

## How do you get STIs?

*When you have unprotected sex with someone, you are having sex with everyone they have ever had sex with!*

## STIs are spread through:

- ANY intimate or sexual contact (vaginal, anal, or sharing sex toys).
- Direct blood contact:
  - » Sharing of needles, syringes, or razors.
  - » Unclean tattoo or body piercing equipment.
- Mother to baby:
  - » During the pregnancy or delivery.
  - » HIV may be spread through breast milk.

STIs are NOT spread through air, water, food or activities such as shaking hands or hugging, or touching surfaces or objects such as telephones, door knobs, and toilet seats.

## Condom Excuses

Be on alert for these condom excuses.  
Don't use them and don't agree to them.

*"I'm clean and my partner looks clean."*

*"My partner didn't want to use a condom."*

*"We don't need condoms since I'm/you're on the pill."*

*"They aren't big enough for me."*

*"They always break."*

*"They're too much trouble and make things messy and might come off."*

*"I can't feel anything with one of those on."*

*"I just got a negative STI/HIV test."*

## More Information:

For more information about risks, protecting yourself (including free condoms), testing, and treatment:

- See your local primary care manager or Army public health nurse.
- Check out the following websites:



### U.S. Army Public Health Center Responsible Sexual Health

<https://phc.amedd.army.mil/topics/healthyliving/rsbwh/Pages/default.aspx>



### Navy and Marine Corps Public Health

<https://www.med.navy.mil/Navy-Marine-Corps-Public-Health-Center/Population-Health/Health-Promotion-and-Wellness/Reproductive-and-Sexual-Health/>



### Center for Disease Control (CDC)

<https://www.cdc.gov/std/default.htm>

U.S. Army Public Health Center  
8252 Blackhawk Road  
Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD 21010-5403

Email: [usarmy.apg.medcom-aphc.mbx.army-public-health-nursing-division@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.apg.medcom-aphc.mbx.army-public-health-nursing-division@mail.mil)



# Prevent STIs

## Sexually Transmitted Infections

PROTECT YOURSELF  
BY PREVENTING STIS



Approved for public release; distribution unlimited.  
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Learn what you can do to protect  
yourself from STIs

# PROTECT YOURSELF BY PREVENTING STIs

## Respect and Protect Yourself

Your sexual health is important – there is no shame in seeking answers and practicing safe sex.

## What can you do?

### Monitor and protect yourself

- Get tested as often as your healthcare provider suggests and get treatment when needed.
- Get the human papillomavirus (HPV) and Hepatitis B vaccines.
- Ensure that your at-risk partners get tested and are vaccinated.

### Be responsible about sex

- Choose to not have sex (oral, vaginal, or anal).
- Reduce your number of partners:
  - » Talk with your partner.
  - » Get tested together.
- Use a condom correctly EVERY time (oral, vaginal, or anal sex)
- Avoid risky situations like:
  - » Drug and excessive alcohol use.
  - » One-night stands, “hook-ups.”
  - » Unknown partners.
  - » Offering or receiving money or drugs for sex.

### Be smart about other risks

- Don't share needles or razor blades.
- Ensure tattoo and piercing facilities are safe and clean.

## Facts about STIs

STIs include over 30 sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and infections. Some, like Chlamydia and Gonorrhea, can generally be cured while others, like Herpes and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), cannot be cured but can be medically managed. HPV and hepatitis can also be prevented with vaccines.

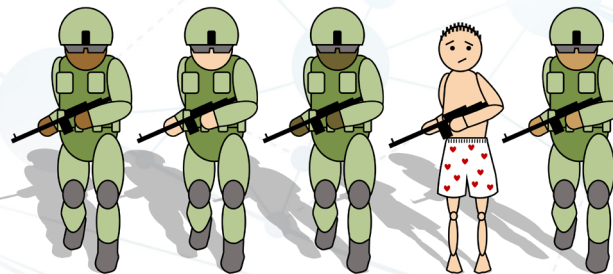
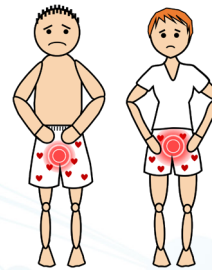
**Soldiers are high-risk because of their age, increased travel, alcohol use, and job-related stresses.**

## Symptoms

Though you can have symptoms with an STI, many men and women are silent carriers who don't have symptoms but can still transmit the infection to others. Not having symptoms should not be a reason not to get tested.

## Symptoms may occur days, weeks, or even months after exposure and can include:

- Pelvic, vaginal, or penile pain
- Swelling, burning, discharge
- Odors
- Rashes, blisters, or warts
- Bleeding between periods
- Painful sex



**You wouldn't go into combat without protection. Wear a condom every time you have sex and protect yourself from STIs!**

**According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), STI rates are increasing. In 2018, one in five people in the U.S. had an STI. The highest rates are among 15-24 year olds.**

## Treatment

See your healthcare provider if you think you have or may have been exposed to an STI.

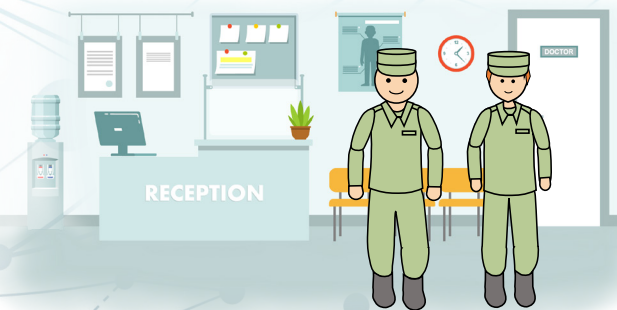
Without treatment you may experience health problems like:

- Infertility
- Pelvic inflammatory disease
- Chronic pain
- Increased risk of HIV
- Nervous system disorders
- Certain types of cancer
- Organ failure and potentially death



Untreated STIs can also be dangerous during pregnancy to a mother and her baby.

**You may not know if you have an STI. Talk to your partner and get tested.**



Prevent the spread of **STIs** with three simple steps. >>>

**TALK**



**TEST**



**TREAT**

