

Learn more about STIs.

- Call your Family PACT provider at

Your provider's telephone number

- Call the Centers for Disease Control at 1-800-232-4636
- Visit Family PACT at www.familypact.org and click on Clients
- Visit the Centers for Disease Control at www.cdc.gov/std
- Visit the American Social Health Association at www.iwannaknow.org

Find a provider in your area.

- Call the Family PACT Program at 1-800-942-1054
- Enter your zip code to find a provider at www.familypact.org
- All Family PACT birth control methods are at no cost to Family PACT clients. STI testing and treatment is at no cost to Family PACT clients when it is part of a family planning visit.

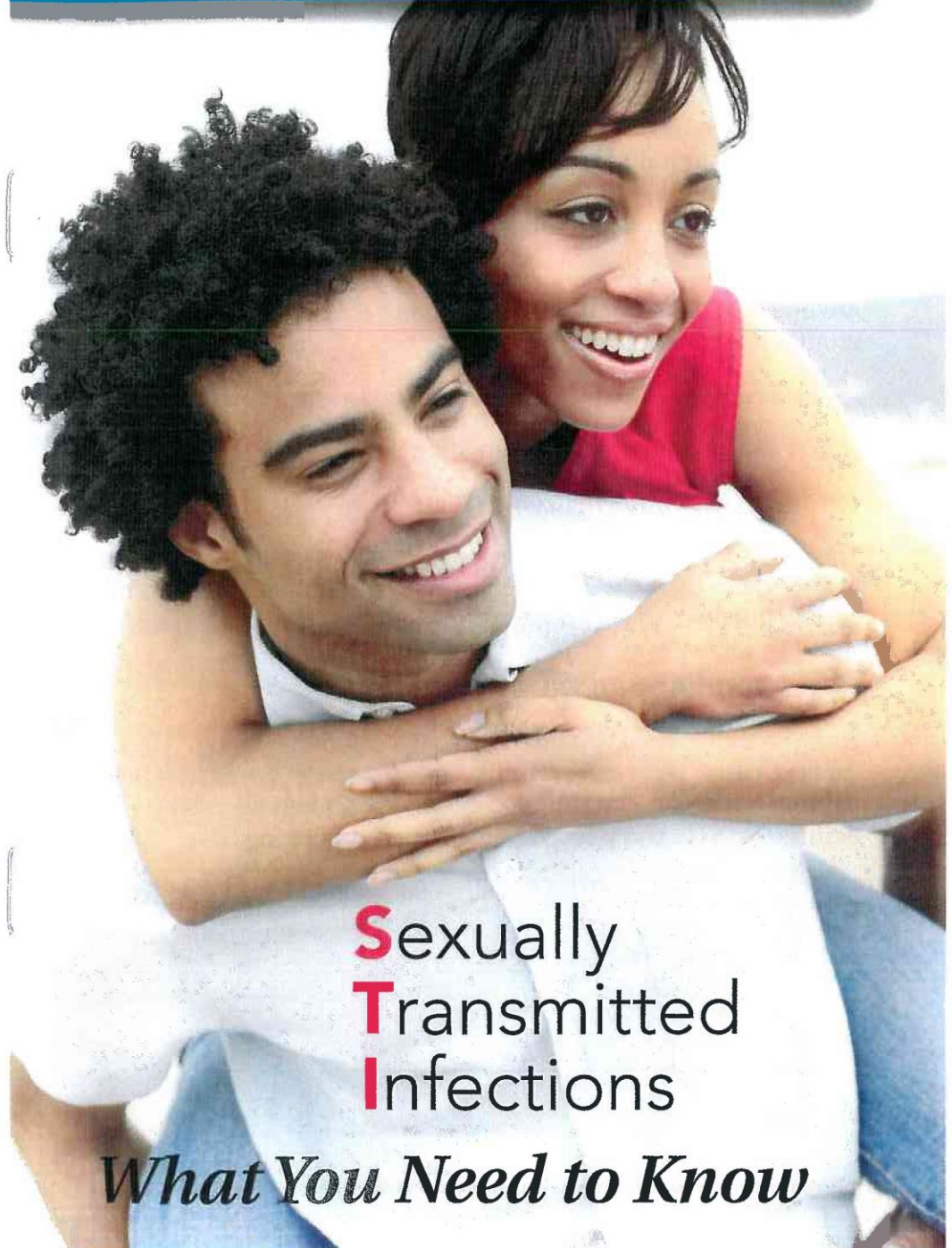


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STIs

Family PACT
Planning • Access • Care • Treatment



Sexually
Transmitted
Infections

What You Need to Know

STIs: What You Need to Know

What are STIs?

STIs are infections that people can get by having sex with someone who has one. There are many different kinds of STIs. The most common STIs are chlamydia, herpes, genital warts, and trichomoniasis. But gonorrhea, HIV, and syphilis are more common than you might think. About one half of all people will get an STI at some time in their life.

Anyone who has sexual contact involving the penis, vagina, mouth, or anus could get an STI.

- You can get an STI even if you have sex just once.
- You can get the same STI more than once.
- You can have more than one STI at a time.

The only sure way to protect yourself from getting an STI is not to have sex, but there are other ways you can lower your chances of getting infected.

What can happen if I get an STI?

Some STIs can make you unable to have children later on. They can also cause birth defects or diseases in babies. Some STIs are painful, but others can cause problems even when there is no pain. Most STIs also put you at greater risk of getting HIV.

Most STIs can be cured if treated right away. Others, like HIV and herpes, cannot be cured, although they can be managed with medicine.

How can I tell if my partner has an STI?

Most of the time, you can't tell if someone has an STI by looking at them. A person can look healthy and still have an STI. It is common for people to have an STI and not know it.

What should I watch out for?

