

# STI Health Information Sheets

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## Bacterial Vaginosis

Every female has bacteria that normally live in the vagina. Bacterial vaginosis (BV) is caused by an imbalance of the bacteria. BV is not a sexually transmitted infection (STI), but it's more common in sexually active females.

### How do I get BV?

BV may be linked to having:

- multiple sex partners (male or female)
- a new sex partner
- oral, vaginal, or anal sex without a condom

BV may also be linked to douching.

### How do I know I have BV?

Some females might not know they have BV. Females with BV may have:

- foul or fishy smelling discharge from the vagina
- itching or burning in the vagina
- change in colour (e.g., gray, white, yellow) and amount of vaginal discharge

The best way to find out if you have BV is to get tested. Your nurse or doctor can test you by taking a swab from your vagina.

### Is BV harmful?

BV can sometimes get better without treatment. Other times, BV can cause serious health problems.

BV increases your chances of getting an STI.

If you have a pelvic procedure (e.g., IUD insertion, abortion), BV can increase your risk of getting a pelvic infection.

### What if I'm pregnant?

If you're pregnant, BV can increase your risk of having a preterm delivery, miscarriage, or infection after delivery.

## **How is BV treated?**

BV is treated with antibiotics. It's important to follow the treatment directions and finish your medicine, even if your symptoms go away.

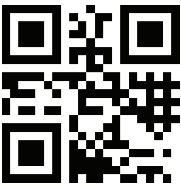
If your symptoms don't go away or come back, see your nurse or doctor.

## **Do males get BV?**

No. A male doesn't need to be treated if his partner has BV.

## **For More Information**

- STI/HIV Information Line: 1-800-772-2437
- [www.myhealth.alberta.ca](http://www.myhealth.alberta.ca)
- [www.sexgerms.com](http://www.sexgerms.com)



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# Chlamydia

Chlamydia is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by a bacteria (*Chlamydia trachomatis*).

## How do I get chlamydia?

Chlamydia is passed between people through unprotected sexual contact (oral, vaginal, or anal sex without a condom). You can infect others right after you come in contact with chlamydia. You can spread it to others without knowing it.

## How can I prevent chlamydia?

When you're sexually active, the best way to prevent chlamydia is to use condoms for oral, vaginal, and anal sex.

Don't have any sexual contact if you or your partner(s) have symptoms of an STI, or may have been exposed to an STI. See a doctor or go to an STI Clinic for testing.

Get STI testing every 3 to 6 months and when you have symptoms.

## How do I know I have chlamydia?

Up to 90% of people with chlamydia don't have symptoms. The infection can be in the rectum, penis, cervix, throat, and the eye. If you have chlamydia, you may have:

- pain or burning when you pee
- discharge, bleeding, or itching from the bum
- redness and/or discharge from one or both eyes

Other symptoms in **females** include:

- unusual vaginal discharge
- irregular bleeding (often after sex)
- pain in the abdomen, low back, or during sex

Other symptoms in **males** include:

- watery or milky discharge from the penis
- irritation or itching inside the penis
- painful or swollen testicles

The best way to find out if you have chlamydia is to get tested. Your nurse or doctor can test you by taking a swab and/or doing a urine test.

## Is chlamydia harmful?

If not treated, chlamydia can cause **serious** long-term effects including infertility and arthritis. Other effects in females include pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) and a higher risk of having a tubal pregnancy. Other effects in males include pain/swelling in the testicles (epididymo-orchitis) and urinary tract problems.

These effects can be prevented if you get **early STI testing and treatment**.

## What if I'm pregnant?

If not treated, chlamydia can cause early delivery or rupture of membranes. If the female isn't treated and has a vaginal delivery, it can cause serious eye and lung infections for the baby. Get tested and treated **before** delivery to prevent these problems.

## How is chlamydia treated?

Chlamydia is treated with antibiotics. Your partner(s) also needs to be tested and treated, even if there are no symptoms.

You can get re-infected if you have unprotected sex with someone before he or she is treated.

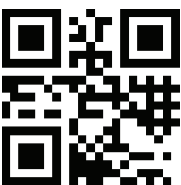
## When can I have sex again?

