeding between periods
- Painful sexual intercourse
- Severe pain in lower abdomen and Fever

Anal Infections: Symptoms are similar for both men and women.

- Discharge
- Anal itching
- Soreness
- Bleeding
- Pain during bowel movements

Throat Infections: Throat infections rarely cause any symptoms. The only known symptom of a throat infection is a sore throat.

If the infection spreads to the bloodstream symptoms will include a fever, rash and arthritis-like symptoms. A doctor will typically perform culture tests to determine if the symptoms are in fact gonorrhea. If someone is diagnosed with gonorrhea, they should be tested for other STDs, including HIV, since it's possible to have multiple infections at the same time, and these infections can cause complications with HIV.

Treatment

Because gonorrhea is a bacterial infection, most cases can easily be treated with a type of antibiotic called cephalosporin. It is marketed under several different names and is related to penicillin, so those with an allergy to penicillin should be sure that their doctor is aware of the allergy to prevent a reaction. Cephalosporin medications are available as an oral tablet or as an injectable medication.

While no studies have been performed on humans, there have been no reports of adverse effects on unborn babies whose mothers were treated with cephalosporin. Pregnant women who contract gonorrhea should get treatment immediately due to the risk of the infection spreading to the baby.

There has been a disturbing emergence of cephalosporin resistant strains of gonorrhea, making treatment more difficult than it had been in the past. Because the control strategy for gonorrhea in the United States depends exclusively on antibiotic medications, strains of the bacteria that are resistant to treatment pose a big problem. So when doctors perform the tests to determine if someone is actually infected with gonorrhea, they will also determine the strain of the bacteria.

If a person is infected with a drug resistant strain, the doctor may recommend a treatment approach that uses cephalosporin in conjunction with another medication, either azithromycin or doxycycline. If it is found that someone is infected with a resistant strain, their doctor will monitor the condition closely to ensure that treatment is effective.

Complications

If left untreated, gonorrhea can cause serious, permanent health problems:

- In women, gonorrhea can cause a condition called Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID). About 750,000 women develop PID each year, and it can lead to internal abscesses that are difficult to treat. It can also lead to ectopic pregnancy and infertility.
- If left untreated in men, gonorrhea can cause epididymitis, a very painful condition that affects the testicles and can lead to infertility.

- If a woman is pregnant, she can spread the infection to her baby during birth. This can be life threatening to the baby, leading to blindness, blood or joint infections.
- Anyone with untreated gonorrhea faces the risk of the disease spreading to the blood and joints which can be life threatening. Those with gonorrhea can also contract and transmit other STDs more easily, including HIV.

Prevention

Prevention of gonorrhea is simple. The easiest way to prevent the spread is to abstain from sexual activity. Sexual partners can also be tested before having sex to ensure neither is infected. Condoms are highly effective at preventing the spread of disease and should be used consistently and correctly. There are now condoms made of materials that are safe for those with latex allergies, though lamb skin may not be effective at preventing the spread of the disease.

HPV and Genital Warts

The human papillomavirus, also known as HPV for short, affects millions of people each year, though many never know that they are affected. There have been more than 100 different strains of HPV identified, but only a handful of those strains cause problems. Here readers can learn all the information that they need to understand HPV.

Definition

HPV is a group of over 150 related viruses, and is one of the most common types of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in the United States. At any given time there are roughly 20 million Americans infected with HPV, and each year another 6 million become infected, according to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). There are approximately 40 different types that can infect genitals as well as the mouth and throat. Most people who have HPV don't know that they have it. HPV is not the same as herpes or HIV, although they are often mistaken for one another. It can be classified as low-risk or high-risk, where low-risk causes less serious diseases and conditions, like genital warts, while high-risk HPV can lead to something more serious like cancers of the cervix.

HPV's Effects on the Body

There are two conditions that are caused by HPV:

- **Genital warts:** Genital warts are caused by types 6 and 11 of the various HPV strains and these are considered low-risk strains. Genital warts affect the genitals as well as the anus if a person was infected through anal sex. The warts may appear within a few weeks of infection, or they may take months or years to occur. In some cases they never appear at all. Treatment is available for genital warts, although it is highly individualized and treatment is prescribed by a doctor.
- **Cancer:** The most serious condition caused by HPV is cancer. Nearly all cervical cancer is caused by some type of HPV virus, and both low and high risk strains can cause cancer, however 70 percent of all cervical cancer is caused by types 16 and 18. HPV can cause other types of genital and anal cancers as well. Cancer is treatable, but the prognosis of the patient depends greatly on how far the cancer has progressed.

Symptoms

HPV infections themselves present little to no symptoms. The symptoms that someone with HPV experiences are associated with the problems that they cause such as genital warts or cancer, although these conditions themselves often go unnoticed with no symptoms.

Genital warts are characterized by a bump or group of bumps in the genital area. The bump can be large or small, raised, flat or have a cauliflower-like appearance. Warts can appear at any time after infection, or they may never appear at all. Without treatment they may go away, remain unchanged, or they could increase in size and number. One thing that they will never do is turn into cancer. But they can be spread to others.

Cancer typically has no signs or symptoms until it is in advanced stages and very difficult to treat. The good news is that by getting regular pap smears women can decrease their risk of death from the cancer. Men should also get a yearly physical exam as well.

Another condition that is caused by HPV, though it is much rarer than the others previously mentioned, is something called recurrent respiratory papillomatosis, or RRP. This condition causes warts to grow in the throat and the upper respiratory tract. These can be quite serious, as they can block the airway causing a hoarse voice and problems breathing.

Treatment

There is no treatment for HPV itself, but there is treatment available for the conditions it causes.

- Visible genital warts can be treated by the patient at home with prescribed medication, removed by a physician professionally, or left alone to see if they disappear on their own. There isn't any single treatment that is better than the other; it's just a matter of preference.
- The cancers caused by HPV are easier to treat the earlier they are discovered. By getting regular physical exams, cancers of the genitals and anus can be caught early and treated in a number of ways. A doctor will decide the best way to treat the cancer, based on each individual situation.
- RRP can be treated with medication and surgery. Treatment may need to be repeated over several years to ensure that all warts are removed.

Prevention

The easiest way to treat HPV is to prevent its spread. The best way to prevent the spread of HPV is to engage in safe sex practices. People should only engage in sex when they are in a committed, mutually monogamous relationship. Those who are not involved in a relationship of this nature should always use a condom every time they have sex. Consistent, proper use of condoms can prevent most cases of HPV from spreading.

There are also vaccines available that have shown to be effective at preventing someone from contracting certain types of HPV, those most often associated with genital warts and cancer. These vaccines have been shown to be highly effective, but they must be administered to girls between certain ages only. Boys can receive one of the vaccines as well if they or their parent's desire.

Genital Herpes

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are often misunderstood. Many people have made false assumptions about these conditions based on inaccurate or incomplete information they've received over the years. However, it's important to know the truth about STDs in order to protect both yourself and your partner. In this article, you'll find the symptoms and causes of genital herpes, one of the most common STDs, along with how it can be prevented and treated.

Definition

Genital herpes is an STD that occurs when a person contracts the herpes simplex virus. There are two types of this virus: herpes simplex virus type 1 (HSV-1) and herpes simplex virus type 2 (HSV-2). The majority of cases of genital herpes are caused by HSV-2. This particular type of the virus is widespread; according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about one in six people ages 14 to 49 have the HSV-2 virus.

The genital herpes virus is located in and released from sores caused by the virus. However, it may also be passed through skin that does not appear to have any sores. The misconception that many individuals have is that the virus can only be spread when a person is having an outbreak that causes visible sores. Unfortunately, many people contract the virus by having unprotected sexual contact with someone infected with the virus between outbreaks, thinking that they are safe from possible infection.

Symptoms

Most people first realize they have genital herpes when they see sores in their genital area. This is considered to be an outbreak of the virus, which may occur as seldom as once per year or so often that the symptoms are basically continuous. However, some people with the HSV-2 virus never get sores, so it's important to understand the other symptoms associated with the disease, including:

- Small, painful blisters filled with clear or straw-colored liquid. These may be found on the genital area, the anus, the thighs and the buttocks. In some cases, they may also appear on the tongue, mouth, gums, lips or fingers. These sores are often the worst during the first outbreak.
- A tingling, burning or itchy feeling on the skin before blisters appear
- Decreased appetite
- Fever
- Malaise
- Muscle aches in the lower back, thighs, knees or buttocks
- Swollen and tender lymph nodes in the groin area
- Painful urination

It's important to note that some of the people who never get sores from the virus also experience very mild symptoms, so they may never realize they have the disease unless they get tested.

