

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES

WHAT ARE THEY?

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (or STDs) are infections that are passed from person to person through sex, including oral, anal, and vaginal sex.

HIV may be the most widely recognized STD, but there are many others that are important to know about, especially if you already have HIV.

SOME COMMON STDs INCLUDE:

Chlamydia

Syphilis

Gonorrhea

Genital Herpes

Genital Warts (Human Papillomavirus)

Hepatitis (A, B, & C)

WHAT DOES HAVING HIV HAVE TO DO WITH GETTING AN STD?

If a person living with HIV/AIDS gets an STD, he or she becomes much more likely to pass on HIV to a partner when having sex. This is because when a person with HIV/AIDS has an STD, their genital fluids (including semen, pre-cum, and vaginal fluid) are more likely to contain HIV. For instance, a man with an STD will have higher amounts of HIV in his semen. This makes it easier for HIV to be passed to another person during sex because that person is exposed to much more HIV than they would have been had the partner not had another STD.

HOW DOES HAVING AN STD AFFECT YOUR CHANCE OF GETTING HIV?

If you don't have HIV, having another STD makes it much more likely for you to get HIV if you are exposed to it. When you have an STD, it can cause open sores or damaged skin on your penis, anus, or mouth. These sores may be painless or painful, visible or hidden, and may make it much easier for HIV to get into the body. Open sores are open doors—both in and out for HIV.

Even if no sores are present, having certain STDs makes it easier to catch HIV because STDs cause more immune cells to hang around to try to fight off the STD infection (in areas like the genitals or the throat). Since HIV infects immune cells, having more immune cells around makes HIV infection more likely.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE AN STD?

If you think you may have an STD or if there's a chance you have been exposed to one, the only way to know for sure is to see your medical provider or go to the health department or an STD clinic, where one or more tests can be done.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO FIND AN STD CLINIC NEAR YOU GO TO WWW.HIVTEST.ORG OR WWW.INSPO.TORG.