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Sexually Transmitted Infections or Diseases (STIs or STDs)

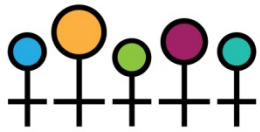
Last updated: February 18, 2020

Together, we can change the course of the HIV epidemic...one woman at a time.

#onewomanatatime

www.thewellproject.org

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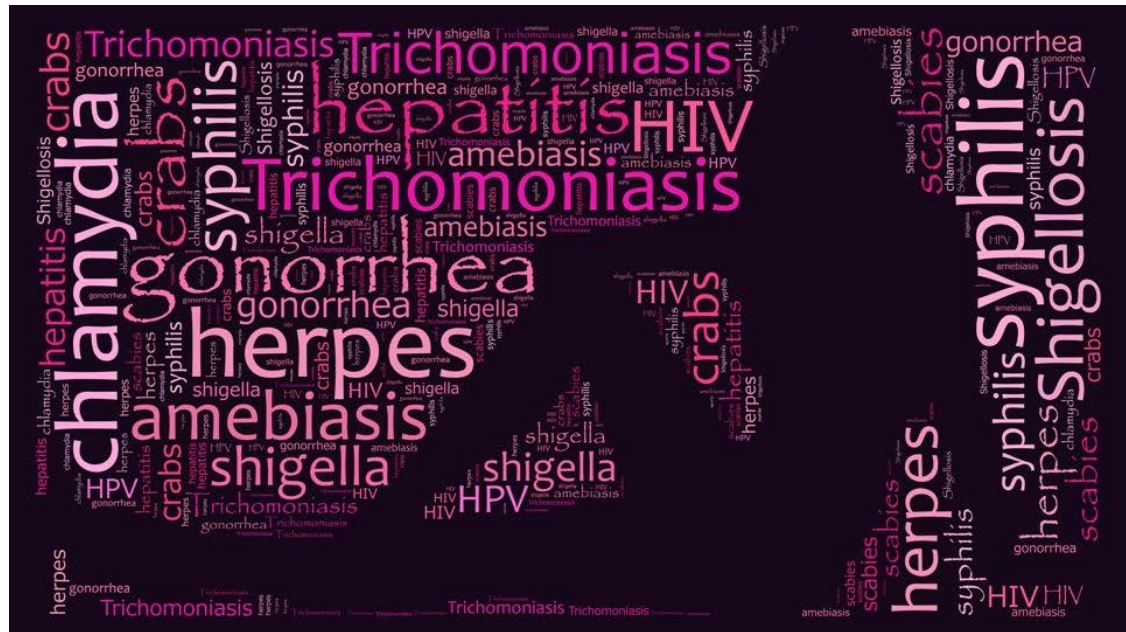


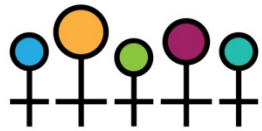
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The Basics

Sexually transmitted infections (or diseases) (STIs or STDs): Infections passed from person to person through sexual contact

- HIV is an STI
 - More than 25 other STIs – mainly spread by vaginal, anal, and oral sex

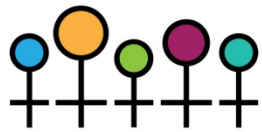




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The Basics

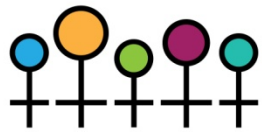
- World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that more than 1 million people get an STI every day worldwide
 - Most people with STIs do not have any symptoms
 - Often unaware they can pass infection to their sexual partner(s)
 - If left untreated, STIs can cause serious health problems:
 - Cervical cancer
 - Liver disease
 - Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)
 - Infertility
 - Pregnancy problems



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The Basics

- Having some STIs can increase risk of getting HIV if you are HIV-negative and get exposed to HIV:
 - Chancroid
 - Herpes
 - Syphilis
 - Trichomoniasis
- People living with HIV may also be ***at greater risk*** of getting or passing on other STIs
- People living with HIV often ***experience more serious problems*** if/when they get STIs

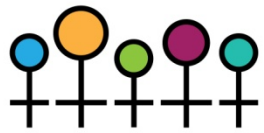


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The Basics

US has ***highest rate of STIs in resource-rich world***

- About 20 million new infections occur each year
- Half occur among young people (15-24 years old) – more at risk for STIs than older adults, in part because:
 - Cervix (passage between vagina and womb) in adolescents and young women lined with cells more vulnerable to STIs
 - Teenagers, young adults may have problems getting information, services, supplies they need to avoid STIs
 - May have trouble getting STI prevention services
 - May not feel comfortable in places designed for adults
 - May have concerns about confidentiality



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The Basics

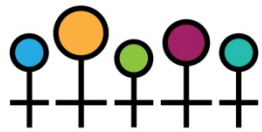
Teenage girls and women of color have some of the highest rates of STIs – especially chlamydia, gonorrhea

