

# Your Sexual Health, Your Responsibility



**U.S. ARMY PUBLIC HEALTH CENTER**



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Nurse Branch of APHC

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This presentation contains sexually graphic images  
and may not be suitable for some audiences  
Viewer discretion is advised.

**This presentation provides you with information to protect yourself from getting and spreading Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and avoiding unintended pregnancies.**

The information reflects the current evidence-based science of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Department of the Army and Department of Defense.



## Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- Sexually Transmitted Diseases (updated 2021). [www.cdc.gov/STI](http://www.cdc.gov/STI)
- Human Immunodeficiency virus (HIV) Surveillance Report, 2019. <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/library/reports/hiv-surveillance/vol-32/index.html>
- Avoiding unintended pregnancy — <https://www.cdc.gov/pregnancy/avoiding.html>

## Department of Defense/Army

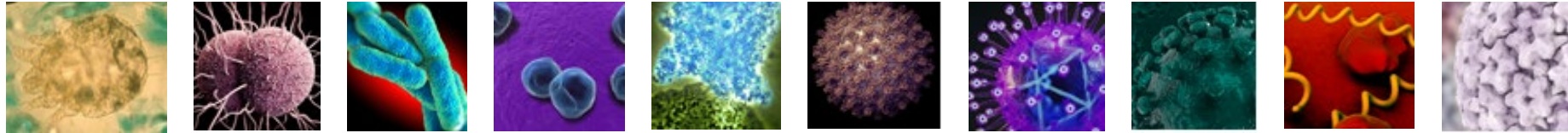
- Health of the Force (2020, pages 54-57). <https://phc.amedd.army.mil/PHC%20Resource%20Library/2020-hof-web.pdf>
- Published Literature Sources
  - A Comparative Analysis of Reported Chlamydia and Gonorrhea Cases among Army Soldiers from 2015-2019 (*Sexually Transmitted Diseases*; June 1, 2021)  
[https://journals.lww.com/stdjournal/Abstract/9000/A\\_Comparative\\_Analysis\\_of\\_Reported\\_Chlamydia\\_and.97645.aspx](https://journals.lww.com/stdjournal/Abstract/9000/A_Comparative_Analysis_of_Reported_Chlamydia_and.97645.aspx)
  - Update: Routine Screening for Antibodies to Human Immunodeficiency Virus, Civilian Applicants for U.S. Military Service and U.S. Armed Forces, Active and Reserve Components, January 2015–June 2020. (*MSMR*, 27(9), 2-10; 2020)  
<https://health.mil/News/Articles/2020/09/01/Update-Routine-Screening-for-Antibodies-MSMR-2020>
- APHC News Articles (2021)
  - “[COVID ‘Stay Safe’ principle also works for responsible sex](#)”
  - “[Protect yourself in the war against sexually transmitted infections](#)”
- Army Regulation 600-110, “Identification, Surveillance, And Administration of Personnel Infected with Human Immunodeficiency Virus,” April 22, 2014. [https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR\\_pubs/DR\\_a/pdf/web/r600\\_110.pdf](https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/web/r600_110.pdf)
- AR 40-562 Immunizations and Chemoprophylaxis, 07 OCT 2013. [http://www.apd.army.mil/pdffiles/r40\\_562.pdf](http://www.apd.army.mil/pdffiles/r40_562.pdf).

# What are STIs?

- STIs are infections that are passed from one person to another through sexual contact.
- STIs can be caused by viruses, bacteria, or parasites.
- ***A person can have an STI without having obvious symptoms.***



**IF IT WERE ONLY THIS EASY!!!**



## ➤ STIs caused by **virus**

- Hepatitis B
- Genital Herpes
- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)
- Human papillomavirus (HPV)
- Molluscum contagiosum

