NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT of HEALTH and SENIOR SERVICES

NJ HIV/STD Hotline
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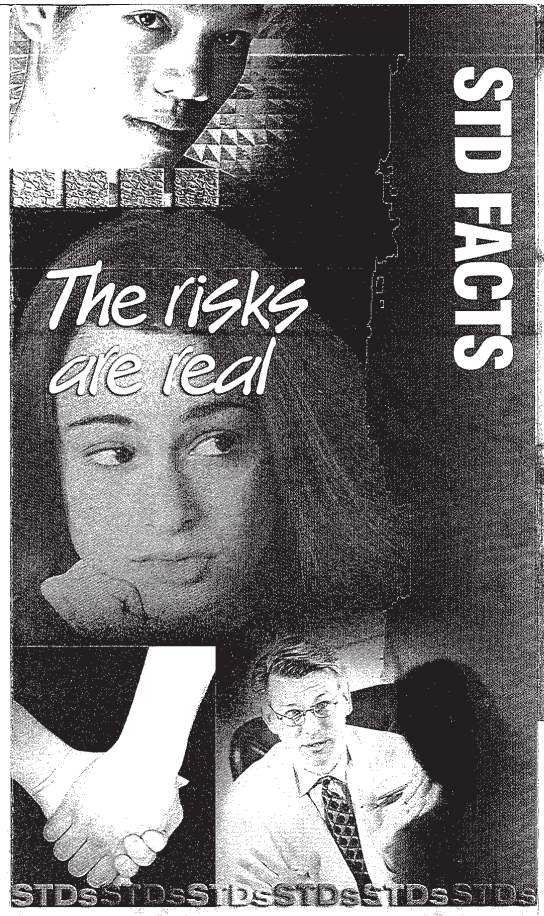


STD FACTS

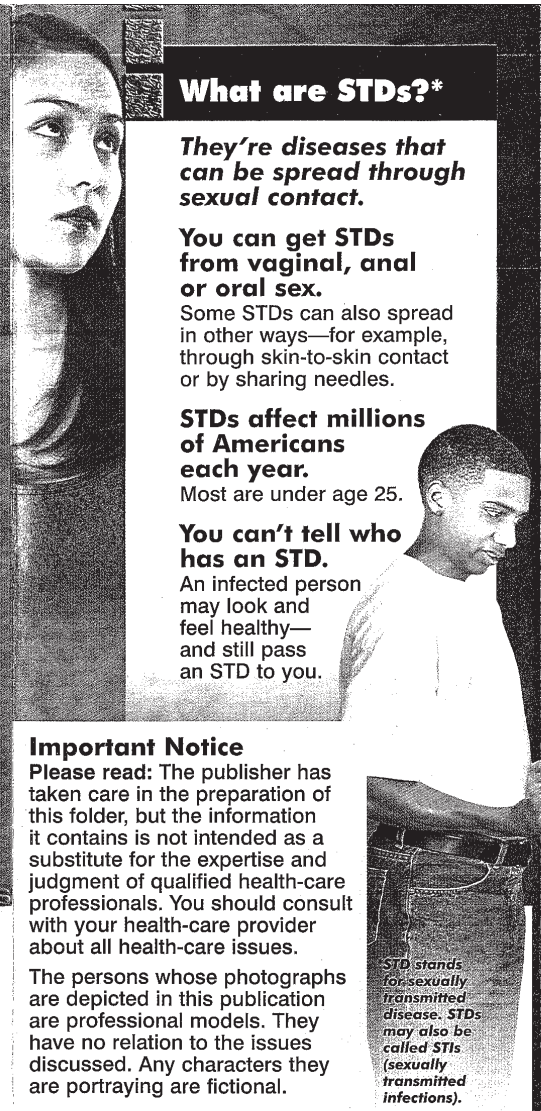
What are STDs?*

They're diseases that can be spread through sexual contact.

You can get STDs from vaginal, anal or oral sex.
Some STDs can also spread in other ways—for example, through skin-to-skin contact or by sharing needles.

STDs affect millions of Americans each year.
Most are under age 25.

You can't tell who has an STD.
An infected person may look and feel healthy—and still pass an STD to you.



STD stands for sexually transmitted disease. STDs may also be called STIs (sexually transmitted infections).

Important Notice

Please read: The publisher has taken care in the preparation of this folder, but the information it contains is not intended as a substitute for the expertise and judgment of qualified health-care professionals. You should consult with your health-care provider about all health-care issues.

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2004 Edition (05-04-A)
Printed in USA. • Channing Bete Company, One Community Place, South Deerfield, MA 01373. **To reorder call (800) 628-7733 or visit www.channing-bete.com and ask for item number PS33882**
Price List A

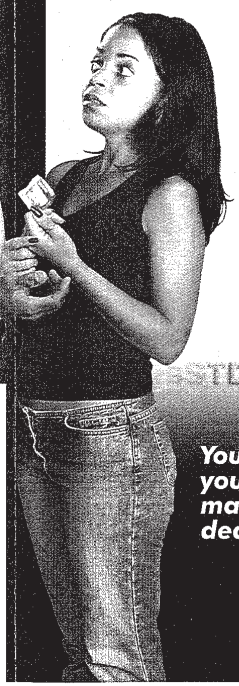
The safest sex is no sex.