- Result of several factors, including:

- Higher rates of poverty
- Less access to health care
- Already high rate of STIs in communities of color



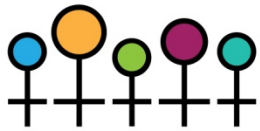
- Increases the risk of getting an infection each time a woman has sex
- More likely to have sex with an infected person within her community



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The Basics

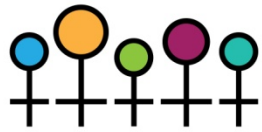
- Regardless of race or age, ***less than half of those who should be tested for STIs*** receive screening
 - Especially important for women
 - More frequent/serious complications from STIs than men
- Many STIs have no symptoms; can still be transmitted
 - A lot of people who have an STI do not even know it
 - Only way to know for sure is regular STI screenings
- Many can be ***prevented by practicing safer sex***
- Most can be ***successfully cured or managed with treatment***



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The Basics

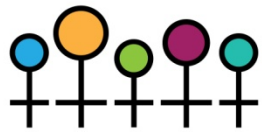
- Many people with STDs ***show no signs or symptoms***
 - When there are signs of STIs, likely to be in genital area
 - For women, this includes:
 - **Vulva** (area around vagina including lips)
 - **Vagina** (opening where menstrual blood comes out)
 - **Buttocks**
 - **Urethra** (opening above vagina where urine comes out)
 - **Anus** (opening where bowel movement comes out)
 - For men, this includes:
 - **Penis**
 - **Scrotum** (“balls”)
 - **Urethra**
 - **Anus**



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Chlamydia

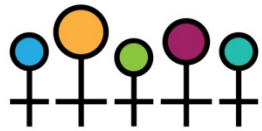
- Among ***most common STIs***
- Caused by bacterium vaginal secretions, semen ("cum")
- Can be spread by:
 - Vaginal, oral, or anal sex without a condom or other latex or polyurethane barrier
 - Pregnant women can pass it on to babies during delivery
- Symptoms may include:
 - Vaginal discharge
 - Burning during urination
 - Most women do not have any symptoms



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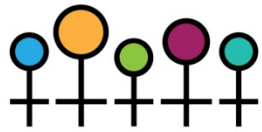
Chlamydia

- Can be successfully treated with antibiotics
 - Left untreated, can spread to woman's ovaries and fallopian tubes, cause **pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)**
 - PID can lead to infertility, make it difficult or impossible to become pregnant
- Yearly screening recommended by US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for:
 - All sexually active women under 25
 - Older women with new or multiple sex partners
 - Recent reports show less than half of sexually active women under 26 are screened



Genital Warts

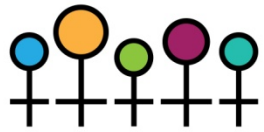
- Caused by viruses
 - **HPV** (Human Papillomavirus) names large group of viruses
 - Certain types of HPV cause infections in genital area
 - Can lead to genital warts, cancer of cervix, vulva, vagina, anus, penis
- Genital HPV is spread easily:
 - Skin-to-skin contact during vaginal, oral, or anal sex
 - Condoms do not totally prevent transmission
 - People living with HIV ***more likely to have HPV, develop genital warts, cervical or anal cancer***



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Genital Warts

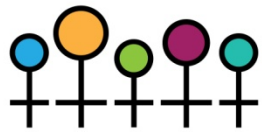
- Important to find HPV early via regular cervical screenings, get treatment, prevent health problems
- Also ***three effective HPV vaccines***
 - Since HPV vaccine introduction several years ago, # of 14 to 19 year old girls with HPV in US has dropped by more than half
- Important for young people to get vaccinated before they have sex (before they have been exposed to HPV)
 - People who are already infected with HPV may not be protected by vaccines



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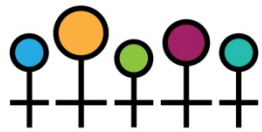
Gonorrhea (“The Clap”)

- Caused by bacteria in vaginal secretions, semen
- Can be spread by:
 - Vaginal, anal, oral sex without latex/polyurethane barrier
- Symptoms may include:
 - Yellowish or greenish vaginal discharge
 - Burning feeling when urinating
 - Can also affect anus and throat
 - Many women have no symptoms
- Can be treated with antibiotics
 - Left untreated, can cause PID, infertility
 - All sexually active women should be screened



Herpes

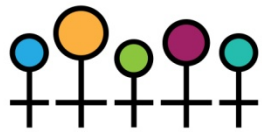
- Caused by a virus in nerves; two common types
 - Herpes simplex type 1 (HSV-1) usually causes cold sores around mouth
 - Herpes simplex type 2 (HSV-2) usually causes sores in genital area
 - Possible to get HSV-2 in mouth, HSV-1 in genital area
- Symptoms include itchy or painful blisters
- Spread through skin-to-skin contact with sores
 - May also spread even before sores can be seen
 - In most people, sores come and go; virus stays in body for life