It will take 1 week for the antibiotic to get rid of the infection. Don't have unprotected sex (oral, vaginal, or anal sex without a condom) for **7 days** after you and your partner(s) have been treated. The best protection is **not** to have sex (oral, vaginal, or anal) for at least 7 days.

If you still have symptoms, don't have any sexual contact.

## For More Information

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# Genital Herpes

Genital herpes is a sexually transmitted infection caused by 2 types of viruses. The viruses are called herpes simplex type 1 (HSV 1) and herpes simplex type 2 (HSV 2).

Both viruses cause sores on the lips (cold sores) and sores on the genitals. HSV 1 causes cold sores on the mouth more often, but it's common for both types of the virus to cause genital sores.

## How do I get genital herpes?

HSV is spread through intimate skin-to-skin contact and oral, vaginal, or anal sex. It can be spread by people who have oral or genital herpes but don't have sores at the time of contact.

## How do I know I have genital herpes?

Symptoms of genital herpes can range from mild to severe. Small blister-like sores can develop in the genital area. Some people also feel very unwell.

Females may have burning in the vaginal area and notice a change in discharge.

Males may have burning when they pee and have clear discharge.

The first outbreak is often the most painful. Sores may take weeks to heal. Future outbreaks are often milder. Some people may have mild or no symptoms and not even know they have genital herpes.

You need to see a doctor or nurse to diagnose genital herpes. If you have sores, a swab will be taken and sent to the lab for testing.

## What if I'm pregnant?

If you're pregnant (or planning a pregnancy), talk to your doctor if you or your partner has herpes. Most women have normal vaginal deliveries. But, if you have an outbreak at the time of delivery, you may need a C-section.

## How is genital herpes treated?

There is no cure for genital herpes. It can be treated with prescribed medicine to help decrease symptoms and shorten outbreaks.

## What can I do during an outbreak?

Keep the area clean and dry. Use a clean towel and lightly dab the area dry after bathing. If it hurts to pee, pour water over the genitals while peeing. It also helps to pee in the shower or tub. Don't put creams or lotions on the sores as it can cause them to spread and get irritated.

## How can I prevent spreading genital herpes to others?

Tell your partner(s) that you have genital herpes so you can make choices to lower the risk of spreading the virus. Don't have sexual contact (oral, vaginal, or anal) while you have sores.

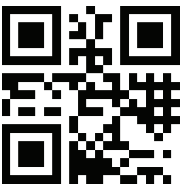
Use condoms and dental dams between outbreaks to lower the risk of spreading the virus. Condoms don't cover all of the skin that may be exposed to genital herpes during sexual contact.

The virus can be spread even if you don't have symptoms. This is called **asymptomatic viral shedding**.

Daily medicine can be prescribed by a doctor if you have frequent outbreaks. Taking daily medicine and using condoms and/or dental dams may help lower the chances of spreading genital herpes to an uninfected partner.

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# Gonorrhea

Gonorrhea is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by a bacteria (*Neisseria gonorrhoeae*).

## How do I get gonorrhea?

Gonorrhea is passed between people through unprotected sexual contact (oral, vaginal, or anal sex without a condom). You can infect others right after you come in contact with gonorrhea. You can spread it to others without knowing it.

## How do I prevent gonorrhea?

When you're sexually active, the best way to prevent gonorrhea is to use condoms for oral, vaginal, and anal sex.

Don't have any sexual contact if you or your partner(s) have symptoms of an STI, or may have been exposed to an STI. See a doctor or go to an STI Clinic for testing.

Get STI testing every 3 to 6 months and when you have symptoms.

## How do I know if I have gonorrhea?

Up to 40% of females and some males with gonorrhea don't have symptoms. The infection can be in the rectum, penis, cervix, throat, and the eye. If you have gonorrhea, you may have:

- pain or burning when you pee
- swelling, itching, or pain in the genital area
- discharge, bleeding, or itching from the bum
- redness and/or discharge from one or both eyes

Other symptoms in **females** include:

- unusual vaginal discharge
- irregular bleeding (often after sex)
- pain in the lower abdomen or pain during sex

Other symptoms in **males** include:

- green or yellow discharge from the penis
- irritation or itching inside the penis
- painful or swollen testicles

The best way to find out if you have gonorrhea is to get tested. Your nurse or doctor can test you by taking a swab and/or doing a urine test.



