

STI Fact sheet #1

Genital Warts

Symptoms:

- Small lumps on, and around, the genitals and surrounding skin.
- They may be uncomfortable but not usually sore; they may be itchy.

How is it spread?

- A virus, spread through sexual contact.
- The genital wart virus is a different strain from that which causes warts on the hands and a verruca on the feet.

Diagnosis.

- A doctor or nurse can usually diagnose genital warts by examining the genitalia.
- In both men and women, they may be very small.
- When genital warts are inside the urethra or vagina, or on the cervix they are harder to see.

Treatment

- Freezing with chemicals.
- By applying solutions which can remove the warts.
- Treatment of genital warts may take several weeks or even months.
- There is no cure for genital warts, and they may regrow.
- Sometimes the wart(s) may have to be removed by surgery

Notes

- Condoms can help to prevent onward transmission of the virus.
- The patient may need to be seen again if treatment is not working.

STI Fact sheet #2

Chlamydia

Symptoms:

- The majority of people have no symptoms.
- Increased discharge from the penis or vagina.
- Pain or burning when passing urine.
- Sometimes there can be bleeding after sex or in between periods.
- Some women can have lower abdominal pain or pain during sex.

How is it spread?

- Chlamydia is spread by having unprotected sexual intercourse.

Diagnosis.

Chlamydia can be detected in women, by taking a vaginal swab and in men, a urine sample. Chlamydia will not show up on the swab until 2 weeks after getting the infection.

Treatment

1 week of antibiotics

Important not to have sex during this time and all sexual contacts must be treated.

Notes

- Most people who have chlamydia don't even know it and they don't have any symptoms.
- If someone does not get treated, chlamydia can remain in his or her body and they can infect any future sexual partners.
- Long-term infection often causes pain in the lower part of the abdomen (tummy) for women and in the testes in men.
- Chlamydia can lead to infertility in women (meaning she is unable to have a baby later in life).
- Chlamydia is the most common STI in the UK – probably in the world.

STI Fact sheet #3

HIV

Symptoms:

- Within six weeks of catching HIV, nearly 50% of people suffer from a flu like illness (with swollen glands that last for a couple of weeks).
- The flu like illness gets better without treatment.
- It can be years before other symptoms occur e.g. the development of AIDS - Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome.

How is it spread?

HIV can be spread in a number of ways:

- In the UK, most HIV is caught through sexual contact with semen or vaginal fluid.

Diagnosis.

- By a blood test which recognises the antibodies to the virus (the body tries to destroy the virus by making antibodies).
- The test takes 1 month from when you are infected, to show as positive.

Treatment

- There is no cure but anti-retroviral treatment can reduce the chance of passing on HIV to zero.

Notes

- People with HIV need regular health check-ups.
- They also need advice on how to prevent spreading the virus to other people.
- Early detection and treatment is important, as it helps to prevent transmission.

STI Fact sheet #4

Hepatitis B

Symptoms:

- Many people with hepatitis B will not have symptoms.
- Symptoms may not appear for weeks or months after the virus has been caught.
- Symptoms may include flu-like illness, loss of appetite, feeling sick, diarrhoea and jaundice (yellow eyes and skin).

How is it spread?

- Hepatitis B is spread through body fluids such as semen, vaginal discharge and blood

Diagnosis.

- The virus can be detected by a blood test, this may take 3 months to show up from the time you are infected.

Treatment

- There is no cure for hepatitis B.
- Patients may need to go to hospital for treatment of the symptoms

Notes

- Some people don't get rid of the virus and become carriers of Hepatitis B.
- Patients who have Hepatitis B will need advice on how to avoid giving the virus to other people.
- You can be vaccinated against hepatitis B.

STI Fact sheet # 5

Thrush

Symptoms:

- In women, a white, creamy discharge from the vagina with itching and sometimes spots or redness. This is caused by yeast growing in the vagina.
- Men who have thrush usually have spots and itching around the genitals

How is it spread?

- It is not sexually transmitted.
- Thrush is caused by a fungus/yeast.
- The fungus is often present on skin normally, and an infection can start after taking antibiotics or from becoming sore from sports such as cycling or horse riding.

Diagnosis.

- Yeast from the fungus can be detected by taking a swab from the discharge.
- The diagnosis can often be made immediately in a sexual health clinic.

Treatment

- Thrush can be treated with an antifungal treatment.

Notes

- Thrush occurs naturally in a healthy vagina.
- Some people have problems with thrush which can be due to something simple like using bubble bath which can wash away the natural oils from the vagina.
- Men can get thrush to, although it is more common in women.

STI Fact sheet #6

Genital Herpes

(pronounced 'her-pees', not herps)

Symptoms:

- Very painful sores or blisters around the male or female genitals or inside the vagina.
- The pain may be so bad that the person finds it difficult to pass urine.
- Spots look like cold sores that people get around the mouth.

How is it spread?

- Genital herpes is spread through sexual contact.
- It is possible to spread the 'cold sore' virus to the genitals (through oral sex) or to have genital herpes alone.

Diagnosis.

- Diagnosis is usually obvious from the appearance of the sores.
- A swab is taken from the sores to confirm the presence of the virus.

Treatment

- Tablets called anti-virals, can make the condition less severe, less painful and more manageable but there is no cure.
- Creams and pain killers can also help.

Notes

- Once someone has caught genital herpes, the virus remains inside their body forever.
- Genital herpes may come back (recur) at any time.
- It is possible to pass the virus on, even when the person hasn't got symptoms, so condoms are recommended to help to prevent transmission.
- It is important for people who have herpes to tell their sexual partners as they should not be knowingly passing on an STI.

STI Fact sheet #7

Gonorrhoea

Symptoms:

- Yellowish or greenish discharge from the penis or vagina.
- Sometimes the discharge from gonorrhoea is accompanied with burning when passing urine.
- Women may have lower abdominal pain.

How is it spread?

- Gonorrhoea is caused by bacteria which is spread through sexual intercourse.
- It can also be spread through oral sex.

Diagnosis.

- Gonorrhoea can be detected by taking a swab from the discharge
- It can also be detected by a swab in women and by a urine sample in men.

Treatment

- Gonorrhoea is treated with an antibiotic injection.
- All sexual partners must also be treated.
- It is important not to have sex until treatment is complete.

Notes

- If it is not treated, gonorrhoea (which is often called 'the clap') can lead to long-term infection which causes a lot of pain.
- The bacterial infection of gonorrhoea can cause infertility in women (meaning she cannot have a baby in later life).
- There are now problems with antibiotic resistance (where the bacteria no longer respond to an antibiotic) which can sometimes make gonorrhoea hard to treat.

STI Fact sheet #8

Syphilis

Symptoms:

- The first signs of syphilis are usually a single, painless sore, on the genital area, which appears after about a week, and clears up on its own.
- Several weeks or months later, the person may develop a rash (on the hands or feet) this is not painful, does not itch and will also clear up its own.
- Other symptoms of syphilis may occur many years later and affect all parts of the body.

How is it spread?

- The syphilis bacteria are spread through sexual intercourse.

Diagnosis.

- Syphilis is usually detected by a blood test.

Treatment

- Syphilis is usually easily cured in its early stages with antibiotics.
- Blood tests are needed to check the treatment has worked.

Notes

- No long-term problems if syphilis is treated early.
- If it is not treated for a long time, syphilis is a difficult disease to deal with and can lead to dementia in the later stages.