Causes and Risk Factors

The cause of genital herpes is HSV-1 or HSV-2 (in most cases, it is HSV-2) that is spread through sexual contact. This is more likely to occur during an outbreak, but it can also be spread between outbreaks as well. Because of this, some people spread the virus before they even find out that they have the virus.

There are two main risk factors for the disease. Women are more likely to have genital herpes than men due to the fact that it is spread more easily from a man to a woman than from a woman to a man. Additionally, having many sexual partners can increase your risk for the disease since it is spread through sexual contact.

Prevention

The best way to prevent genital herpes is to abstain from sexual activity with someone who has visible sores, since this is the time when the disease is most transferrable. In addition, you should use a latex condom during sexual contact to prevent the spread of genital herpes even when no sores are present. It is also helpful to limit the number of sexual partners to reduce your risk for contracting the virus.

Women with genital herpes also need to tell their doctor if they become pregnant. Since the virus can be spread during delivery, these women may be instructed to take an antiviral medication late in their pregnancy to prevent the spread of the disease to the baby. If an outbreak is present when a woman goes into labor, the doctor will likely suggest a C-section instead of a vaginal delivery.

Treatment

The most important step in treatment is to first find out if you have the genital herpes virus. Those who have had unprotected sex or multiple sexual partners should consider getting tested for the disease, which can be done with a simple physical exam and blood test.

There is no cure for genital herpes, but it can be treated with prescription antiviral medications. The most common brand names for this drug are Famvir, Valtrex and Zovirax. These drugs help the sores heal quicker, lessen the severity of symptoms, and reduce the frequency of outbreaks. Additionally, they may help to prevent the spread of the virus. Depending on the prescription, these drugs may be taken daily or only during outbreaks. During very serious outbreaks, an individual may be hospitalized so that they can receive the antiviral medication intravenously until their symptoms subside.

Pelvic Inflammatory Disease

Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID) is a serious condition that affects countless women each year. The rate of PID is highest among teens and each year more than 100,000 women become infertile as a result of leaving PID untreated. Almost 15 percent of women will suffer with PID at some point in their lives and it is thought that a large portion of the more than 700,000 ectopic pregnancies each year are a result of PID. The good news is that PID is easily treated.

What Is It?

Pelvic inflammatory disease is an infection of a woman's reproductive organs. It is typically the result of a sexually transmitted disease, though there are other causes, and occurs when bacteria spread from the vagina to the rest of the reproductive system. It can cause pain, although some women experience no pain at all. If left untreated, it can result in infertility. Some women are unaware that they have PID until they develop chronic pain or experience difficulties getting pregnant. If left untreated, abscess can form in the reproductive organs. These can be very painful and even life threatening if they rupture.

Causes and Risk Factors

The cause of pelvic inflammatory disease is a bacterial infection. The bacteria can come from a number of sources, but it most often comes from a sexually transmitted disease, like gonorrhea or chlamydia. In fact, sexually transmitted diseases cause 90 percent of all cases of PID. Though STDs are by far the most common cause, it is not the only cause of PID.

- The use of an intrauterine device (IUD) for birth control does present an increased risk for PID. The implantation of an IUD can allow for bacteria to enter the reproductive organs and cause PID.
- Childbirth, miscarriage or abortion can also cause PID. The changes that occur during these events make it easier for bacteria to enter the reproductive organs through the cervix.
- An endometrial biopsy, which removes a piece of the uterine lining for laboratory testing, can also introduce bacteria into the uterus where it can then travel to fallopian tubes or ovaries.

Those most at risk of contracting pelvic inflammatory disease are:

- Sexually active women under 25 years of age.
- Having multiple sexual partners.
- Being involved with someone who has multiple sexual partners.
- Having an IUD inserted in the recent past.
- Douching frequently. This disrupts the natural balance of bacteria in the vagina and can allow bad bacteria to grow, which then infect the higher reproductive tract and organs.
- Having a history of STDs or PID.

Symptoms

Some women with pelvic inflammatory disease may experience very mild symptoms or no symptoms at all. This can make treating the infection difficult. If a woman does experience any symptoms at all they can often be ambiguous. These symptoms include:

- Pain in the lower abdomen or pelvis
- Pain in the lower back
- Odor and heavy discharge from the vagina
- Bleeding between periods or irregular periods
- Painful intercourse
- Fever
- Fatigue
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Painful or difficult urination.

If a woman experiences severe pain in the lower abdomen, a high fever (over 101⁰ F), signs of shock, such as fainting or excessive vomiting, should go to the emergency room immediately as this could be the sign of something very serious.

Treatment

Fortunately, treatment of pelvic inflammatory disease is relatively simple, provided the infection is caught early. If the infection progresses, other treatments may be required.

- Antibiotics are the most commonly used form of treatment for PID. A doctor may prescribe multiple antibiotics to treat PID until the actual bacteria that caused the infection is identified. The medications may then be adjusted. If the cause of PID is a sexually transmitted disease, then the woman's partner needs to be tested and treated as well. Partners should abstain from sex until the infection is cleared.
- In some situations, hospitalization with intravenous antibiotics may be required. This is usually what happens if a woman is pregnant, HIV-positive or does not respond to oral antibiotics.
- In more severe cases of PID abscesses may develop. If this happens, a doctor may need to drain the abscesses, and this will require surgery. This is a last resort because of the risks associated with surgery.

Prevention

Because 90 percent of PID is caused by sexually transmitted infections, safe sex practices can virtually eliminate the risk of contracting this condition. Prevention includes:

- Using a condom each time a person has sex unless involved in a long term, mutually monogamous relationship.
- Get tested for STDs regularly.
- Have partner get tested for STDs regularly.
- Don't douche frequently.
- Practice good personal hygiene.

Pelvic inflammatory disease can be devastating and have long term damaging effects. But by being responsible about sexual activity and paying attention to one's body, the risk of contracting PID is very low and the long term effects can be minimized.

Syphilis

Syphilis affects many people every year in the United States, but it doesn't have to. By understanding what syphilis is, how it's spread and how it can be prevented, people can protect themselves from this sexually transmitted disease (STD). Here readers can gain a better understanding of syphilis and how to protect themselves.

Definition

Syphilis is one of the most common STDs in the United States. It is known as "the great imitator" because its symptoms are very broad and can often be misdiagnosed as other conditions. According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there are more than 36,000 cases of syphilis diagnosed each year. Of those, most are diagnosed in people who are 20 to 39 years of age. It is especially prevalent in women ages 20 to 24, and in men ages 35 to 39. Syphilis can be spread to a child during pregnancy and birth and can have debilitating effects, eventually leading to the death of the child if left untreated.

Causes and Risk Factors

Syphilis is caused by the bacterium *Treponema pallidum*. Syphilis is passed from one person to another through contact with a syphilis sore. The sores are usually painless and can go unnoticed. Sores can be found on the external genitals, vagina, penis or in the anus. They can also occur in the mouth as a result of contact during oral sex or kissing if someone has an open sore in his or her mouth. Syphilis is not transmitted through contact with toilet seats, or through swimming pools, hot tubs, eating utensils or other casual means.

- Once a person is infected with the bacterium, it can lay dormant in the body for years or even decades. This can make it very difficult to pinpoint where the disease came from.
- Syphilis is contagious during the primary and secondary stages. Occasionally it can be transmitted in the early latent period of the disease as well. Even if a person is cured of syphilis, he or she can be re-infected from contact with another syphilis lesion.
- Having syphilis puts a person at a higher risk of contracting HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. It's easier for the virus to enter the body when there are open syphilis sores present on the genitals or in the mouth.

Symptoms

The symptoms of syphilis vary greatly and are separated into four stages. The symptoms can be very vague, making diagnosis difficult. Often syphilis can be misdiagnosed as many other conditions.

Primary Stage

During the primary stage of syphilis, a sore called a chancre (pronounced shang-kur) develops. This sore marks the point of entry into the body for the infection. This sore is usually painless and can go unnoticed because it is concealed within the vagina or anus. The chancre usually develops within three weeks of infection and clears up on its own in about six weeks.