## ➤ STIs caused by **bacteria**

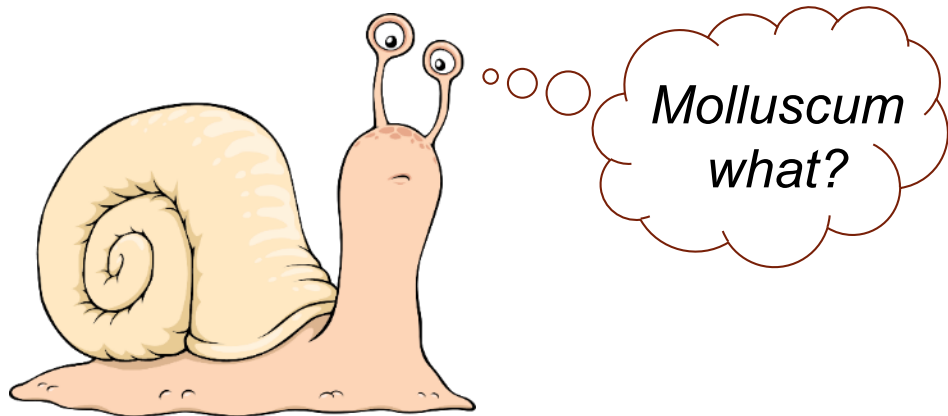
- Chlamydia
- Gonorrhea
- Syphilis

## ➤ STIs caused by **parasites**

- Trichomoniasis
- Pubic lice\*
- Scabies\*

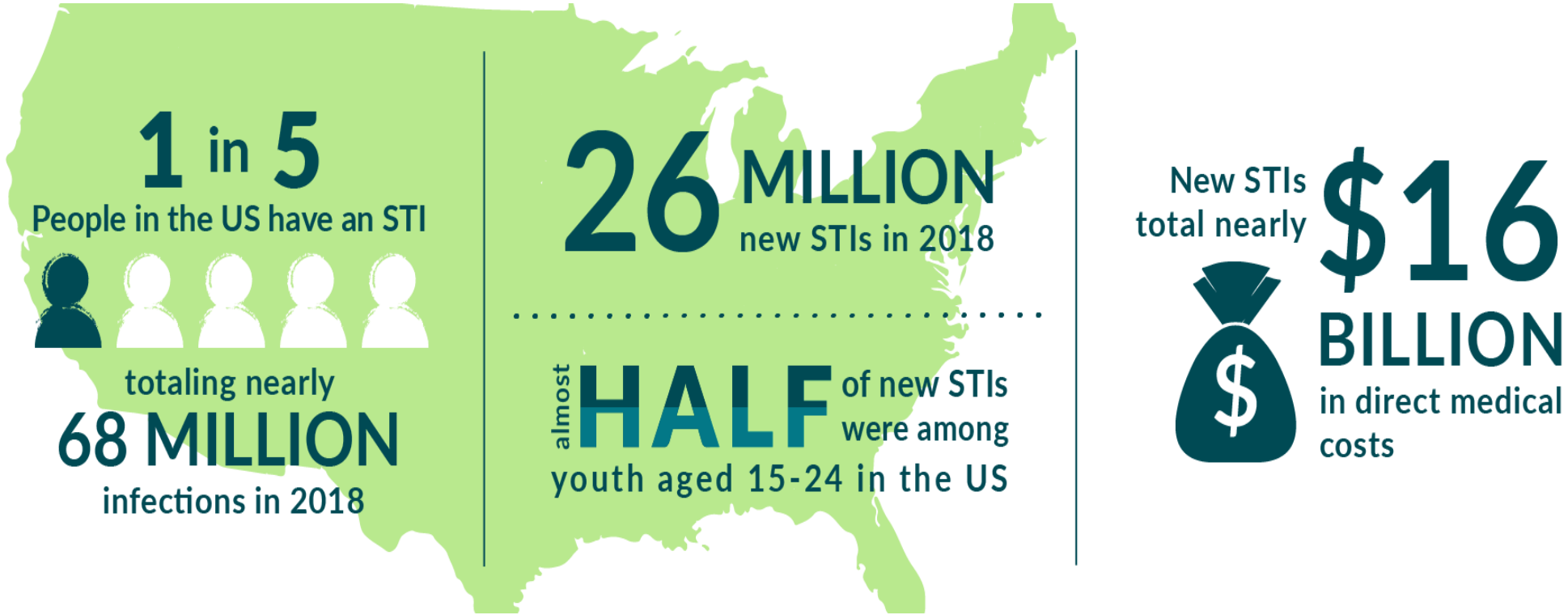
## ➤ Other less common STIs

- Chancroid
- Lymphogranuloma Venereum (LGV)
- Mycoplasma genitalium



\*Can also be transmitted through non-sexual exposure such as beds and blankets.