## Is gonorrhea harmful?

If not treated, gonorrhea can cause **serious** long-term effects including infertility and arthritis.

Other effects in females include pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) and a higher risk of having a tubal pregnancy. Other effects in males include pain/swelling in the testicles (epididymo-orchitis) and urinary tract problems.

These effects can be prevented if you get **early STI testing and treatment**.

## What if I'm pregnant?

If not treated, gonorrhea can cause early delivery or rupture of membranes. If a pregnant female isn't treated and has a vaginal delivery, it can cause serious eye, blood, and joint infections for the baby. Get tested and treated **before** delivery to prevent problems.

## How is gonorrhea treated?

Gonorrhea is treated with antibiotics. Your partner(s) needs to be tested and treated, even if there are no symptoms. You can get re-infected if you have unprotected sex with someone before he or she is treated.

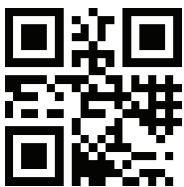
## When can I have sex again?

It will take 1 week for the antibiotic to get rid of the infection. Don't have unprotected sex (oral, vaginal, or anal sex without a condom) for **7 days** after you and your partner(s) have been treated. The best protection is **not** to have sex (oral, vaginal, or anal) for at least 7 days.

If you still have symptoms, don't have any sexual contact.

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# Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection (STI) in the world. You will likely get some type of HPV in your life and not have any symptoms. Most people have no problems at all from the virus.

Some strains of HPV can cause genital warts and cancer. There are over 100 different types of HPV. About 40 types can be spread through sexual contact. Most types of HPV are harmless, cause no symptoms, and go away without treatment.

## How do I get HPV?

If you have any type of sexual contact (oral, vaginal, or anal), you're at risk for HPV. It can be spread through intimate skin-to-skin contact with a person who has HPV. HPV can be spread even if there are no symptoms or you can't see any warts.

## How do I know I have HPV?

Many people with HPV don't have symptoms. Genital warts may be the only sign that someone has HPV. Genital or anal warts may look like tiny bumps or clustered growths on the skin (often a cauliflower-like texture). Most HPV infections go away on their own within 2 to 3 years.

There is no routine test for HPV. You need to see a doctor or nurse to be diagnosed with genital warts.

## Is HPV harmful?

Some types of HPV are linked to cervical cancer, other genital cancers, and cancer of the penis, anus, mouth, and throat. Some types of HPV cause genital warts, but most warts aren't harmful.

## How are genital warts treated?

Genital warts can be treated by some doctors and in STI clinics with freezing (liquid nitrogen). You may need more than 1 treatment.

Other treatments include prescription creams or liquids that you or your doctor put on. Talk to a nurse or doctor to see which treatment is right for you.

**Don't:**

- scratch or shave the affected area as it can cause the virus to spread
- use over-the-counter wart treatments for genital warts

**How can I prevent spreading HPV?**

Tell your partner(s) that you have genital warts so you can make choices to lower the risk of spreading the virus.

Using a condom is good protection against STIs. But, condoms don't cover all the skin around the genitals. This means you aren't completely protected from HPV even if you use a condom.

**HPV and Pap Tests**

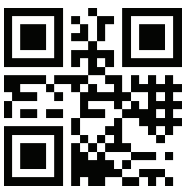
There is a link between HPV and cervical cancer, so regular Pap tests are important. A Pap test is when a doctor checks a female's cervix and takes a tissue sample. If there are abnormal cells on the cervix, this may lead to cervical cancer. Regular follow-up is needed.

**HPV Vaccine**

You can get vaccinated to protect yourself from certain types of HPV. Vaccination is approved in Canada for females and males. Talk to your nurse or doctor if you're interested.

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# Molluscum Contagiosum

Molluscum contagiosum is a common viral skin infection that causes raised bumps on the skin.

## How do I get molluscum?

Molluscum can be spread by sexual contact, skin-to-skin contact, or contact with contaminated objects (e.g., towels, clothing, tanning beds, gym equipment).

