

GET THE 411

on STIs
(sexually transmitted infections)

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STIs

(Sexually Transmitted Infections)



We all know about HIV. It is the STI that we hear about the most. But did you know that there are lots of other STIs, and that for some STIs like chlamydia, adolescent girls and young women in South

Africa have between 8% to 20% chance of infection. This means 2 out of 10 young women could have chlamydia! And for other STIs like bacterial vaginosis, the risks are as high as 1 out of 2!

So, if you're between the ages of 15-24, you are at risk of having an STI. And you may not even know about it.

An STI is a sexually transmitted infection passed from one person to another person through sexual contact. You can get an STI from all kinds of sex, especially when genitals touch, rub or penetrate, or come into contact with sexual fluids. This includes oral, anal, vaginal sex, or using a shared sex toy. STIs can happen from having sex even just once! Even if you don't have lots of sexual partners, you're at risk. It's a drag... but this little book will help you know your stuff.



I have no symptoms
so I don't have an STI.

And if I do, what's
the big deal?



For many people, STIs don't show any symptoms.
(Symptoms are visible signs that you have an STI.)

You could have an STI but no signs on your body.
This means you could:

- ♥ Have one or more STI and not realise it
- ♥ Infect your sexual partner(s) if left untreated

IMPORTANT:

**Not everyone who has an STI has any signs or
symptoms of an STI.**



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If you have an STI,

it's super important that you tell your sex partner so that they can also get screened, and get treatment! It's the right thing to do!

Ps: This goes for guys and girls.

Here's the problem:

STIs, when left undiagnosed and untreated, could lead to these problems down the road:

- Increase your risk of other STIs, including HIV infection: Many STIs cause cuts or tears in the skin on your genitals. This makes it easier for HIV transmission.
- Increase your risk of infertility (not being able to get pregnant).
- Increase your risk of premature labour (early childbirth) if you're pregnant.
- Increase your risk of cervical cancer.
- You may get pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)... which can cause infertility, chronic pelvic pain or tubal pregnancies.
- Some STIs can be passed to your baby during childbirth, which can be fatal for your baby.
- Left untreated, some STIs can result in eye inflammation, heart disease, rectal cancer, ectopic pregnancy which is very dangerous for mom and baby, or narrowing of the urethra.

If you're on PrEP, there's a good chance you've chilled with the Project PrEP team. This is the same team bringing you this new STI screening and treatment opportunity.



Ok ok, I get it.

Now what?

First, let's take a look at the most common types of STIs that we're screening for, their common symptoms and what they can do to your body if you don't get treatment:

STI name	Symptoms	What happens if left untreated?
Trichomonas vaginalis (Trich)	Often has no symptoms. If you have symptoms, they can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bad-smelling genital discharge• Genital itching• Painful urination	Can increase your risk of premature delivery (early childbirth) for pregnant women This could impact the baby's health.
Bacterial vaginosis (BV)	Often has no symptoms. If you have symptoms, they can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unusual vaginal discharge or bleeding• Itching or odour	Can increase your risk of getting other STI infections.
Human papillomavirus (HPV)	Often has no symptoms. If you have symptoms, they can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Warts on the genitals or surrounding skin• Genital warts can be removed through surgery or may go away on their own	Can increase your risk of cervical cancer.

STI name	Symptoms	What happens if left untreated?
Chlamydia trachomatis (Chlamydia)	<p>Often has no symptoms. If you have symptoms, they can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Painful urination • Vaginal, penile or rectal discharge • Painful sexual intercourse in women • Bleeding between periods and after sex in women • Testicular pain in men • Fever 	<p>You may get pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)... PID can cause infertility (not being able to get pregnant), chronic pelvic pain, tubal pregnancies.</p>
Neisseria Gonorrhoea (Gonorrhoea, Drop)	<p>Often has no symptoms. If you have symptoms, they can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Painful urination • Vaginal, penile or rectal discharge • Painful sexual intercourse in women • Bleeding between periods and after sex in women • Testicular pain in men • Fever • Pain in the lower stomach • Rash 	<p>Can lead to infertility (not being able to fall pregnant).</p>
Herpes simplex virus 2 (Genital Herpes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unusual vaginal, penile or rectal discharge • Fever • Genital sores or blisters • Painful urination • Rash • Swollen glands in the groin • Flu-like symptoms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May lead to miscarriage. • Can increase your risk of premature delivery (early childbirth) for pregnant women. • Can be passed to your child during childbirth which can be deadly.

The good news is:

STIs caused by bacteria can be treated and often cured with antibiotics.

What if the STI I have, is a virus and not caused by bacteria?

If you have more than one sex partner, it's a good idea to screen for STIs every six months.

STIs caused by viruses can be controlled, but not cured. If you get a viral STI, you will always have it. But the symptoms can be treated with medication. Some viral STIs include HIV, genital herpes, genital warts, human papilloma virus (HPV), and hepatitis virus 2.

The best thing to do is make sure you use a condom every time you have sex. Condoms are 98% effective against STIs. They don't protect you from all STIs because some can spread from skin touching skin...so if you don't use condoms properly or they break or slip, you are at risk of STI infection. You can even get one STI called HPV from fingering. **This is why annual STI screenings are always a good idea.**

I *screened* for STIs and have one! What do I do now?

Firstly, **congratulations** on taking control of your body, your health and your future. Like any problem you encounter, finding out what you're dealing with is the first step. Here's what you can do next:

- ♥ Go back to the clinic as soon as possible to get treatment.
- ♥ Make sure you finish all the medication you're given to treat your STI(s). If you don't finish all the medication, the STI may come back.
- ♥ Do not share the medication with anyone else.
- ♥ If you go to your traditional healer, make sure you still go to the clinic and discuss the treatments from your traditional healer with the health professional at your clinic.
- ♥ If you've followed all these steps and you've still got symptoms, head straight back to your clinic and tell them about it.

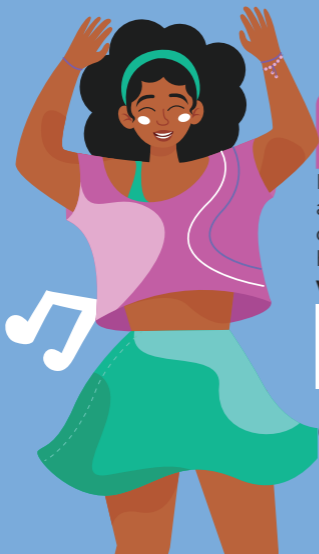
Remember, you have a right to access friendly and non-judgmental health services at your local clinic!

Important!

Even if you have an STI, and even if there is no cure, you can deal with it. And you are not alone!

Your healthcare provider will be able to treat your STI so that you can make sure you are managing it. You'll get it under control, so it won't lead to more issues.

And you won't be able to spread it to your sexual partner(s).



You've got the power!

For more information about STIs or any questions you have head to:

www.bwisehealth.com



PS: It won't chow your data on MTN, Vodacom or CellC

www.myprep.co.za



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