

## What are STIs?

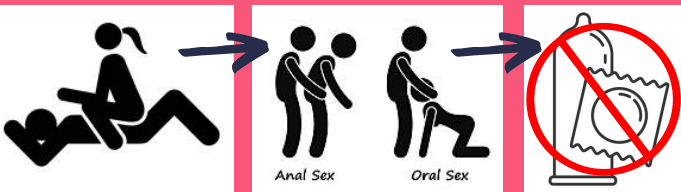


Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs, also called STDs) are a group of infections that can be spread from person to person through sexual activity.

Examples are HIV, Syphilis, Herpes, Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) also called genital warts, Hepatitis B and C and Gonorrhea.

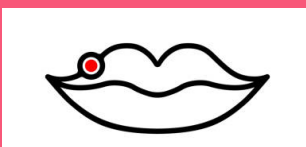
## You can get an STI:

- By having unprotected vaginal, anal or oral sex without a condom.
- Some STIs like syphilis, HIV and herpes can be spread to a baby during pregnancy or birth. This can be prevented by taking medication.
- Some STIs can be spread by the mouth, rectum or open sores.



Anal Sex

Oral Sex



## Where to get Help:

### You can contact:

- **National AIDS Helpline:** 0800 012 322

### For counselling and emotional support:

- **National Counselling Line:** 0861 322 322
- **Suicide Helpline:** 0800 567 567

### Organizations that offer help and support:

- **Thuthuzela Care Centres:** there are over 50 centres nationwide that offer emergency services to victims of rape and those accompanying them. To find a centre near you visit [www.gov.za/TCC](http://www.gov.za/TCC)
- **loveLife:** loveLife Plz Cal Me services offer psychosocial support to youth. To get help, send a please call me to MTN \*121\*0833231023#, Cell C \*111\*0833231023#, Telkom and Vodacom \*140\*0833231023#



POSITIVE ACTION

ViiV



## Things to know about: **SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STIS)** *Also called STDs*

### For Adolescent Girls and Young Women with Disabilities



## STIs can lead to...

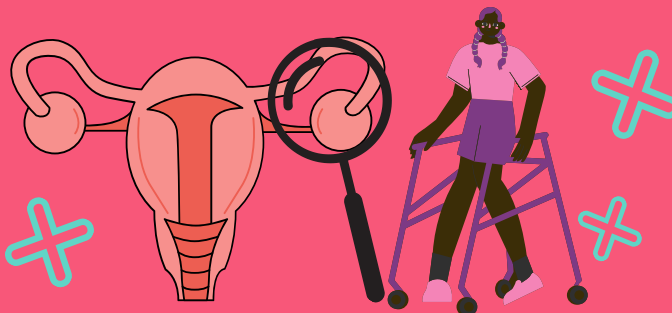
- Cancer - genital warts (HPV) leads to cervical cancer and Hepatitis B and C lead to liver cancer.
- Infertility (not being able to have children).
- Death and disability if STIs are not treated.
- A higher risk of spreading and getting HIV infection.

## Symptoms (signs) of an STI include:

- Itchy vagina
- Lower back or stomach pain
- A burning feeling when peeing or having sex
- Sores on your vagina, mouth or penis
- Bad smelling vaginal discharge or pee



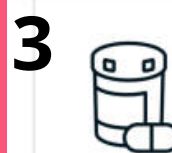
Women are more likely not to have visible signs of an STI, this is because the signs can be inside the vagina or there may be no signs at all. This does not mean there is no STI.



This is why it is important to go for regular checkups at your local clinic or gynecologist.

## If you think you have an STI:

1. Go to a clinic and get tested as soon as possible. Leaving an STI untreated could make it worse.
2. If you have an STI, tell all your sexual partners so they can get tested too.
3. Take all of your prescribed medicine until it is finished, even if you feel better.
4. Go back to the clinic to make sure the infection is gone or better.



## To protect yourself from STIs:

- Go for regular checkups and get tested for STIs and HIV!
- There are vaccines to protect you from genital warts (HPV) and Hepatitis B.
- Use condoms consistently and correctly during penetrative sex.
- Consider taking pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). Check to see if PrEP is available at your clinic.

PrEP is a pill or injection taken to prevent HIV infection for people who have tested HIV- and want to prevent HIV infection.



- Limit your number of sexual partners.
- Make sure your vagina is properly lubricated during sexual activities, using a water-based lube if needed, to lessen the possibility of tearing and bleeding inside the vagina.
- Do not inject drugs or abuse alcohol.
- If you have been raped or feel like you have been exposed to HIV, go to your clinic and ask for post exposure prophylaxis (PEP).

PEP is HIV medicine you can take after possible exposure to HIV to prevent the HI-virus from taking hold in your body.