# How Common are STIs?



Based on military health surveillance data, the problem may even be worse among Soldiers who are in the highest risk age group and have unique job-related stressors and exposures.

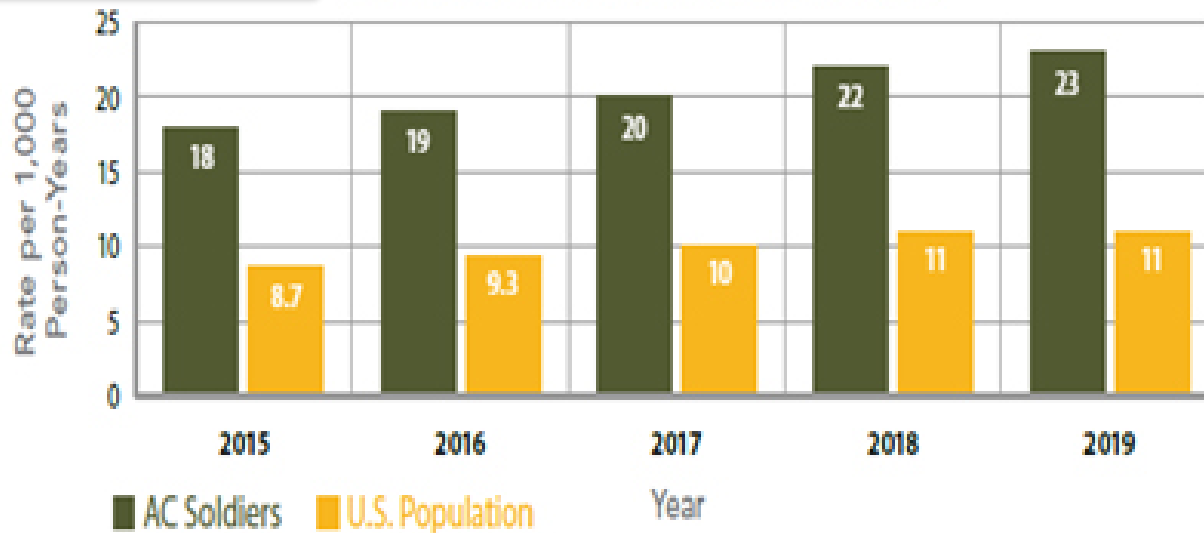


# Health Surveillance of STIs in Active Duty Army Soldiers



- Chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis are nationally notifiable STIs so included in Army surveillance.
- Chlamydia is the most commonly reported STI for Army Soldiers.