Molluscum can be anywhere on the body, except the bottoms of the hands and feet. Molluscum on the genitals might sometimes be mistaken for herpes or warts.

## How do I know if I have molluscum?

You need to see a doctor or nurse to be diagnosed.

Molluscum starts as small, painless bumps that may become raised. They can be pearl or flesh-coloured and often have a dimple in the centre. In adults, the bumps are common on the genitals, abdomen, and inner thighs.

## Are molluscum harmful?

Molluscum may last for a few months to a few years. They do go away without any scarring, unless there is lots of scratching. Single bumps usually go away in 2 to 3 months. The bumps are usually all gone in 6 to 18 months. They can last longer in people with weak immune systems.

## How are molluscum treated?

Molluscum may go away without treatment.

Molluscum can be treated in a Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) Clinic or doctor's office with freezing (liquid nitrogen). You might need more than 1 treatment.

## How can I prevent molluscum from spreading?

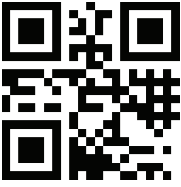
Tell your partner(s) that you have molluscum so you can make choices to lower the risk of spreading the virus.

Using a condom is good protection against STIs. But, condoms don't cover all the skin around the genitals and won't completely protect against molluscum.

Don't share personal items (e.g., towels, clothes, razors) while you have molluscum.

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## Mucopurulent Cervicitis (MPC)

MPC is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) of the cervix. It can be caused by many different germs (e.g., chlamydia, gonorrhoea) or other germs that aren't known.

### How do I get MPC?

Females get MPC through unprotected sexual contact (oral, vaginal, or anal sex without a condom) with someone infected with germs that can cause MPC.

You can infect others right after you come in contact with the germs that cause MPC. You can pass on the germs to others without knowing it.

### How do I prevent MPC?

When you're sexually active, the best way to prevent MPC is to use condoms for oral, vaginal, and anal sex.

Don't have any sexual contact if you or your partner(s) have symptoms of an STI, or may have been exposed to an STI. See a doctor or go to an STI Clinic for testing.

Get STI testing every 3 to 6 months and when you have symptoms.

### How do I know if I have MPC?

Some females with MPC don't have any symptoms, while others may have:

- vaginal discharge
- bleeding between periods or after sex
- pain in the abdomen
- pain during or after vaginal sex

The best way to find out if you have MPC is to see your nurse or doctor and get tested. You will have a pelvic exam and be tested for STIs.

### Is MPC harmful?

If MPC isn't treated, it can spread up into the uterus, fallopian tubes, and ovaries. This can cause a serious infection called pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). PID can cause pain in the lower abdomen, infertility, and increase your risk of tubal pregnancies.

These effects can be prevented if you get **early STI testing and treatment**.

## How is MPC treated?

MPC is treated with antibiotics.

Your partner(s) needs to be tested and treated even if there are no symptoms.

You can get re-infected if you have unprotected sex with someone before he or she is treated.

If you still have symptoms 3 to 4 weeks after taking antibiotics, see your nurse or doctor.

## When can I have sex again?

It will take 1 week for the antibiotic to get rid of the infection. Don't have unprotected sex (oral, vaginal, or anal sex without a condom) for **7 days** after you and your partner(s) are treated. The best protection is **not** to have sex (oral, vaginal, or anal) for at least 7 days. If you still have symptoms, don't have any sexual contact.

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## Non-Gonococcal Urethritis (NGU)

NGU is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) in males, which affects the urethra (the tube that carries urine and semen through the penis). It can be caused by many different germs (e.g., chlamydia) or other germs that aren't known.

### How do I get NGU?

Males get NGU through unprotected sexual contact (oral, vaginal, or anal sex without a condom) with a partner infected with bacteria that can cause NGU.

You can infect others right after you come in contact with the germs that cause NGU. You can pass on the germs to others without knowing it.

### How do I prevent NGU?

When you're sexually active, the best way to prevent NGU is to use condoms for oral, vaginal, and anal sex.

Don't have any sexual contact if you or your partner(s) have symptoms of an STI, or may have been exposed to an STI. See a doctor or go to an STI Clinic for testing.

Get STI testing regularly every 3 to 6 months and when you have symptoms.

