

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) Top 10 Myth Busters for All Ages



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Myth 10. Having sex in a hot tub or pool will protect you from STIs because chlorine kills germs.

Not true. STIs can be transmitted through intercourse even in the presence of chlorine. There's no substitute for a condom when it comes to protecting yourself from STIs.

Myth 9. Two condoms are better than one. And if you don't have a condom, just use plastic wrap.

Actually, no! Using two condoms is more risky than just using one. During sex, the two will rub together, which will increase the chances of the condoms breaking or slipping off. Secondly, there are no homemade alternatives for a condom. Plastic wrap can have tiny holes and can easily slip off.

Myth 8. I know someone with HIV, and I don't want to get HIV by drinking after her.

No matter what anyone may tell you, saliva does not transmit the HIV virus. HIV is not passed through casual contact. The only four body fluids which transmit the HIV virus are: semen, vaginal fluids, blood and breast milk. However, you can still catch the flu, a cold and other infections by sharing drinks or kissing others.

Myth 7. Chlamydia and gonorrhea are not serious STIs and will go away with time.

You or your sex partner may have chlamydia or gonorrhea and not know it. In fact, one out of four sexually active teens will contract an STI. Chlamydia and most strains of gonorrhea can be cured with antibiotics. If left untreated, these STIs can cause permanent damage to the reproductive organs. Women and possibly men who do not get treated for chlamydia and gonorrhea may not be able to have children.

Myth 6. Only people that have a lot of sex partners are at risk of getting STIs.

Completely false. It only takes one person, one time, to get an STI. Additionally, when you decide to have unprotected sex with someone, you are not just sleeping with that person, but also with all of their previous sex partners.

Myth 5. Getting HIV is not a big deal.

HIV is a big deal. You can get HIV and other STIs every time you have oral, vaginal or anal sex. Although people are living longer because of modern medicine, HIV can still lead to AIDS.

Myth 4. I don't need to use condoms because I'm on the pill.

This couldn't be further from the truth. Birth control pills are made to prevent pregnancy, not STIs.

Myth 3. I'm picky about who my sex partners are, and I can tell who has an STI.

People who look healthy can have STIs. Many STIs don't cause any symptoms at all. Just because you can't see bumps, rashes or other signs, doesn't mean you and your partner are "clean." The only way to know for sure is to get tested. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that sexually active individuals under the age of 25 get tested for STIs at least once a year.

Myth 2. As long as there's no penetration, I don't have to worry about STIs.

Not true. While some STIs are spread through body fluids, there are plenty of others that can be spread just by coming in contact with another person's skin. Herpes, genital warts (HPV), pubic lice and syphilis can be spread without any penetration. People with herpes and HPV can even spread those viruses without any visible blisters, sores or warts.

Myth 1. Oral sex is a safe way of showing affection without the risk of STIs.

Wrong! This is a frequent misconception. You can get STIs from genital contact, semen and vaginal fluids. If your mouth comes in contact with an infected area, there is a possibility that you can get an infection. There is also evidence that pre-ejaculate can cause infections. Use a condom or dental dam for protection during oral sex.

Affordable and Confidential Services
For HIV/STD testing and information, call 410-222-7382.