Many STIs have no signs or symptoms, or they have signs that only last for a little while. You should get checked if:

- You think that your partner may have had sex with someone else.
- You have had sex with more than one person in the last year.
- You have had sex with a new partner within the last three months.

Get a check-up right away, if you feel or see any of these signs:

- Burning or pain while urinating (peeing).
- Unusual discharge or smell from the vagina or penis.
- Itching, burning, or pain in the vagina or on the penis.
- Sores, blisters, rashes, swelling, or wart-like growths on or around the vagina or penis. These may or may not hurt.



Protect yourself from getting an STI.

- **Use a condom every time you have sex to lower the chances of getting an STI.**

Latex or plastic (polyurethane) condoms are best. Condoms for women line the woman's vagina. Condoms for men fit over the man's penis. You can buy condoms in a drugstore or grocery store. Family PACT clients can also get them at no cost from a Family PACT provider or at a pharmacy with a prescription from their Family PACT provider.

- **No other birth control method, except condoms, will protect you from STIs.**

Use a condom (for men or women) along with your birth control method to lower the chances of getting an STI.

- **Limit the number of sex partners you have.**

Having sex with more than one person puts you at risk for getting an STI. If you or your partner have sex with other people, use a condom to help keep from getting an STI.

- **Be close without sharing body fluids.**

Hugging and touching are safer because no body fluids (semen, fluids from the vagina, or blood) are shared. Any kind of sex is more risky when body fluids are shared.

- **Some infections are spread by touch.**

Herpes and HPV infections that cause genital warts can be spread by genital skin-to-skin contact, even when there aren't any signs of infection. If you or your partner has an outbreak of herpes or genital warts, don't have any contact with the sores.

- **Get vaccinated.**

Vaccination can prevent HPV infection and protects you from cervical cancer and genital warts. This vaccination works best when given before the first time a person has sex.

- **Make good decisions.**

Being drunk or high can lead you to take risks, like having sex without a condom.