### How do I know I have NGU?

Some males with NGU don't have any symptoms. If you have NGU, you might have:

- pain or burning when you pee
- clear, creamy white, or yellow discharge from the penis
- irritation or itching inside the penis

The best way to find out if you have NGU is to see a nurse or doctor and get tested.

### Is NGU harmful?

If NGU isn't treated, it can lead to serious health problems like infertility or infection in the testicles.

These effects can be prevented if you get **early STI testing and treatment**.



## How is NGU treated?

NGU is treated with antibiotics.

Your partner(s) needs to be tested and treated, even if there are no symptoms.

You can get re-infected if you have unprotected sex with someone before he or she is treated.

If you still have symptoms 3 to 4 weeks after taking antibiotics, see your nurse or doctor.

## When can I have sex again?

It will take 1 week for the antibiotics to get rid of the infection. Don't have unprotected sex (oral, vaginal, or anal sex without a condom) for **7 days** after you and your partner(s) have been treated. The best protection is **not** to have sex (oral, vaginal, or anal) for at least 7 days.

If you're still having symptoms, don't have any sexual contact.

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## Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID)

PID is a serious infection of the female reproductive organs (uterus, fallopian tubes, and ovaries).

### How do I get PID?

PID can be caused by germs from a sexually transmitted infection (STI) like gonorrhoea or chlamydia, or an overgrowth of germs that are normally in the vagina. The infection can spread to the reproductive organs. You can also get PID if your cervix is opened during a medical procedure.

### How do I prevent PID?

When you're sexually active, the best way to prevent PID is to use condoms for oral, vaginal, and anal sex.

Don't have any sexual contact if you or your partner(s) have symptoms of an STI, or may have been exposed to an STI. See a doctor or go to an STI Clinic for testing.

Get STI testing every 3 to 6 months and when you have symptoms.

### How do I know I have PID?

Some females with PID don't have symptoms and don't know they have it, while others may have:

- pain when having sex
- vaginal discharge
- nausea and/or vomiting
- feeling unwell and tired
- pain in the lower abdomen or back
- chills or fever (temperature over 38.5 °C)
- irregular vaginal bleeding

If you have any of these symptoms, see a nurse or doctor right away.

Only a nurse or doctor can diagnose you with PID by doing a pelvic exam to check your reproductive organs.

### Is PID harmful?

PID can cause serious health problems like infertility. It can also increase your chance of having a tubal pregnancy and long-term pelvic pain.

These effects can be prevented if you get **early STI testing and treatment**.

## How is PID treated?

- PID is treated with antibiotics.
- You and your sexual partner(s) must be tested and treated.
- You can get re-infected if you have unprotected sex with someone before he or she is treated.
- Start treatment **right away** and take all of your medicine, even if you start to feel better.
- Return to the clinic that treated you 2 to 3 days after starting your medicine to make sure you're getting better.
- If your symptoms aren't better, you may need a different treatment.
- If you lose your pills or can't finish them for any reason, go back to the clinic where you were treated.

## When can I have sex again?

It's important **not** to have sex (oral, vaginal, or anal) until you and your partner(s) have **finished** all of your medicine.

If you still have symptoms, don't have any sexual contact.

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## Pubic Lice (Crabs)

Pubic lice are small, crab-like insects that are grey or brown-red. They live in pubic hair, but can be on other body parts with hair (e.g., chest, armpit, face, eyelashes).

Crabs can live for up to 24 hours on bedding, towels, and clothes. They feed on the blood of the infected person (by taking small bites that can cause itching). They lay tiny white eggs (nits) that stick on the hair shaft. Crabs don't have wings, so they can't jump or fly.

### How do I get crabs?

You can get crabs by:

- having skin-to-skin contact with a person who has crabs
- sharing clothes, towels, bedding, or sleeping bags with a person who has crabs

### How do I know I have crabs?

- You can see pubic lice or nits on the hair and skin around the genitals and anus.
- You might get itching in the pubic area and around the genitals and the anus. Itching is often worse at night.
- You may get redness and pain from scratching, which can spread lice to other body hair. Bite marks look like small, blue spots on the skin. You may see fine, black specks in your underwear.

