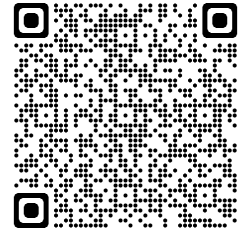




Be Safe: Prevent STIs

Healthy Living Message



What are Sexually Transmitted Infections?

- Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) are infections that you can get through sexual contact with someone who has an STI.
- STIs are the same thing as sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

What's Important to Know?

- Many STIs do not have symptoms, and you can have an STI and pass it on without knowing it.
- Some STIs can cause organ damage and infertility.
- Having one STI may raise your risk for getting other STIs.
- Some examples of STIs are chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, trichomonas, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and human papillomavirus (HPV).
- You can get STIs from any sexual activity, whether it involves the mouth, anus, vagina, or penis.
- STIs can also be passed through body fluids on sex toys.
- If you are pregnant, you can pass some STIs to your baby before or during the baby's birth.
- Most STIs can be treated and cured. Some cannot be cured but can be managed by taking medicines.
- If you are treated for an STI, your sex partner(s) should also be treated to prevent you from being re-infected.

How Can STIs Be Prevented?

- The spread of some STIs can be reduced by using latex condoms every time you have sex.
 - » Lambskin condoms, birth control pills, and some other types of birth control such as IUDs can help prevent pregnancy, but they **will not protect you** from STIs.

- Having only one sex partner helps reduce your risk of getting an STI. If that sex partner has unprotected sex with other sex partners, that raises your risk of getting an STI.
- A vaccine is available to protect against HPV, the virus that causes cervical cancer and other types of cancer including that of the penis, anus, and throat.
- Medications, known as PrEP, can lower your risk of getting HIV from sex by about 99% when taken correctly.

Want to Know More?

If you want to learn more about STIs or think you may have one, talk with your VA health care team. They can help if you have questions about testing, treatment, or ways to improve your sexual health.

You can find additional information and resources at VA's Prevention website using the QR code above or the link below:

www.prevention.va.gov/Healthy_Living/Be_Safe_Prevent_Sexually_Transmitted_Infections.asp