Secondary Stage

Within a few weeks of the original chancre healing, someone who is infected with syphilis many develop a rash that begins on the trunk but spreads to the rest of the body, including the palms and soles of the feet. This rash is often misdiagnosed as a simple viral rash which is allowed to run its course instead of being treated with medication.

The rash may be accompanied by wart-like sores in the mouth or genitals, muscle aches, fever, sore throat and swollen lymph nodes. These symptoms may disappear on their own or they could come and go frequently for up to a year.

Late or Latent Stage

In this stage, syphilis typically has no symptoms at all. If left untreated a person can remain in this stage of the condition for the rest of his or her life, or the disease can progress to the next stage.

Tertiary or Late Stage

This is the final stage of syphilis. About 15 to 30 percent of people with the disease progress to this stage. In the tertiary stage, damage to other systems in the body occurs including the brain, heart, blood vessels, eyes, nerves, liver, bones and joints. This occurs many years after the initial infection if the disease is left untreated.

Treatment

Treatment for syphilis is very simple if caught in the early stages. Penicillin derivatives are highly effective at treating the infection. However, for those allergic to penicillin, their doctor can recommend other antibiotics that are also effective. Currently, the only approved treatment for syphilis in pregnant women is penicillin, so a pregnant woman may need to go through a desensitization process before she can be treated. If a pregnant woman is treated for syphilis, her child will need to be treated as well upon birth.

If caught within the first year, a single injection of penicillin may be all that is needed to cure the infection. Infections that have been present for more than a year may need additional doses but a doctor will monitor the infection with blood work to determine how much penicillin is needed. Sometimes a combined therapy of penicillin injections and pills may be used as well.

After the penicillin injections, a person may experience something called Jarisch-Herxheimer reaction. Symptoms of this reaction include fever, chills, achy pain, headache and nausea. The symptoms will typically only last one day and are not life threatening.

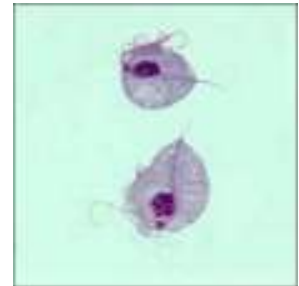
After treatment, a person may be asked to undergo additional testing for other STDs, including HIV, as well as notifying previous sexual partners so that they can be tested and treated as well.

Syphilis is definitely not the end of the world and is easily treated, leaving no lasting effects. However, the best offense is a good defense. By practicing safe sex, people can prevent the spread of syphilis by virtually eliminating their risk of contracting it. When it comes to STDs an ounce of prevention really is worth a pound of cure.

Trichomoniasis - CDC Fact Sheet

What is Trichomoniasis?

Trichomoniasis (or “trich”) is a very common sexually transmitted disease (STD) that is caused by infection with a protozoan parasite called *Trichomonas vaginalis*. Although symptoms of the disease vary, most women and men who have the parasite cannot tell they are infected.



How Common is Trichomoniasis?

Trichomoniasis is considered the most common curable STD. In the United States, an estimated 3.7 million people have the infection, but only about 30% develop any symptoms of trichomoniasis. Infection is more common in women than in men, and older women are more likely than younger women to have been infected.

How do People get Trichomoniasis?

The parasite is passed from an infected person to an uninfected person during sex. In women, the most commonly infected part of the body is the lower genital tract (vulva, vagina, or urethra), and in men, the most commonly infected body part is the inside of the penis (urethra). During sex, the parasite is usually transmitted from a penis to a vagina, or from a vagina to a penis, but it can also be passed from a vagina to another vagina. It is not common for the parasite to infect other body parts, like the hands, mouth, or anus. It is unclear why some people with the infection get symptoms while others do not, but it probably depends on factors like the person’s age and overall health. Infected people without symptoms can still pass the infection on to others.

What are the Signs and Symptoms of Trichomoniasis?

About 70% of infected people do not have any signs or symptoms. When trichomoniasis does cause symptoms, they can range from mild irritation to severe inflammation. Some people with symptoms get them within 5 to 28 days after being infected, but others do not develop symptoms until much later. Symptoms can come and go.

Men with trichomoniasis may feel itching or irritation inside the penis, burning after urination or ejaculation, or some discharge from the penis.

Women with trichomoniasis may notice itching, burning, redness or soreness of the genitals, discomfort with urination, or a thin discharge with an unusual smell that can be clear, white, yellowish, or greenish.

Having trichomoniasis can make it feel unpleasant to have sex. Without treatment, the infection can last for months or even years.

What are the Complications of Trichomoniasis?

Trichomoniasis can increase the risk of getting or spreading other sexually transmitted infections. For example, trichomoniasis can cause genital inflammation that makes it easier to get infected with the HIV virus, or to pass the HIV virus on to a sex partner.

How does Trichomoniasis Affect a Pregnant Woman and her Baby?

Pregnant women with trichomoniasis are more likely to have their babies too early (preterm delivery). Also, babies born to infected mothers are more likely to have an officially low birth weight (less than 5.5 pounds).

How is Trichomoniasis Diagnosed?

It is not possible to diagnose trichomoniasis based on symptoms alone. For both men and women, your primary care doctor or another trusted health care provider must do a check and a laboratory test to diagnose trichomoniasis.

What is the Treatment for Trichomoniasis?

Trichomoniasis can be cured with a single dose of prescription antibiotic medication (either metronidazole or tinidazole), pills which can be taken by mouth. It is okay for pregnant women to take this medication. Some people who drink alcohol within 24 hours after taking this kind of antibiotic can have uncomfortable side effects.

People who have been treated for trichomoniasis can get it again. About 1 in 5 people get infected again within 3 months after treatment. To avoid getting reinfected, make sure that all of your sex partners get treated too, and wait to have sex again until all of your symptoms go away (about a week). Get checked again if your symptoms come back.

How can Trichomoniasis be Prevented?

Using latex condoms correctly every time you have sex will help reduce the risk of getting or spreading trichomoniasis. However, condoms don't cover everything, and it is possible to get or spread this infection even when using a condom.

The only sure way to prevent sexually transmitted infections is to avoid having sex entirely. Another approach is to talk about these kinds of infections before you have sex with a new partner, so that you can make informed choices about the level of risk you are comfortable taking with your sex life.

If you or someone you know has questions about trichomoniasis or any other STD, especially with symptoms like unusual discharge, burning during urination, or a sore in the genital area, check in with a health care provider and get some answers.

Vaginal Infections

What is Bacterial Vaginosis?

Vaginosis or vaginitis is an inflammation which occurs in the vagina and includes several strains of germ that cause bacterial vaginosis yeast infections and trichomoniasis. Many women mistakenly believe that yeast infections are the most common type of vaginal infection but bacterial vaginosis is the most frequently occurring vaginal infection affecting from 10% to 64% of the population at any given time.

Although treatment is available which quickly cures this infection if left untreated bacterial vaginosis may increase a woman's risk of pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) endometritis cervicitis pregnancy complications and post-operative infections among other health conditions.

Bacterial vaginosis occurs most during the reproductive years although women of all ages are susceptible to this infection that affects the vagina urethra bladder and skin in the genital area.

What Causes Bacterial Vaginosis?

Primary causes of bacterial vaginosis include an overgrowth of anaerobic bacteria and the Gardnerella organism. The healthy vagina includes a small amount of these bacteria and organisms. When the vaginal balance is disrupted by the overgrowth of these bacteria, another protective bacterium lactobacilli is unable to adequately perform its normal function.

Lactobacilli normally provides a natural disinfectant (similar to hydrogen peroxide) which helps maintain the healthy and normal balance of microorganisms in the vagina.

E. coli which is a normal inhabitant of the rectum can cause bacterial vaginitis if it is spread to the vaginal area. Other factors which may contribute include hot weather poor health poor hygiene use of an intrauterine device (IUD) for birth control and routine douching.

Risk of bacterial vaginosis increases with menopause and in women with diabetes as well as women whose resistance is lowered due to other conditions.

A report published in *Women's Health Weekly* indicates that multiple sex partners may increase a woman's risk of bacterial vaginosis although African-American women with only one partner still have a high prevalence of infection.

What Are the Symptoms of Bacterial Vaginosis?

The most obvious sign of bacterial infection is an unpleasant foul sometimes fishy odor. Itching and/or burning sometimes accompany bacterial infections but are not a required symptom for a diagnosis of bacterial vaginosis.