It's the only sure way to prevent getting STDs through sex. If you decide to have sex, reduce your risks:

Know your partner.
Stay faithful to one sex partner who:

- is not infected
- has no other sex partners
- has never injected drugs.

Some people may not be truthful about—or remember—their past. You and your partner should get tested for STDs to be 100% sure.



Always use a new male latex condom.
Condoms aren't 100% effective. But they can help protect against HIV and other STDs. (Some STDs can be caused by contact with infected areas not covered by a condom.) Be sure to use a new latex condom properly for each act of vaginal, anal or oral sex. (Birth control pills do not help protect against STDs.)

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Your health—even your life—depends on making smart decisions about sex.

Some STDs can be cured.

Gonorrhea
Symptoms are more common in men than in women. Symptoms appear about 2-10 days after infection and may include:

- discharge from the penis, vagina or rectum
- painful, difficult urination
- abdominal pain or bleeding between periods (in women).

Gonorrhea can result in serious problems—including infertility and, in women, pelvic inflammatory disease (PID).

Chlamydia
Most people have no symptoms. Mild symptoms (about 1-3 weeks after infection) may include:

- a burning sensation when urinating
- discharge from the penis or vagina.

Chlamydia can lead to PID and infertility.

Syphilis
About 2-6 weeks after infection, a painless sore may appear on or near the genitals, anus or mouth. It goes away, but a rash elsewhere on the body may follow. Syphilis can cause:

- damage to the heart
- blindness
- mental illness
- death.

Trichomoniasis
Men rarely have symptoms. In women, symptoms (within 5-28 days after infection) may include:

- vaginal itching, redness or discharge
- pain during sex
- burning urination.

Trichomoniasis can cause problems in pregnancy, including premature delivery.

Early treatment can help prevent serious problems.

If you have an STD:

- Ask your local or state health department about partner notification.
- Follow all instructions on treatment and follow-up visits.
- Don't have sex until you get your health-care provider's OK.

Other STDs can be treated—but not cured.

There is currently no cure for:

HIV
About 1-2 months after infection, a person may have:

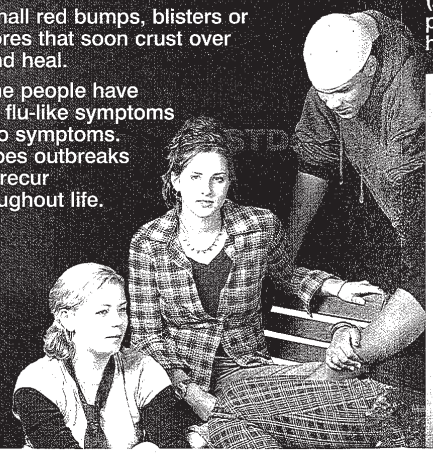
- swollen glands
- fatigue
- a fever or night sweats
- weight loss
- other flu-like symptoms.

Symptoms may disappear, then return years later (possibly as AIDS develops). There is no cure for HIV—and there is no vaccine (shot) to help prevent it. But proper treatment can extend the lives of people with HIV and AIDS.

Genital herpes
Within 3 weeks after infection, a person may develop:

- itching, burning or pain in the legs, buttocks or genital area
- vaginal discharge
- pressure in the abdomen
- small red bumps, blisters or sores that soon crust over and heal.

Some people have mild flu-like symptoms or no symptoms. Herpes outbreaks can recur throughout life.



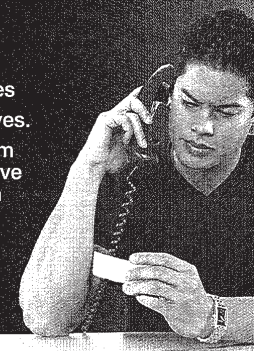
Genital warts (HPV)
About 3 months or more after infection, small, hard, painless bumps may appear on or around the genitals or anus. Genital warts can cause:

- difficulty in childbirth
- cervical cancer (and increase the risk for certain other cancers).

Hepatitis B
About 2-3 months after infection, some people may experience:

- fatigue
- loss of appetite
- diarrhea or nausea
- dark urine or pale feces
- yellowing of skin or eyes.

Most people recover from hepatitis B, but some have it for life. Hepatitis B can cause possibly fatal liver problems. (Ask your health-care provider about hepatitis B shots.)



Get early testing and treatment.
Contact a health-care provider, a family planning clinic or your health department. Or call the CDC National STD and AIDS Hotlines:

- 1-800-342-2437 (English)
- 1-800-344-7432 (Spanish)
- 1-800-243-7889 (TTY).

If you're pregnant or planning a pregnancy, get tested. STDs can harm your baby.

You can stay STD-free.