- **Don't be pressured into having sex.**

It's your body and your choice whether or not to have sex. Decide ahead of time what is right for you. Avoid situations where it will be hard for you to say no or to insist on using condoms.

Take care of yourself if you have an STI.

- **Get treated.**

Take your medicine the way your provider tells you to.

- **After treatment for gonorrhea, chlamydia, or syphilis, make sure you get retested.**

Your provider will tell you when to come back for another test.

- **Ask your partner(s) to get treated.**

Although it can be hard to say something, tell your partner(s) about your infection. They need to know so they can get treated. That way you won't pass it back and forth. Your provider can give you advice about different ways of getting treatment to your partner. And remember, don't have sex with them again until they have finished their treatment too.

- **Ask your provider when it will be OK to have sex again.**



Plan ahead.

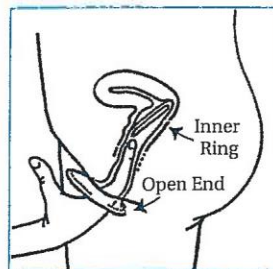
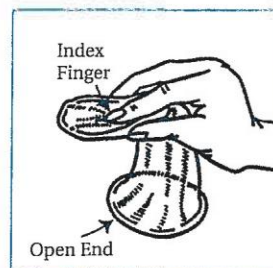
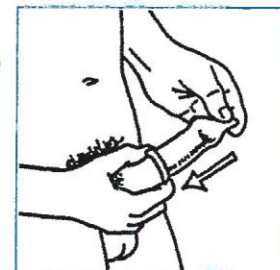
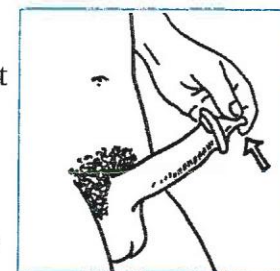
- Talking to your partner about STIs may not be easy for you. But it is important to be honest about your desire to protect your sexual health. Your partner may want to say the same thing and not know how to talk about it.
 - Talk to your partner about getting tested for STIs. Until then use condoms to prevent infections.
 - If you and your partner want to be monogamous – only have sex with each other – then focus on using condoms until both of you have been tested (and treated, if needed) for STIs.
 - Keep using condoms until you are sure your partner has no other partners.
 - If you or your partner have other sex partners, then talk about always using condoms when you have sex.
- Think about what you want to say ahead of time. Talking with friends, family members, or a provider can help you figure out what to say and how to say it. You may even want to practice with a friend or in a mirror.
- A good time to talk about STI testing and using condoms is when you have private, undisturbed time with your partner. Don't wait until you are aroused or about to have sex to talk about this. If you are caught up in the heat of the moment, it's easy to forget about safer sex and staying healthy.
- You can talk about STI testing and using condoms in many ways. Find a way that works for you. Here are some ideas:
 - “I'd really like to have sex with you as long as we use condoms. Using condoms protects both of us.”
 - “You know, it makes sex even better for me knowing that both of us are protected. Let's use condoms.”

How to use Condoms.

Condoms protect you better if they are put on the right way. Make sure the condoms are not too old. Look for the expiration date printed on the wrapper. Be careful when you open the condom so you don't rip it. Never re-use condoms. They are for one time use only.

Here is how to use the condom for men:

- Hold the tip of the condom to squeeze out the air.
- Put the condom on the erect penis before it comes near the woman's vagina.
- Keep holding the tip of the condom while you unroll it all the way over the penis, down to the base.
- After sex, hold onto the condom while the penis is coming out of the vagina.
- Throw it away in the trash and not the toilet.



- Use a water-based personal lube. Do not use anything oil-based like petroleum jelly, mineral oil, massage oil, hand or face lotion because this will make the condom break easily.

Here is how to use the condom for women:

- Squeeze the inner ring together.
- Put the inner ring in the vagina.
- With your finger, push the inner ring as far as it can go. The outer ring stays outside the vagina.
- Guide the penis through the outer ring.