Many times women are unaware they are infected until they are diagnosed during a routine pelvic exam and Pap smear. It is important not to douche during the few days preceding a visit to your gynecologist as douching can hide signs of infection and may make bacterial vaginosis worse.

What is the Treatment for Bacterial Vaginosis?

The good news is that treatment is relatively simple and effective once proper diagnosis is made. Treatment usually consists of three to seven nights of Cleocin 2% vaginal cream. Oral antibiotic treatment is sometimes prescribed and may be available if you request it from your physician.

Although your symptoms may disappear before you finish your medication it's important that you complete your medication exactly as directed by your physician.

Preventing Vaginal Infections

- Always wipe from front to back after bowel movements to prevent E. coli from the rectum from entering the vagina.
- Douching is never a good idea. Douching may disrupt the fragile balance of natural organisms in the vagina which may lead to bacterial or yeast infection and may also cause the spread of infection up into the reproductive tract where it can do damage.
- Keep the vaginal area clean and dry. Wash before and after sex with an antibacterial cleanser and thoroughly dry the vaginal area to prevent moisture from creating a breeding ground for bacteria.
- Avoid tight clothing and always wear white cotton panties that help absorb moisture and allow air to circulate.
- Avoid scented or treated toilet paper personal hygiene products perfumes spermicides and harsh soaps or detergents if the vaginal area is irritated.
- Practice safe sex! Always use condoms to prevent STDs or other vaginal infections unless you are in a long-term monogamous relationship.
- Diaphragms cervical caps and medication applicators should be thoroughly cleaned after each use.

Remember if you experience signs of vaginal infection it is important that diagnosis is made by a physician--most vaginal infections are not yeast infections! Self-treatment with over-the-counter remedies for yeast infection will not cure a bacterial infection and may increase your risk of complications.

Yeast Infection (Candidiasis)

Yeast infections are considered an overgrowth of yeast in the body, also known as *Candida* species. Yeast is a type of fungus that thrives in warm, moist environments. Also known as candidiasis, yeast infections are usually treatable. Yeast is naturally found in the body and is usually regulated by the immune system and other essential bacteria in the body.

The more common types of yeast infections include oral thrush and genital candidiasis, which can happen to both men and women. Yeast infections can also happen to other parts of the body as well. If left untreated, the organism may spread to the blood and infect the body as a whole. Genital candidiasis can also be passed back and forth between sexual partners if left untreated.

Symptoms and Warning Signs

Symptoms for oral thrush may include:

- Thick, white patches in the mouth and/or tongue
- Redness, inflammation, or swollenness inside the mouth
- Painful cracks around the corners of the mouth
- Pain and difficulty eating or swallowing

Symptoms for genital candidiasis may include:

For men:

- Rash on the penis and/or surrounding genital area
- Red, patchy sores near the foreskin
- Severe itching and/or burning sensation
- White, milky discharge near the head of the penis

For women:

- Thick, cottage cheese-like vaginal discharge
- Strong vaginal odor
- Vaginal irritation, itchiness, and/or inflammation
- Pain during sexual intercourse
- Burning sensation when urinating

Any inflammation and irritation of the skin due to prolonged unventilated coverage may also be a sign of yeast infection, and not all symptoms need to be present for an infection to occur. If you are experiencing any of these warning signs, be sure to go to your doctor so he or she can prescribe the effective treatment. If symptoms worsen or are accompanied by chills and nausea, it may be a more serious illness caused by another organism.

Causes and Risk Factors

Yeast infections usually occur when immune systems are weakened. Hence, individuals suffering from immunodeficiency disorders, including but not limited to cancer patients, AIDS patients, and organ transplant receivers, may be more susceptible to candidiasis.

The *Candida* yeasts generally prefer warm, moist, and unventilated environments. Hence, skin areas not well-ventilated may be at risk for yeast infections, including but not limited to the skin in orthopedic casts used to set broken bones, genital areas, and even diaper rashes on babies.

Women are also more prone to yeast infections than men due to naturally occurring vaginal flora. A diet high in sugar and overly sweetened foods may also put an individual at risk, as it throws off the pH balance of the body. Unnecessary use of excessive antibiotic therapy can also increase risks due to decreased naturally-occurring essential bacteria that monitor the growth of yeast. Patients who have had yeast infections before are also at a higher risk of recurring infections. Thus, it is important to talk to your doctor when undergoing antibiotic treatments and follow the course of treatment completely as prescribed.

Prevention and Treatment

Simple lifestyle and diet changes can be made to help prevent yeast infection. Since yeasts prefer warm and moist environments, infections may be prevented by keeping the skin dry and well-ventilated. A decreased intake of sugars and overly sweetened foods may also help. For women undergoing antibiotic treatments for another illness, consuming foods rich in probiotics, such as yogurt, may help preserve vaginal flora and prevent yeast overgrowth.

Depending on the infection site, treatments consist of medication in different physical forms. Medicated mouth rinse liquids for oral thrush and topical ointments for the skin may be prescribed. Vaginal suppositories and creams, which are inserted into the vaginal canal via applicators, are also widely available for women as over-the-counter treatments.

It is important to consult your healthcare provider for the best course of treatment rather than seeking self-treatment, as *Candida* yeasts may also become resistant to antifungal medication over time if not properly diagnosed and treated by a physician. Treatment for yeast infections lasts between 3 to 7 days, and it is important to finish the entire course of treatment to avoid producing antifungal-resistant strains of yeast that may later re-infect the original site.

Tests and Diagnosis

To diagnose the problem, the doctor will usually take a culture sample of the growth from the infection site and examine it under a microscope to confirm the presence of the *Candida* yeast. Depending on the infection site, the culture sample may be saliva, vaginal or penile secretions, or a blood tissue sample. Usually, the sample will be examined under a microscope via wet mount to distinguish the yeast flora.

Since urinary tract infection for women also share very similar symptoms as that of genital candidiasis, doctors may also run a urine culture test for patients. It is important to have a medical professional diagnose the problem before any self-medication, so that proper treatment can be implemented.

Oral Sex and STDs: Transmission without Intercourse

Many people are under the assumption that oral sex is a safe way to be intimate while avoiding the risk of a sexually transmitted disease (STD). However, this is not the case. While you are less likely to become infected by an STD through oral sex than you would with sexual or anal intercourse, there is still a possibility that you can become afflicted from numerous diseases like HIV/AIDS, gonorrhea, herpes, syphilis and chlamydia.

What Is Oral Sex?

Oral sex is a category of sexual acts that are performed with the mouth around the penis, vagina or anus. The most common acts of oral sex that are performed between sexual partners are fellatio (mouth to penis) and cunnilingus (mouth to vagina). Oral sex is a personal choice and is a common sexual practice. While oral sex can be performed to avoid unwanted pregnancy, it does not prevent the transmission of an STD.

Oral Sex and STDs

There are various STDs that can be passed through oral sex. These STDs include:

- **Herpes:** Herpes can be transmitted through oral sex from contact with a sore in the mouth. If the person who is performing oral sex has a cold sore in his or her mouth, contact with the genitalia can lead to the transmission of herpes. This also works inversely, if the person receiving oral sex has a genital sore.
- **HPV:** The human papillomavirus, or genital warts, can be transmitted through oral sex from skin-to-skin contact from the mouth and genitalia or anus.
- **Gonorrhea:** Gonorrhea can be passed from bacteria found in bodily fluids. However, a gonorrhea infection does not necessarily have to be passed through bodily fluids, like semen. Touching an infected sex organ can result in infection. Since the bacteria that causes gonorrhea grows in warm, moist areas, people need to keep in mind that the cervix, uterus and urethra aren't the only places that fit this description; the throat and mouth is a suitable place for this bacterium to form as well.
- **HIV/AIDS:** Although the risk of infection is lower than anal or sexual intercourse, oral intercourse still poses some risk for transmitting HIV.

HIV from Oral Sex

A person performing oral sex is typically the one at risk for becoming infected by HIV, since the person receiving oral sex is mainly exposed to saliva, which contains extremely low concentrations of HIV. There are a number of factors that can lead to the transmission of HIV through oral sex. These factors include:

- Performing oral sex during a woman's menstrual period.
- Transmission of semen to the mouth during fellatio.
- HIV can pass through the tip of the penis or through an open wound on the penis.
- Oral ulcers, also known as canker sores.
- Bleeding gums can allow the transference of fluids.
- Genital sores, similar to the risk they pose for herpes through oral sex.
- Recent dental work.
- Any other open cuts, wounds or abrasions in or around the mouth.