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Herpes

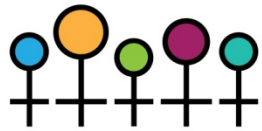
- Sometimes no symptoms; virus "hiding" in nerves
 - Some women with HIV never had blisters or sores before HIV; surprised by "outbreak" of sores
 - Women with HIV may have more frequent, difficult to treat herpes outbreaks
- No cure for herpes; herpes antiviral drugs can:
 - Reduce # of outbreaks if taken daily
 - Shorten and ease outbreaks if taken when symptoms begin
 - Valtrex also shown to lower transmission risk
- Pregnant women can transmit herpes to babies
 - Tell your provider if you have genital herpes, are pregnant or planning pregnancy



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HIV

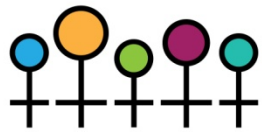
- HIV stands for **Human Immunodeficiency Virus**
 - Virus that causes AIDS
- Present in blood, vaginal secretions, semen, breast milk
- Can be spread through vaginal, oral, or anal sex without condom or latex/polyurethane barrier
 - As many as 1 in 5 US people living with HIV do not know it
- Getting tested for HIV is part of routine, regular health care in many countries



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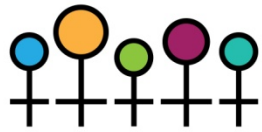
HIV

- Important that you get tested if you:
 - Have ever had vaginal, anal, or oral sex without a condom
 - Have shared needles, syringes to inject drugs, other substances
 - Are uncertain of partner's HIV status; have a partner with HIV
 - Are pregnant or are considering becoming pregnant
 - Have ever been diagnosed with an STD
 - Have hepatitis C
 - Begin treatment for tuberculosis (TB)
- Left untreated, HIV can cause serious illness, death
- ***Effective treatment helps*** people living with HIV stay well



Syphilis

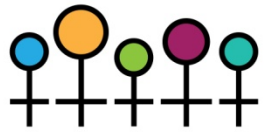
- Caused by bacterium
- Can be spread by:
 - Vaginal, anal, or oral sex without latex or polyurethane barrier
- Has several phases:
 - **Primary syphilis** (early disease): Pain-free open sores (**chancres**) in genital or anal area or around mouth
 - Usually heal on their own in 3-6 weeks
 - **Secondary syphilis** (later stage): Often rash and/or hair loss
 - Left untreated, can proceed to **latent stage**
 - May have no visible symptoms; can damage heart, brain, other organs



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Syphilis

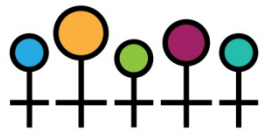
- Can be successfully treated with antibiotics
- Without treatment
 - Can hurt your body's organs
 - Lead to severe illness, even death
- Pregnant women can pass syphilis to their babies during pregnancy and childbirth
 - Important that pregnant women get tested for syphilis



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Other STIs to Know About

- Chancroid
- Hepatitis
- Pubic Lice (“Crabs”)
- Trichomoniasis



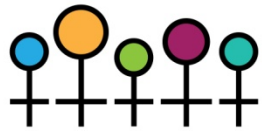
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Chancroid

- Caused by bacterium
- Symptoms may include:
 - Genital sores
 - Vaginal discharge
 - Burning feeling when urinating
 - Swollen lymph nodes in groin
- Can be spread by:
 - Vaginal or anal sex
 - Skin-to-skin contact with sores
- Can be treated with antibiotics



