

STI/Condom Fact Sheet for Non-Clinicians

What is a Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI)?

Sexually Transmitted infections (STIs) are infections that are spread from one person to the other during unprotected sexual intercourse; which is either vaginal, anal or oral sex. STIs can also be transmitted from mother to child, during pregnancy and during birth.

Symptoms of STIs

Many STIs have no signs and therefore a person with an STI can have one of these symptoms:

- Abnormal Vaginal or penile discharge
- Burning Urine
- Genital Ulcer
- Painful Intercourse
- Lower abdominal pain
- Scrotal swelling



Risk Factors of getting infected with an STI

- Inconsistent or no of condom use
- Use of hormonal contraceptive without condom use
- History of diagnosed and untreated STI.
- If you have a partner who has an STI or who once had an STI in the last 8 weeks
- Periodic separation of partners (Partner not always available e.g travelling partner)
- Uncircumcised males

Common Types of STIs

There are various types of STIs caused by different disease organisms. These organisms are responsible for causing the symptoms that have been identified above. It is possible that more than one organism can cause the same symptoms; therefore It is important to know how to identify the symptoms so that you can visit the nearest health facility for treatment and further tests. Following here are the highlights of the Types of STIs according to the causative organisms and a group of symptoms which they cause.

Type of STI / Causative organism	Symptoms	Complications
Gonorrhea (drop), Chlamydia in males	Urethral (Penile) Discharge Burning Urine Frequent urination	Involvement of other body parts, mainly anus, throat, eye; urethral stricture, cystitis, Scrotal Swelling and infertility
Gonorrhea, Chlamydia, Trachomoniasis, Candidiasis in females	Unusual Vaginal Discharge Burning Urine Painful Intercourse Vaginal Itching	Involvement of other body parts mainly anus, throat, eye; Cervicitis, Endometritis, Salpingitis. In pregnancy: premature membrane rupture, pre-term delivery. In neonates: conjunctivitis
Gonorrhea, Chlamydia in females	Lower abdominal pain Painful Intercourse	Chronic or recurrent salpingitis, ectopic pregnancy, infertility, acute peritonitis, death.

Type of STI / Causative organism	Symptoms	Complications
	(It is also possible not to see the vaginal discharge, and it can be discovered by a health care provider on examination)	
Syphilis, Chancroid, Genital Herpes	Genital ulcer (sore)	Involvement of other body parts, mainly anus, mouth, eye; general body pain and lymph node swelling, rashes, Neurosyphilis, scars, fistula, strictures, elephantiasis of genitals. In pregnancy: miscarriage, stillbirth, premature delivery In neonates: low birth weight, congenital syphilis
Gonorrhoea , Chlamydia in males	Scrotal swelling Scrotal pain	Chronic and recurrent scrotal swelling, Infertility

How can I protect myself from STIs?

- Reporting early any STI symptoms at the clinic for management
- Visiting a health care facility regularly for STIs and HIV screening.
 - NB: A person with an STI is at greater risk of HIV acquisition and transmission.
- Abstaining from penetrative sexual intercourse.
- Delaying sexual debut
- **Consistent and correct use of Condoms**
- Pregnant women to attend the antenatal care early and be screened for both HIV and STIs which includes Syphilis
- **Partner notification, tracing and treatment** to avoid re-infection

What to expect at the clinic

- Private and confidential consultation
- Full history including sexual history will be taken.
- Full examination and diagnosis of STI will be done.
- STI treatment will be provided.
- HIV test will be offered.
- Condom provision and demonstration
- **Partner notification** slip (s) will be offered
 - **Partner notification** is the process of identifying sexual partner(s) of a client with an STI and ensuring that they are aware of their exposure and they should also be treated.
 - Relevant partner(s) include those with whom the client with an STI has had sexual intercourse in the last 8 weeks even if they have no symptoms.

What are the benefits of Condom Use?

- Used correctly and consistently; **condoms** can be used as a dual protection method; for protection against STIs including HIV and prevention of unwanted pregnancy