Reducing the Risks of STDs through Oral Sex

Much like regular intercourse, the only surefire way to prevent an STD infection from oral sex is through abstinence. However, those who wish to be sexual intimate with their partner through the practice of oral sex can follow these guidelines that fall under safe sex practices:

- Using a condom during fellatio.
- Using a dental dam, which is a sheet of latex, during cunnilingus.
- Plastic food wrap can possibly substitute a condom or dental dam, though latex is preferred for preventing skin-to-skin contact and the transference of bodily fluids.
- Dental dams and food wrap can also be used for oral to anal stimulation.
- Avoid the use of food products with condoms or dental dams as there is a possibility they may break the latex.

- Avoid oral sex if your mouth is in poor health. Bleeding gums, canker sores and any open wounds or abrasions in or around the mouth can expose you to STDs.
- A cut condom can be substituted for a dental dam and can be used in place of a dental dam.

Factors to Keep In Mind

- A protective barrier used during oral sex will only prevent infection from the covered areas. If a portion of the genitalia is not covered, there is still a risk for exposure to an STD.
- Further study is necessary to prove the effectiveness of plastic wrap for preventing exposure to STDs during oral sex. A latex product like condoms or a dental dam are the most suitable choices.
- STDs can still pass even if a man does not ejaculate. Pre-ejaculate fluid can contain organisms like gonorrhea or chlamydia.

Talking to Your Teens about Sexual Issues and Safe Sex

How to Talk So Your Teens Listen

Here are his suggestions for talking to your teens about sexual issues, including safe sex.

Your teenager depends on you for information about values, love and relationships, not just in word, but indeed. Here are a few suggestions that may help you and other parents who struggle with communicating about sexual issues with their teens:

- **“If you can’t talk about it, you shouldn’t be doing it.”** Usually, I suggest this rule of thumb to youth who are becoming sexually active to encourage sexual responsibility and communication about condoms. It seems to apply to parents who are queasy about providing condoms to their teens as well. Talk with your teen about your concerns. Be honest with your struggles. Explore your feelings and share them. Discuss with your son or daughter the positive and negative consequences that sex can have on our lives. You may even want to suggest this helpful phrase to them.
- **Talking is difficult but important.** It may be confusing and difficult to explain your concerns. You may feel embarrassed. What a great opportunity this is to role model for your teen about healthy communication. You are the greatest role model your teen has.
- Keep in mind, your teen may not want to talk about it. **Show that you are interested without demanding intimate details.** Teens want their privacy and have most of the facts about sex and pregnancy, but they also want their parents to be involved in their lives. Take advantage of natural opportunities to talk. The next time you pass by a clinic, bring up the topic again.

There are a dozen reasons why parents want their children to use condoms “*when the right time comes.*” Discussing with your teen whether or not it is the right time may be incredibly important. Teens need to know that sex won’t heal a troubled relationship. Sex is not proof of adulthood. Sex carries with it major responsibilities and is he or she ready for them? If these are your concerns, explain that it’s for these reasons that as a parent you struggle with taking him to get free condoms. While you want him to be safe, you also hope he’s having sex for positive reasons.

Stress that except for not having sex, latex condoms are the only method that offers reliable protection from sexually transmitted diseases. Don't forget that he can also buy his own condoms. We need to empower teens and remind them that sex carries responsibilities. If he is too embarrassed to buy condoms or to get free condoms, maybe that's a sign that he's not really ready for the responsibilities of sex. Remind your teen as well, "If you can't talk about it, you shouldn't be doing it."

Sexually Transmitted Diseases in Teenagers

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are infectious diseases that spread from one person to another during sexual contact. If you're a teenager (or a parent of a teen), it's important to know that people in this age group are often susceptible to these diseases since they are unaware of the consequences or the prevention techniques. This article is a guide for teens and their parents for preventing and dealing with STDs.

Teens and STDs

Many people are surprised by just how prevalent STDs are among teenagers. In fact, almost half of the 19 million new cases of STDs that appear every year are found in young people ages 15 to 24, says the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Additionally, certain STDs like Chlamydia and gonorrhea are more common among teens than among adults. The ways that STDs are spread is the same among teens as it is among adults:

- **Multiple partners:** The more partners a teen has, the more likely they are to be exposed to an STD.
- **Unprotected sex:** Failing to use a latex condom during sexual activity can increase the risk of infection.
- **Sexual acts:** STDs can be transmitted through several types of sexual activity, including vaginal, oral and anal sex. Many teens don't realize that even skin-to-skin contact can transmit some STDs, such as herpes or genital warts.

With teens, there is one additional risk factor – becoming sexually active at a young age. The younger a person becomes sexually active, the greater their chances of becoming infected with an STD.

Getting Treatment for Teens

Teens are often confused about where to turn when it comes to getting tested for and treating STDs. In cases where a teen feels uncomfortable speaking to a parent about the issue, there are usually local health clinics that can provide STD testing. Most of these clinics have a confidentiality policy so that no one will know you've been tested or treated for an STD – not even your parents. Call ahead to find out more about a health clinic's confidentiality policy for minors.

If you find out that you have an STD, seek treatment as soon as possible. Abstain from sexual contact with anyone until you are no longer infectious. It's important to take the medication or antibiotics you receive exactly as specified by the doctor – failing to follow the instructions properly could cause your STD to come back.

Possible Complications

Many teens are unaware of how serious STDs are. Often, they believe that an STD isn't such a big deal because it can just be treated with medication if they find out they have one. Unfortunately, some STDs can't be cured, such as herpes. There are also several health complications that can result from having an STD, such as:

- Being more susceptible to becoming infected with other STDs, including HIV
- Joint problems
- Blood infections
- Chronic pain
- Infertility
- Pregnancy complications
- Pelvic inflammatory disease
- Cervical cancer
- Meningitis
- Hearing or vision problems
- Dementia
- Aneurysm
- Valvular heart disease
- Stroke
- Paralysis

Prevention Strategies

One of the main reasons that teens contract STDs is because they have not been educated about the ways in which these diseases can be prevented. In addition, some teens have a casual attitude about STDs because they are unaware of the serious health risks they can cause.

It's important for parents of teens to be realistic about teenage sexuality. According to the CDC, almost half of all U.S. high school students have had sexual intercourse. In addition, 14 percent of high school students had had 4 or more sexual partners already. Sadly, many of these students were also not using condoms to prevent the spread of STDs or other forms of birth control to prevent teen pregnancy.

Because of these statistics, it's important for all parents to educate their teens about sex and STDs. Parents who would like assistance can contact a local health clinic about possible sex education programs in which their teen can be enrolled.

Besides education, there are several other important strategies that teens should use to prevent the spread of STDs:

- **Get tested:** Many people don't even know they have an STD because they aren't displaying any symptoms. If you're sexually active, get tested to find out if you have any STDs.
- **Treatment:** Seek out treatment for an STD immediately, even if you're not displaying any symptoms at the moment.
- **Condoms:** Use a latex condom every time you have sex to prevent the spread of STDs.

- **Limiting sex partners:** Having fewer sexual partners reduces the risk of infection.
- **Abstinence:** Abstaining from all sexual activity is the only way to truly prevent STDs. Teens can wait until they are older to become sexually active to reduce their risk of infection.

It's important for all teens to be aware of the risks of and prevention methods for STDs, even if they plan to wait to have sex. For more information about STDs, including where to find local clinics for testing and treatment, call the National STD Hotline at 1-800-227-8922.

Female Sexual Dysfunction

What are the most commonly seen sexual problems in women?

A recent survey (conducted by Laumann and colleagues at the University of Chicago) of American women (ages 18-59) found that the most common sexual problem in women is hypoactive sexual desire disorder (HSDD), more commonly referred to as low sex drive or libido (33.4%), followed by difficulty with orgasm (24.1%). Pain during intercourse--which occurs in 14.4% of women--was the only condition to show a relationship to age -- it decreases as women get older.