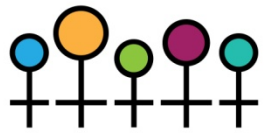
Credit: Medicinenet.com



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Hepatitis

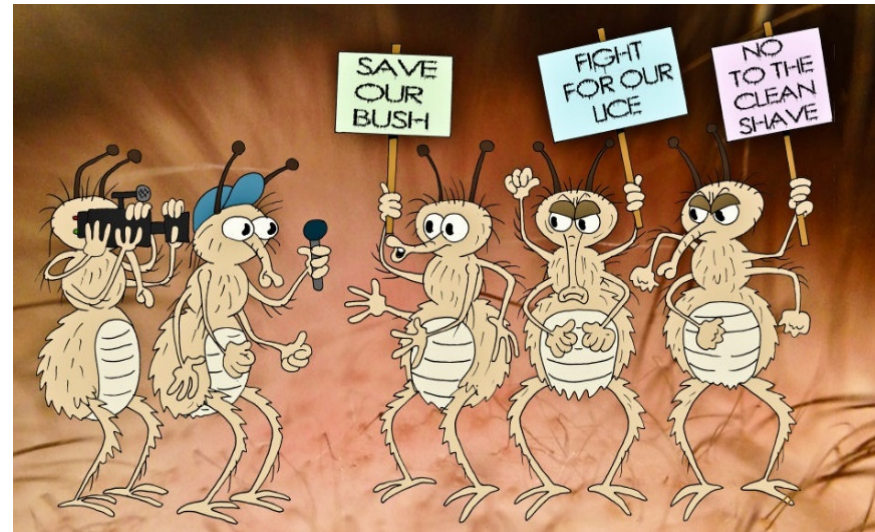
- Inflammation (irritation) of liver
- Some types of hepatitis caused by viruses in blood, vaginal secretions, semen, breast milk
 - Hepatitis A (HAV), hepatitis B (HBV), hepatitis C (HCV) can all be sexually transmitted
- Vaccine to prevent HAV and HBV, not HCV
 - HAV goes away on its own; HBV/HCV can become chronic (long-term), very serious
 - HBV and HCV often have no symptoms
 - Important for people living with HIV to be tested for HBV and HCV, treated if necessary



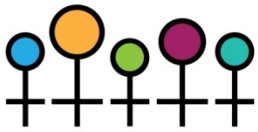
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Pubic Lice (“Crabs”)

- Live in pubic hair (hair around genitals)
- Can be transmitted by:
 - Skin-to-skin contact
 - Infected clothes and bedding
- Symptoms may include:
 - Intense itching
 - Seeing lice or eggs in hair
- Can be treated with over-the-counter medications
 - Pregnant women must use products designed just for them
 - Wash contaminated clothes, linen in hot water, laundry soap; kills lice, eggs



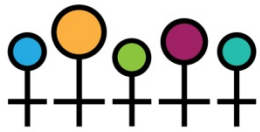
Credit: Jennifer2016 on Glogster



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Trichomoniasis

- Caused by **protozoa** (single-celled germ)
- Can be spread during vaginal, oral, or anal sex without a condom or latex/polyurethane barrier
 - Common cause of vaginal infections
- Symptoms may include:
 - Foamy, foul-smelling vaginal discharge
 - Itching
 - Sometimes there are no symptoms at all
- Can be successfully treated with antibiotics
 - Person with trichomoniasis and her sexual partner must both be treated, or untreated partner can re-infect

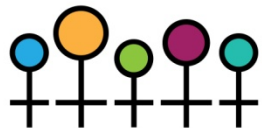


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Protecting Yourself and Others

You can ***greatly reduce risk*** of getting many STIs if you:

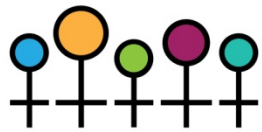
- Use a latex condom for vaginal and anal sex or a plastic condom if you are sensitive to latex
 - Female condom can also prevent many STIs
- Use condoms without lubricant for oral sex on a man
- Use latex or plastic barriers (dental dams, plastic wrap) for oral sex on a woman or for oral-anal sex; use latex or plastic gloves if you have cuts or sores on your hands
- Use water-based lubricants (KY, Astroglide) with latex barriers
- DO NOT use oil-based products (Vaseline, lotions); destroy latex
- Do not use lubricants or condoms that contain nonoxynol-9 (N-9)
 - Can damage lining of vagina or anus, increase HIV risk



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Protecting Yourself and Others

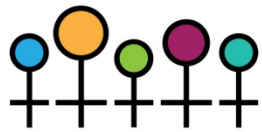
- Wash shared sex toys or put on fresh condom between users
- Use a latex condom with methods of birth control (birth control pills, shots, implants, etc) that do not protect you from STIs
- Talk with your sex partner(s) about STIs and using condoms
- Talk honestly with your provider, sex partner(s), about any STIs you or your partner has or has had
- Have regular pelvic exams, cervical cancer screening (do not screen for STIs other than HPV)
- Talk to your provider about having routine STI screening
- Do not share needles or syringes for injecting drugs or other substances; if you do share drug equipment, clean your works



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The Bottom Line

- There are many sexually transmitted infections, including HIV
- Some can be cured; many can be managed
 - Many can cause serious health and fertility problems or even death if untreated
 - If needed, get treatment your provider recommends
 - Even if symptoms go away, still need to finish treatment
 - Make sure your partner(s) gets treated, so that you do not pass an infection back and forth



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Learn More!

- To learn more about this topic, and for links to articles featuring more details, please read the full fact sheet on this topic:
 - Fact sheet: [Sexually Transmitted Infections or Diseases \(STIs or STDs\)](#)
- For more fact sheets and to connect to our community of women living with HIV, visit:
 - www.thewellproject.org
 - www.facebook.com/thewellproject
 - www.twitter.com/thewellproject