

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

Adolescents in the United States have high rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), with half of all new cases occurring in people ages 15–24. Some common STIs in teens include:

- Chlamydia: The most common STI in teens, especially in females
- Gonorrhea: A common STI in teens, also known as "the clap"
- Human papillomavirus (HPV): A common STI in teens
- Herpes simplex virus: A common STI in teens
- Syphilis.
- Trichomoniasis.
- Hepatitis B.
- HIV/AIDS.
- HPV

Some factors that increase the risk of STIs in teens include:

- Having multiple sex partners
- Not using barrier protection consistently or correctly
- Having lower socioeconomic status
- Facing obstacles to accessing health care
- Adverse childhood experiences, such as abuse, neglect, incarceration, divorce, and household substance abuse

If a teen is diagnosed with an STI, they should:

- Start treatment right away
- Take the full course of medicines
- Follow their healthcare provider's advice
- Tell all recent sex partners and urge them to get healthcare checkups

Protecting your teen from STIs

The best way to prevent your teen from contracting an STI is to advise them to not have any type of sexual contact with another person. But if they are or will be sexually active, there are many safety measures to follow. These are advised by experts to help reduce your teen's risk of getting an STI. They include:

- Have a mutually monogamous sexual relationship with an uninfected partner.
- Use (consistently and correctly) a male latex or female polyurethane condom, even for oral sex.
- Reduce the chance of getting an HIV infection by preventing and controlling other STIs. Having another STI makes it easier to get infected with HIV.

- Strongly think about taking HIV prevention treatments, including:
 - **PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis).** Taking medicines to prevent HIV within 72 hours after a risky exposure.
 - **PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis).** Taking medicine regularly to prevent HIV infection from possible future exposures during unsafe sex.
- If you're going to have sex with someone who is HIV-positive, make sure the other person is taking their HIV medicines. Also make sure their viral load is completely under control (undetectable).
- Delay having sexual relationships as long as possible. The younger a person is when they start to have sex for the first time, the more susceptible they are to getting an STI.
- Have regular checkups for HIV and STIs.
- Learn the symptoms of STIs. Get medical help as soon as possible if you have any symptom.
- Don't have sex during menstruation.
- Don't have anal intercourse.
- Don't use a male latex condom and topical microbicides together. The topical agent can break down the condom, making it less effective.
- Don't douche.

Facts about STIs and teens

1. STIs affect people of all backgrounds and income levels. But nearly 50 out of 100 STI cases in the U.S. happen in people younger than age 25.
2. STIs are on the rise, possibly due to more sexually active people who have multiple sex partners during their lives.
3. Many STIs cause no symptoms at first. And many STI symptoms may be confused with those of other diseases not spread by sex, especially in people with a uterus. Even symptomless STIs can be contagious. **They can later cause long-term (chronic) or serious health problems.**
4. People with a **uterus** suffer more frequent and severe symptoms from STIs: Some STIs can spread into the **uterus and fallopian tubes and cause PID**. This can lead to both infertility and ectopic (tubal) pregnancy. Some strains of HPV infection may also be linked to **cervical cancer**. In all people, these strains may **cause anal, head, and neck cancer**. STIs can be passed from a **birthing parent to their baby** before or during birth. Some newborn infections may be successfully treated. Others may cause a **baby to be permanently disabled or even die**.
5. Once diagnosed, some STIs can be successfully treated. Some STIs, such as herpes, can't be completely cured and may happen again. **Others can cause a lifelong effect.**
6. Keyways to prevent transmission of HIV infection include PEP within 72 hours of exposure and PrEP to prevent transmission if there is ongoing risk. Also make sure that HIV-positive partners are under treatment and have their virus under control