If you think you have crabs, see a nurse or doctor.

### How do I get rid of crabs?

#### ***On the Body:***

- Regular soap or shampoo does **not** kill crabs. Shaving may not get rid of crabs either.
- Use special shampoos/creams with medicine (you can buy these at a drugstore without a prescription). Follow package directions or ask your pharmacist. Put lotion on all body parts with hair, except the head.
- After treatment, use a fine-toothed comb to remove any eggs still in body hair. Wash your hands and put on clean clothes after treatment.
- You may need more than 1 treatment. If you still have symptoms after being treated, repeat the treatment 7 days later.

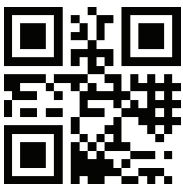
- Your sexual partner and anyone you have shared a bed, towels, or clothes with needs to be treated at the same time.
- Talk to a nurse or doctor before you use the shampoo or cream if you are pregnant, breastfeeding, or treating a child under 2.

### ***In the Home:***

- You must treat all clothes, towels, and bedding used during treatment **and** any unwashed items used 2 to 3 days before treatment. To do this, wash all items in hot water (50 °C) and put them in a dryer for at least 20 minutes on the hottest setting. If any items can't be washed, have them dry-cleaned or loosely pack them in a sealed plastic bag. Put the bag in the freezer for 2 to 7 days.
- Vacuum mattresses, pillows, rugs, beds, and furniture.

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## Scabies

Scabies is caused by mites that burrow into the top layer of the skin and lay eggs.

### How do I get scabies?

You can get scabies by:

- having skin-to-skin contact with a person who has scabies
- sharing clothes, towels, bedding, or sleeping bags with a person who has scabies

### How do I know I have scabies?

Scabies can cause an itchy rash that is most often on the wrists, in the creases of the elbows and/or knees, and between the fingers.

The rash might be tiny red bumps, small blisters, white lines, or look like scratch marks.

The itching often gets worse when the body is warm (e.g., after a warm bath, at night when you're covered with blankets).

It can take weeks before you have symptoms. But, scabies can spread from person to person before the rash and itching starts.

### How is scabies treated?

Scabies doesn't go away without treatment. Follow these steps and do **all** steps on the **same day**.

- 1) Treat scabies with a special cream or lotion that kills mites. You can buy it at a drugstore without a prescription. Follow the package directions or ask a pharmacist. Put the lotion on the whole body from the neck down. Put clean clothes on after treatment. Talk to your pharmacist, doctor, or nurse if you have questions or if you're pregnant, breastfeeding, or treating a child under 2.
- 2) You must treat all clothes, towels, and bedding used during treatment **and** any unwashed items used 2 to 3 days before treatment. To do this, wash all items in hot water (50 °C) and put them in a dryer for at least 20 minutes on the hottest setting. If any items can't be washed, have them dry-cleaned or loosely pack them in a sealed plastic bag. Put the bag in the freezer for 2 to 7 days.

3) Vacuum mattresses, pillows, rugs, beds, and furniture.

The itching and rash might not go away for days or weeks. If the itching doesn't get better (or it gets worse and it's been at least 2 weeks after treatment), talk to your nurse or doctor. You may need to repeat the treatment.

### **How can I prevent scabies?**

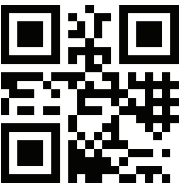
If someone has scabies, everyone who lives with that person must be treated at the same time (even if there is no rash or itching). Anyone who has had skin-to-skin contact or shares clothes, towels, or bedding with the person who has scabies must be treated.

Children who have scabies must stay home from school and daycare until they've been treated.

Adults who have scabies can **not** work in hospitals, nursing homes, extended care facilities, personal care or childcare places until they've been treated.

### **For More Information**

- STI/HIV Information Line: 1-800-772-2437
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# Syphilis

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by a bacteria (*Treponema pallidum*). The infection progresses in stages.

## How do I get syphilis?

Syphilis is passed between people through unprotected sexual contact (oral, vaginal, or anal sex without a condom). You can spread it to others without knowing it.

Pregnant females can pass the infection on to their unborn children.