HSDD is a deficiency or absence of sexual fantasies and desire for sexual activity, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association (APA). The definition is vague because the APA acknowledges that there can be significant differences in sexual interest levels among women. According to the survey mentioned above, 37% of women think about sex a few times a month and only 33% think about sex 2-3 times a week or more. Happier women seem to think about sex more often than unhappy women.

Difficulty with orgasm, or female orgasmic disorder, is a persistent delay or absence of orgasm. This definition is also from the APA and it again attempts to allow for individual variation by not giving a specific number or percentage to define a "normal" amount of orgasms. The survey states that 29% of women say they always have orgasms during sex and 40% say they are physically satisfied with their partners.

There are wide variations in sexual functioning, and there is no gold-standard that women should feel they must meet for their sexual functioning to be considered 'normal.' If a woman experiences a sexual problem that troubles her, then it is a problem that needs to be addressed and she should be encouraged to talk to her doctor about it to see how it can be improved.

What causes decreased sexual desire in women?

Low sex drive can be caused by a range of factors, which vary from one individual to the next. Fatigue, the daily responsibilities and multiple roles women often assume, and many possible psychological causes can impact a woman's sexual appetite. It is also known that certain health conditions and medications can affect a woman's sexual desire. Depression and anxiety disorders can interfere with sexual desire, but so can some of the drugs used to treat these conditions. Many antidepressants, in particular Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors, also called SSRIs (e.g., Prozac, Paxil, Zoloft), have side effects that have a negative impact on women's libidos. Wellbutrin SR is a possible alternative, as it does not seem to cause sexual problems. Serzone, Remeron and Luvox may not cause problems with sexual desire either. In addition, birth control pills, mood stabilizers, tranquilizers and other medications

have been shown to decrease libido. If you notice a drop in your sexual desire around the time you start a new medication, talk to your doctor to see if there is a connection. Do not stop taking any medication without talking to your doctor first.

Increasing Sexual Desire and Arousal

What is the difference between sexual arousal and sexual desire?

In most women who are not experiencing sexual problems, libido and arousal are closely related and difficult to separate. Libido refers to a baseline interest in sex and might be redefined as sexual appetite. Arousal refers to the physiological response to sexual stimuli. Women with higher libidos generally have a greater response to sexual stimuli, or greater arousal. Physical manifestations of sexual arousal include vaginal lubrication and increased blood flow to the labia, clitoris and vagina.

What can increase sexual arousal in women?

One of the symptoms of decreased sexual arousal in women is a reduced amount of vaginal lubrication. Over-the-counter vaginal lubricants can augment lubrication.

If a decrease in vaginal lubrication has been caused by menopause, hormone replacement therapy can help. This is the only approved drug therapy for this disorder.

Viagra (sildenafil) and a class of medications called alpha-adrenergic blockers, such as Regitine (phentolamine), can also increase the vaginal lubrication response to sexual stimulation. However, it should be mentioned that study after study of Viagra for various female sexual problems have not shown an increase in sexual pleasure in women.

Aside from pharmacologic solutions, women can also choose behavioral therapy to help increase sexual arousal. Such therapy is aimed at enhancing sexual fantasies and focusing one's attention on sexual stimuli. For women in on-going relationships, the therapist would also look into the possibility of communication problems in the relationship, or lack of sexual stimulation by the woman's partner.

What can increase sexual desire in women?

At this time, there are no approved drug treatments for low sexual desire. However, a recent study of 66 women, ages 23 to 65, with HSDD for an average of six years, found that Wellbutrin SR may be an effective treatment. Approximately one third of women experienced doubled interest in sexual activity, sexual arousal and sexual fantasies. Although Wellbutrin SR is an antidepressant, the women in this study did not suffer from depression and they did not have relationship difficulties. More studies are needed to support this preliminary data. There have also been studies that indicate that testosterone can increase sexual desire in women whose low sex drive is a result of the surgical removal of their ovaries. Continual treatment with testosterone does have side effects and may lead to "masculine" side effects in some women (i.e., lower voice, hair loss, enlarged clitoris).

Another factor to consider is that for some women, feelings of guilt and shame learned in early childhood may interfere with adult sexual function and may affect one or more phases of the sexual response cycle. In these instances, as well as in cases of sexual abuse, psychotherapy may be beneficial. Marriage counseling or couples therapy can also be of value.

Lack of Orgasm, Treatments for Pain during Sex

What can cause lack of orgasm?

The inability to achieve orgasm (anorgasmia) can be caused by a number of factors, both physical and psychological in nature. Lack of adequate stimulation, acute stress, anxiety, as well as depression and relationship problems can all interfere with the ability to experience orgasm. Other health conditions, such as incontinence, can cause problems too. Everyday stress and the many roles and responsibilities women deal with can result in distractions, making orgasms more difficult to achieve. In addition, cultural and religious prohibitions may result in anorgasmia (possibly related to a heightened sense of guilt). Fortunately, there are very good self-help books available to assist women in developing skills that will improve their ability to reach orgasm.

Medications can also interfere with the ability to experience orgasm. Many antidepressants, including Prozac, Zoloft and Paxil have a high propensity to cause such problems. In addition, antipsychotic drugs such as Haldol, Thorazine and Mellaril can cause inability to reach orgasm and Valium may delay orgasm. Fortunately there are other antidepressants (Wellbutrin SR) and antipsychotic drugs (Zyprexa and Seroquel), which don't seem to cause inability to experience orgasm. Antihypertensive drugs may also interfere with orgasm.

Any disease, such as multiple sclerosis, that interrupts the nerve supply to the genitals may cause lack of orgasm.

How is pain during sex treated?

In postmenopausal women who experience diminished vaginal lubrication, hormone replacement therapy is often recommended. Vaginal creams containing estrogen may also help.

Even women who are not postmenopausal experience problems with vaginal lubrication which can create friction during sex, and ultimately cause pain. In this case, use of over-the-counter vaginal lubricants before intercourse is a possible remedy.

If the woman experiencing pain is in a relationship, she should communicate with her partner. Together they can work to find a position that is more comfortable. Sometimes a change in the time of day when you are more rested may help.

If pain is persistent, see your doctor. The pain could be a symptom of another medical condition. In fact, most physicians view dyspareunia (pain with intercourse) as a pain disorder and treat accordingly (analgesics/creams, etc.).

Sex after Hysterectomy, Vaginismus, Hormonal F

Can women ever expect sex to be the same again after a hysterectomy?

Absolutely. A recent, large study found that hysterectomy (removal of the uterus) did not interfere with sexual function.

However, removal of the uterus and ovaries (hysterectomy plus oophorectomy, sometimes referred to as total hysterectomy) causes large declines in sex hormones. Hormone replacement therapy--with or without testosterone replacement--may help to restore sexual function in women experiencing sexual difficulty after this surgery.

As with any major change in physical functioning, some women do find their sexual functioning negatively impacted. Some women miss the contractions of the uterus they have associated with orgasm. Removal of the cervix may result in a change in the physical sensation experienced during deep penetration during intercourse. In our clinical experience with women, there is wide variation in sexual functioning post-hysterectomy.

What is vaginismus? Is there any hope for women with vaginismus ever having a healthy sexual relationship?

Vaginismus is persistent or recurrent spasm of the outer third of the vagina that interferes with intercourse. It can usually be treated by the use of vaginal dilators of increasing diameter plus relaxation training. The success rate increases in couples where the partner is involved in the therapy process. While treatment can help, it is important to note that some women have very intimate, loving relationships without intercourse.

Will hormones help women with decreased sexual desire? Which hormones? Testosterone? Estrogen? Progesterone? What about DHEA?

In postmenopausal or peri-menopausal women, estrogen replacement can decrease pain during intercourse and facilitate vaginal lubrication.

Studies have also shown that testosterone increases libido in women, so if someone's decreased desire is due to a drop in hormones, it can very likely be resolved with testosterone. However, to date, these studies have used high doses of testosterone, which might lead to masculinization if taken for long periods of time.

Although DHEA is also a male hormone, there have been very few studies of its effect on women and none have shown that it improves a woman's libido.

Is there anything else that's important for women to understand about female sexual dysfunction?

Sexual response varies between women and within each individual. Sexual concerns are very common. Some sexual problems, while distressing, may reflect normal variations in a woman's life. Shifting one's focus to enhancing intimacy rather than having all interactions result in intercourse may help. Not all sexual concerns or problems are "dysfunctions."

