

What You Need to Know About STIs

Millions of people around the world are still contracting sexually transmitted infections (STIs) every day. Infection is usually through sexual contact (vaginal, anal or oral) and the sharing of needles, although mothers can infect their babies through pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding.

Anyone can contract an STI, irrespective of sexual orientation or standards of hygiene, although teenagers, young adults, men who have intercourse with men, and sex workers are most at risk.

Symptoms and treatment

Because STIs often don't present with symptoms, particularly in the early stages of infection, regular checkups are important. However, you should look out for these symptoms:

- Pain or a burning sensation during urination
- Discharge
- Abdominal pain
- Sores that present without pain
- Flu-like symptoms and rashes
- Painful blisters or sores in the mouth or groin
- Itching in the genital region

STIs can be treated with antiviral medication, antibiotics and follow-up care.

How to prevent STIs

- Use good-quality condoms
- Test regularly
- Discuss vaccination options with your doctor
- Have honest conversations with your partner about your health history
- Limit your number of sexual partners



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