## How can I prevent syphilis?

When you're sexually active, the best way to prevent syphilis is to use condoms for oral, vaginal, and anal sex.

Don't have any sexual contact if you or your partner(s) have symptoms of an STI, or may have been exposed to an STI. See a doctor or go to an STI Clinic for testing.

Get STI Testing every 3 to 6 months and when you have symptoms.

## How do I know I have syphilis?

Many people with syphilis have no symptoms, while others may have:

- sores on or near the penis or in and around the vagina, mouth, or rectum
- a rash on the palms of the hands, feet, or the whole body

The sores and rash may not be painful.

The best way to find out if you have syphilis is to get tested. Your nurse or doctor will do a blood test and test you for other STIs.

## Is syphilis harmful?

If not treated, syphilis may cause blindness, paralysis, deafness, brain and heart disease, and mental health problems. These effects can be prevented if you get **early STI testing and treatment**.



## What if I'm pregnant?

If not treated, syphilis can cause **pregnancy problems** like early delivery, rupture of membranes, low birth weight, and stillbirth.

Syphilis can also cause birth defects that can lead to long-term health problems. When a female is treated **before** delivering her baby, these problems can be prevented.

## How is syphilis treated?

Syphilis is treated with antibiotics. Your partner(s) also needs to be tested and treated, even if there are no symptoms. You can get re-infected if you have unprotected sex with someone before he or she is treated.

Your blood test for syphilis will likely stay positive, even if you've been properly treated. But, you can be re-infected if you're exposed again.

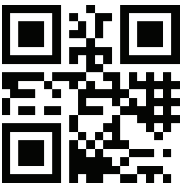
## When can I have sex again?

It will take 1 week for the antibiotic to get rid of the infection. Don't have unprotected sex (oral, vaginal, or anal sex without a condom) for **7 days** after you and your partner(s) have been treated. The best protection is **not** to have sex (oral, vaginal, or anal) for at least 7 days.

If you still have symptoms, don't have any sexual contact.

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## Trichomoniasis (Trich)

Trich is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by a parasite called *Trichomonas vaginalis*.

### How do I get trich?

Trich is passed between people through unprotected sex (sexual contact without a condom).

### How can I prevent trich?

When you're sexually active, the best way to prevent trich and other STIs is to use condoms for oral, vaginal, and anal sex.

Don't have any sexual contact if you or your partner(s) have symptoms of an STI, or may have been exposed to an STI. See a doctor or go to an STI Clinic for testing.

Get STI testing every 3 to 6 months and when you have symptoms.

### How do I know if I have trich?

The infection is most common in females in the vagina and in males in the tube that carries urine and semen (urethra).

Many women with trich have no symptoms, but trich can cause:

- vaginal discharge that smells musty
- itching in and around the vagina
- pain or burning when you pee
- pain during intercourse

Most males with trich have no symptoms, but they can still spread it.

The best way to find out if you have trich is to get tested. Your nurse or doctor can test you by taking a swab.

### Is trich harmful?

If not treated, trich may cause:

- infertility or low sperm count in males
- increased risk of pelvic infections in females
- increased risk of getting other STIs and HIV

## What if I'm pregnant?

If not treated, trich may cause premature rupture of the membranes, early delivery, and low birth weight. Get tested and treated before delivery to prevent these problems.

## How is trich treated?

Trich is treated with antibiotics. It's important to follow the directions you get with your medicine (e.g., don't drink alcohol while you take the medicine).

Wear cotton underwear and loose clothing to keep the genital area dry and help your body heal faster. You can also use cold packs or soak in a tub to help the itching.

Your partner(s) also needs to be tested and treated even if there are no symptoms. You can get re-infected if you have unprotected sex with someone before he or she is treated.

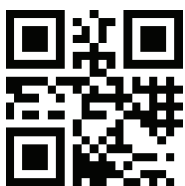
## When can I have sex again?

It will take 1 week for the antibiotic to get rid of the infection. Don't have unprotected sex (oral, vaginal, or anal sex without a condom) for **7 days** after you and your partner(s) are treated. The best protection is **not** to have sex (oral, vaginal, or anal) for at least 7 days.

If you still have symptoms, don't have any sexual contact.

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