Women need to pay attention to changes in their daily lives that may cause sexual dysfunction. In cases where medications cause sexual problems, the solution may be as simple as changing the medication or adjusting the dosage.

Don't be afraid to talk to your doctor and your partner. It can be difficult and uncomfortable to initiate a conversation with a doctor about sex, but the majority of women can be helped if they are willing to talk openly to their healthcare provider to determine the best treatment for their specific problem.

Herbal Program for AIDS

The following herbal program was taken from “Footprints on the Path” by Herballure and by client experience.

AIDS is an Immune System deficiency disorder that suddenly alters the body’s ability to defend itself. The current belief is that the HIV virus invades the T-cells and multiplies, causing a breakdown in the body’s immune system, eventually leading to overwhelming infection and/or cancer. Some 29 different diseases are classified as AIDS when the HIV virus is present in the individual. Seek appropriate medical assistance.

Immune System:

- Nature’s Immune Stimulator (with meals) + Protease/High Potency (between meals)
- Olive Leaf Extract – Antiviral, Anti-HIV
- Astragalus, Trigger Immune or VS-C (Chinese Antiviral)
- Thai-Go or Grapine/High Potency
- Pau d’Arco or Pau d’Arco/Taheebo Tea – Builds Immune System and fights Candida overgrowth
- Una De Gato
- Alpha Lipoic Acid – Universal antioxidant
- Super Algae (Trace Minerals) – For antiviral properties
- Anamu (Strengthen Immune System)
- Colostrum – To recharge Immune System and heal tissues
- Green Tea Extract – Boost immunity and neutralize free radicals
- Golden Seal or Oregon Grape (Natural Antibiotics)
- Phyto-Soy (Soybean Immunity/Anti-Cancer)
- Vitamin C (antioxidant/Vital Nutrition)
- ASEA – Redox Signalers
- Paw Paw – Natural Cancer Treatment

Cleanse/Purify:

- E-Tea (Anti-Cancer/Blood Purifier), Enviro-Detox or All Cell Detox (Whole Body Cleanses)
- Liquid Cleanse or Tiao He Cleanse
- Para-Cleanse (Chinese Parasite Cleanse Package), wait 8 days, Para-Cleanse again to kill larvae and heads of parasites
- Blood Build (Chinese Weak Liver), BP-X or Red Clover Blend
- Ultimate Greenzone – To cleanse and detoxify
- Gentle Move

Candida: Candida overgrowth is often a problem

- Yeast/Fungal Detox
- Candida Clear

Other:

- CoQ10 – For efficient cell metabolism
- 7-Keto – May prevent HIV wasting
- Germanium Combination or Korean Ginseng – To oxygenate the tissues
- St. John’s Wort – To rid the blood of active virus
- Adaptamax or Suma Combination (Whole Body Balance/Stress)
- Ionic Minerals or Mineral Chi Tonic

- Energ-V or Bee Pollen – To build energy
- Aloe Vera, Whole Leaf – For mannose Polysaccharides
- IF-C (Anti-inflammatory Chinese)
- Pregnenolone or DHEA for adults/Licorice Root Extract for children – To build the Adrenal Glands and balance blood sugar
- Digestive Enzymes or Proactazyme Plus

Essential Oils:

- Helichrysum – Apply to thymus area and bottoms of feet
- Bergamot, Frankincense

Homeopathics:

- Candida
- Detoxification Remedies

Other:

- Diet, exercise, positive attitude are crucial in addition to nutritional support.
- Consider Candida and Parasites. They are often present with AIDS.

Herbal Program for Chlamydia

The following herbal program was taken from “Footprints on the Path” by Herballure and by client experience.

Chlamydia is a common sexually transmitted disease (STD) caused by the bacterium, Chlamydia trachomatis. It can be transmitted during vaginal, anal or oral sex and can damage a woman’s reproductive organs. It can also cause infertility. In pregnant women, there is the possibility that untreated chlamydia infections can lead to premature delivery. Chlamydia can also cause discharge from the penis of an infected man. Antibiotics are the usual treatment. Seek medical attention.

Cleanse: Suggested in this order:

1. Clean Start or Tiao He Cleanse – To cleanse the colon
2. Kidney Drainage To support the kidneys and to eliminate toxins
3. Liver Balance or LIV-J – To cleanse the liver
4. Liquid Chlorophyll – To cleanse the blood

Herbals:

- Garlic, High Potency – Antibiotic/Broad Spectrum Antibacterial
- Olive Leaf Extract (Powerful/Antibacterial)
- Golden Seal or Echinacea/Goldenseal (Antimicrobial)
- Silver Shield w/Aqua Sol – Antibacterial
- Oregon Grape

Vitamins, Minerals & Other Supplements:

- MSM – For the sulfur
- Vitamin E
- Vitamin B Complex – For liver support
- Vitamin C w/Bioflavonoids (Antioxidant/Anti-inflammatory action)
- Carotenoid Blend – For healthy mucous membranes
- Zinc – For immune support and to speed healing
- Bifidophilus Flora-Force – To replace friendly bacteria after antibiotics
- ASEA – Redox Signalers

Topical/External:

MSM/Glucosamine Cream – For the sulfur
Silver Shield Gel

Essential Oils:

- Lavender
- Myrrh – Highly diluted. Caution: may burn!

Diet:

- Avoid sugar, caffeine and alcohol. Eat brown rice, whole grains, fish, turkey, raw seeds and nuts. Drink cranberry juice every day to prevent the bacterial infection from creating a urinary tract infection.

Other:

- Abstain from sexual contact or be in a long-term monogamous relationship with a partner known to be uninfected.
- Use latex condoms.

Herbal Program for Hepatitis

The following herbal program was taken from “Footprints on the Path” by Herballure and by client experience.

An inflammatory process in the liver. Pathologically this can be due to a range of causes including viruses, bacteria, parasites, alcohol or drugs. Symptoms can include malaise, anorexia, fatigue, sometimes initiated with “flu like” symptoms, and often associated with a range of specific signs from vomiting to jaundice. Seek appropriate medical assistance.

Primary Product:

- Liver Balance (Stressed Liver) – To cleanse liver and blood

Herbals:

- Liver Cleanse Formula, Milk Thistle Combination or Blood Build – For Liver and blood
- Tiao He Cleanse – To cleanse the Liver and colon
- Liquid Chlorophyll – To cleanse and support the Liver
- Nature’s Immune Stimulator or VS-C
- Digestive Bitters Tonic – To aid cleansing of Liver
- Olive Leaf Extract (Antiviral/Antibacterial)
- Garlic, High Potency (Antibiotic/Antiviral)
- IF-C (Chinese Anti-Inflammatory)
- Codyceps – As a nourishing tonic for the liver
- I-X (Iron Formula) or Yellow Dock – For organic Iron
- Licorice Root – To balance blood sugar levels
- Ultimate Greenzone or Barley Juice Powder
- Super Algae or Spirulina – For proteins and minerals
- Love and Peas – For vegan protein
- Thai-Go – To protect the liver

Vitamins, Minerals & Other Supplements:

- SAM-E – To relieve bile flow and cholestasis
- Germanium Combination – To oxygenate the cells
- Lecithin (Fat Emulsifier)
- CoQ10 – To support circulation
- Colostrum – As an anti-inflammatory
- N-Acetyl Cysteine – To protect the liver
- ASEA – Redox Signalers

Essential Oils:

- Rosemary + Frankincense, Thyme Linalol, Roman Chamomile or Geranium – For viral Hepatitis

Homeopathic:

Viral Recovery Remedy

Diet:

- Eat raw fruits and vegetables. Drink green drinks, carrot and beet juice. Eliminate sugar, refined carbohydrates, eggs, red meat and dairy.

Other: Cleanse the Liver and Colon.

Herbal Program for Herpes

The following herbal program was taken from “Footprints on the Path” by Herballure and by client experience.

Any of several viral diseases causing the eruption of small blister-like vesicles on the skin or mucous membranes, especially herpes simplex or herpes zoster.

