



May 12, 2003
National Women's Check-Up Day

More Information About *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are a severe health problem in the United States. The latest estimates indicate that there are approximately 15 million new STD cases in the United States each year. And while some STD rates, such as syphilis, are at all time lows, rates for genital herpes, gonorrhea, and chlamydia continue to spread throughout the population.

- ❖ Approximately 40,000 new HIV infections occur each year in the United States, 30 percent of them among women. African-American women account for 64 percent of new HIV infections among women.
- ❖ Chlamydia is the most commonly reported sexually transmitted disease in the United States. An estimated 3 million contract chlamydia annually. By age 30, 50 percent of sexually active women probably have had chlamydia.

(This is from a non-federal resource, so we tried to instead rely on CDC information, where available.)

- ❖ Forty percent of chlamydia cases are reported among young people, 15 to 19 years old.
- ❖ At any one time, an estimated 20 million people in the United States have genital human papilloma virus (HPV) infections that can be transmitted to others.
- ❖ Genital herpes-herpes simplex virus type two (HSV-2)-is one of the most common sexually transmitted diseases in the United States, with as many as one million people in the United States becoming infected each year.
- ❖ An estimated 650,000 cases of gonorrhea occur each year in the United States.

How STDs Affect Women

By far, women bear the greatest burden of STDs, suffering more frequent and more serious complications than men.

- ❖ Some STDs can have no apparent symptoms, which can be particularly harmful for women. For example, if left untreated, chlamydia will develop into pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), which can lead to infertility. Chlamydia also can cause eye disease and pneumonia in infants. Moreover, women infected with chlamydia are more likely to become infected with HIV, if exposed.
- ❖ Each year in the United States, more than 1 million women experience an episode of acute PID. More than 100,000 women become infertile each year as a result of PID, and a large proportion of the ectopic pregnancies occurring every year are due to the consequences of PID. More than 150 women die from this infection every year.





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- ❖ Even when an STD causes no symptoms, a person who is infected may be able to pass the disease on to a sex partner or to an unborn child.
- ❖ Some STDs, such as gonorrhea and chlamydia, can spread into the genital tract and cause pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), which in turn is a cause of infertility, ectopic (tubal) pregnancy, chronic pelvic pain, and abscess formation.
- ❖ Human papillomavirus (HPV) sometimes causes genital warts but in many cases, infects people without causing noticeable symptoms. There are 30 distinct types of HPV that can infect the genital area. Of these, some types cause genital warts, and others cause subclinical infections, which cannot be seen. Genital warts are extremely common, but can be treated and cured. Subclinical HPV infection is more common than genital warts, and there is no cure. The disease can lead to cervical, penile and anal cancer.

Preventing & Treating STDs

- ❖ Sometimes people are too embarrassed or frightened to ask for help or information. Some STDs are readily treatable, and the earlier a person seeks treatment, the less likely the disease will do irreparable physical damage or be spread to others.
- ❖ To prevent STDs: Do not have sex. If you have sex, use latex condoms. Being in a long-term relationship with 1 person who has been tested for STDs and does not have any STDs lowers your risk.