Primary Formulas:

- Olive Leaf Extract or VS-C (Chinese Antiviral)

Herbals:

- St. John’s Wort – Externally on sores
- Garlic, High Potency (Antiviral)
- Elderberry Defense – Antiviral for the Immune System
- Pau d’Arco or Pau d’Arco tea (Blood Purifier/Immunity)
- Anamu – To protect cells and build the Immune System
- Lymphatic Drainage, Lymph Gland Cleanse or Lymph Gland Cleanse-HY
- Black Walnut (Anti-Parasitic)
- Burdock (Blood Purifier)
- Aloe Vera (Tissue Health)
- Stress-J, Stress Relief or Nutri-Calm (Anti-Stress)
- Black Walnut Extract – Externally on sores
- Super GLA, Flax Seed Oil or Black Currant oil

Vitamins, Minerals & Other Supplements:

Grapine, High-Potency (Powerful Antioxidant)
L-Lysine (Antiviral Amino Acid)
Silver Shield (Natural Antiviral)
Colostrum – For virus control
Probiotic Eleven or Bifidophilus Flora Force – To add friendly bacteria
Krill Oil, Super GLA or Super Omega-3 (Essential Fatty Acids)
ASEA – Redox Signaler

Essential Oils:

- Lavender + Tea Tree, Lemon or Peppermint

Homeopathic:

- Viral Recovery Remedy

Diet:

- No alcohol, colas, white flour, sugar, refined carbohydrates, coffee, and chocolate.
- Eat in moderation: almonds, barley, cashews, whole grains, chicken, corn, nuts, seeds, peanuts.
- Eliminate fruit.

Other:

- Herpes Type 1 – Cold Sores
- Herpes Type II – Highly infectious until healed

Herbal Program for Syphilis

The following herbal program was taken from “Footprints on the Path” by Herballure and by client experience.

A chronic infectious disease caused by a spirochete (*Treponema pallidum*), either transmitted by direct contact, usually in sexual intercourse, or passed from mother to child in the uterus, and progressing through three stages characterized respectively by local formation of chancres, ulcerous skin eruptions, and systemic infection leading to general paresis. No information herein should be used without first consulting your health care practitioner.

Herbals:

- Oregon Grape (Antibiotic/Antiseptic)
- Nature’s Immune Stimulator, Echinacea Purpurea or Ultimate Echinacea – To build white blood cells and immunity
- Astragalus – To stimulate immunity
- Sarsaparilla – The most widely used treatment in the 1800’s
- Garlic, High Potency (Antibiotic/Vital Nutrition)
- All Cell Detox (Whole Body Cleanse)
- Red Clover or Red Clover Blend (Blood Purifiers)
- Anamu – Used in Central and South America for venereal diseases
- Pau d’Arco/Taheebo Tea (Immunity)
- Elderberry Defense – For the Immune System
- Suma Combination or Adaptamax (Whole Body Balance)

Vitamins, Minerals, & Other Supplements:

- Grape, High-Potency (Powerful Antioxidant)
- Silver Shield (Natural Antibiotic) – Internally and externally
- Super Antioxidant or Defense Maintenance – To support the Immune System
- B-Complex, Balanced – To support the Nervous System
- Germanium Combination – Healing and reduction of pain
- Probiotic Eleven or Bifidophilus Flora Force – For friendly bacteria
- Vitamin C (Antioxidant/Vital Nutrition)
- ASEA – Redox Signaling

Essential Oils:

- Thyme Linalol
- Wild Oregano

Herbal Program for HPV (Human Papillomavirus)

The following herbal program was taken from “Footprints on the Path” by Herballure and by client experience.

HPV is a common virus that infects the skin and mucous membranes. More than 100 different HPV types have been identified; at least 30 of them can be transmitted sexually and can infect the genital areas of males and females. It can also be the result of an imbalance in the body. Low-risk types of HPV can cause genital warts that appear on the vulva, in or around the vagina, anus, cervix, penis, scrotum, groin or thigh. High-risk types can cause cervical cancer. These HPV types can also infect the mouth and throat. It is one of the most common sexually transmitted diseases (STD). Seek Medical Attention.

The HPV tests on the market are only used to screen for cervical cancer. There are no tests to find HPV on the genitals or in the mouth or throat. Gardasil is a highly controversial vaccine to protect against most genital warts in young females before they become sexually active. The vaccine does not protect against all types of HPV that can cause cervical cancer.

Herbals:

- Olive Leaf Extract (Powerful Antiviral)
- Elderberry Defense – Antiviral for the Immune System
- Pau d’Arco or Pau d’Arco/Taheebo Tea
- Thai-Go, Nature’s Immune Stimulator, Astragalus, Trigger Immune or Thim-J – Immune System
- E-Tea (Whole Body Cleanse) or Burdock
- All Cell Detox (Whole Body Cleanse)
- BP-X, Blood Build or Red Clover Blend – To cleanse the liver and blood
- Yarrow – To help remove toxins from body

Vitamins, Minerals & Other Supplements:

- Super Algae – For antiviral properties
- Alpha Lipoic Acid, Grapine H/P or Defense Maintenance – Immunity
- Silver Shield (Natural Antiviral)
- Carotenoid Blend (Antioxidant)
- ASEA – Redox Signalers

Topical/External – For genital warts

- Golden Salve (natural antibiotic)
- Aloe Vera Gel – To soothe tissue
- Garlic Oil – To support the immune system

Essential Oils:

- Guardian (To strengthen the immune system), Wild Oregano

Other:

- Make a bolus of Tea Tree Oil, Pau d’Arco and Black Ointment.
- Make small suppository about ½” and refrigerate.
- Insert virginally at night and protect clothing with a panty shield or pad.

Herbal Program for Sexual Intimacy

The following herbal program was taken from “Footprints on the Path” by Herballure and by client experience.

Sexual intercourse between two human beings. To arouse sexually.

Men & Women:

- MACA – To improve desire and performance
- IGF-1 – To enhance libido, increase energy and stamina
- Codyceps – To increase stamina and support vitality
- Nervous Fatigue Formula (Chinese “Burnout” Formula)
- Eleuthero (Women); Ginseng, Korean (Men)

Essential Oils:

- Geranium (Balances reproductive system of both sexes)
- Sandalwood, Ylang Ylang, Patchouli, Myrrh or Rose Bulgaria (Stimulants) – With massage oil massaged on abdomen, low back and feet
- Jasmine – As an aphrodisiac
- Cinnamon – As a stimulant to increase blood flow
- Marjoram – To reduce overactive libido or excessive behavior

Women:

- X-Action for Women (Female Emotional Support)
- Damiana or X-A (hormone balance)
- Flash-Ease, C-X or Black Cohosh
- Thyroid Support, Thyroid Activator or TS II w/Hops
- Female Comfort (Female Corrective)
- Vitamin E Complete w/Selenium (Antioxidant/Female)

Essential Oils:

- Clary Sage, Rose or Geranium (for frigidity)
- Ylang Ylang – For lack of libido

Men:

- MACA – Herbal alternative to prescription drugs
- X-Action for Men (Men’s reproductive formula) or X-A
- Sarsaparilla (Male Hormone Balance)
- Men’s Formula (Prostate)
- Saw Palmetto + Zinc (Prostate/Hormone Balance)
- Hydrangea (for premature ejaculation)
- Stress Relief, Stress-J, Nerve Eight or Nutri-Calm
- Hops – To decrease sexual drive
- KB-C (Chinese Kidney/Bone) For nocturnal emissions
- Korean Ginseng – To raise testosterone levels

Essential Oils:

- Clary Sage – For low sperm count

**CERTIFIED WOMEN'S HEALTH COUNSELOR ONLINE COURSE - SESSION 6
QUESTION & ANSWERS**

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
CITY, STATE, ZIP, PC: _____
PHONE: _____
FAX: _____
E-MAIL: _____

Please be sure to fill out the information above, complete the test and e-mail or mail it back to us at iridology@netzero.net or P.O. Box 485, Weimar, CA, 95736-0485. We will grade your question & answer session and will let you know if we have any questions or concerns. **Please use a separate sheet to do this assignment.**

1. What are the 7 Most Common STDs to Watch Out For?
2. What is AIDS?
3. What causes death in AIDS patients?
4. What is Chlamydia?
5. What are the causes and symptoms of Chlamydia?
6. What is Herpes?
7. What are the symptoms of herpes?
8. What is HPV?
9. What are HPV's effects on the body?
10. What is HIV?
11. What is Gonorrhea?
12. What are the complications of Gonorrhea?
13. What is Hepatitis?
14. What is Syphilis?
15. How do you prevent Syphilis?
16. What is the cause of pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)?
17. What is Trichomoniasis?
18. What is Bacterial Vaginosis?
19. What is genital candidiasis?