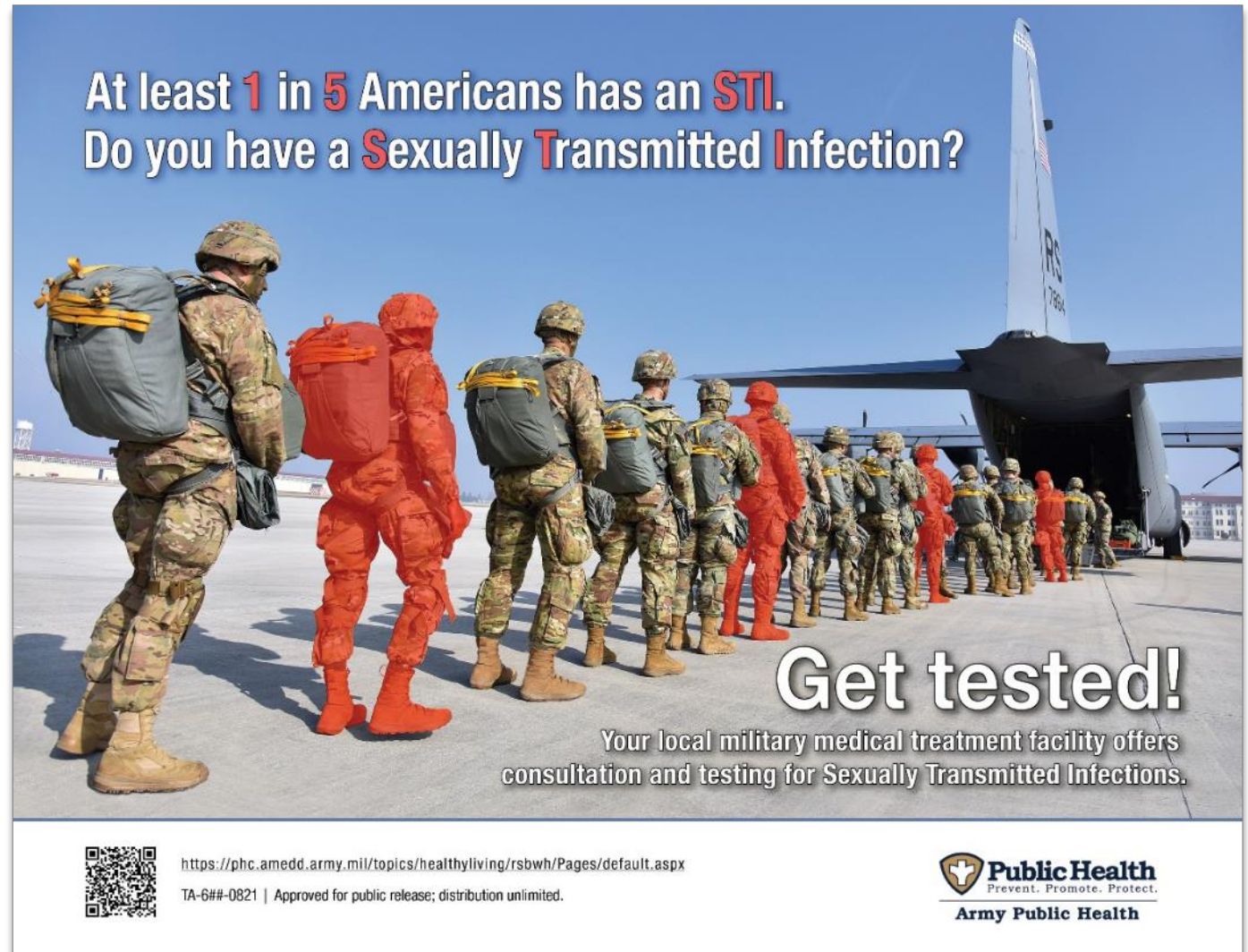
## COMPARISON WITH U.S. RATES



- Rates have been increasing among Soldiers as well as in the U.S. general population.
- Soldier rates are more than two-times those reported among U.S. adults of similar age and gender.


\*Army and U.S. rates adjusted by the 2015 AC Army age and sex distribution; U.S. data include 15–64-year-olds


- Reduced Soldier performance and medical readiness
- Transmission to other unit members
- Blood supply concerns during deployment
- Cost
- Poor morale (stigma)
- Long-term medical complications



At least **1 in 5** Americans has an **STI**.  
Do you have a **Sexually Transmitted Infection?**

**Get tested!**  
Your local military medical treatment facility offers consultation and testing for Sexually Transmitted Infections.

 <https://phc.amedd.army.mil/topics/healthyliving/rsbwh/Pages/default.aspx>  
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 **Public Health**  
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- Contact with infectious blood or body fluids
- **ANY** intimate (skin-to-skin) or sexual contact
  - Vaginal      – Oral
  - Anal          – 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 process
  - HIV may be spread through breast milk



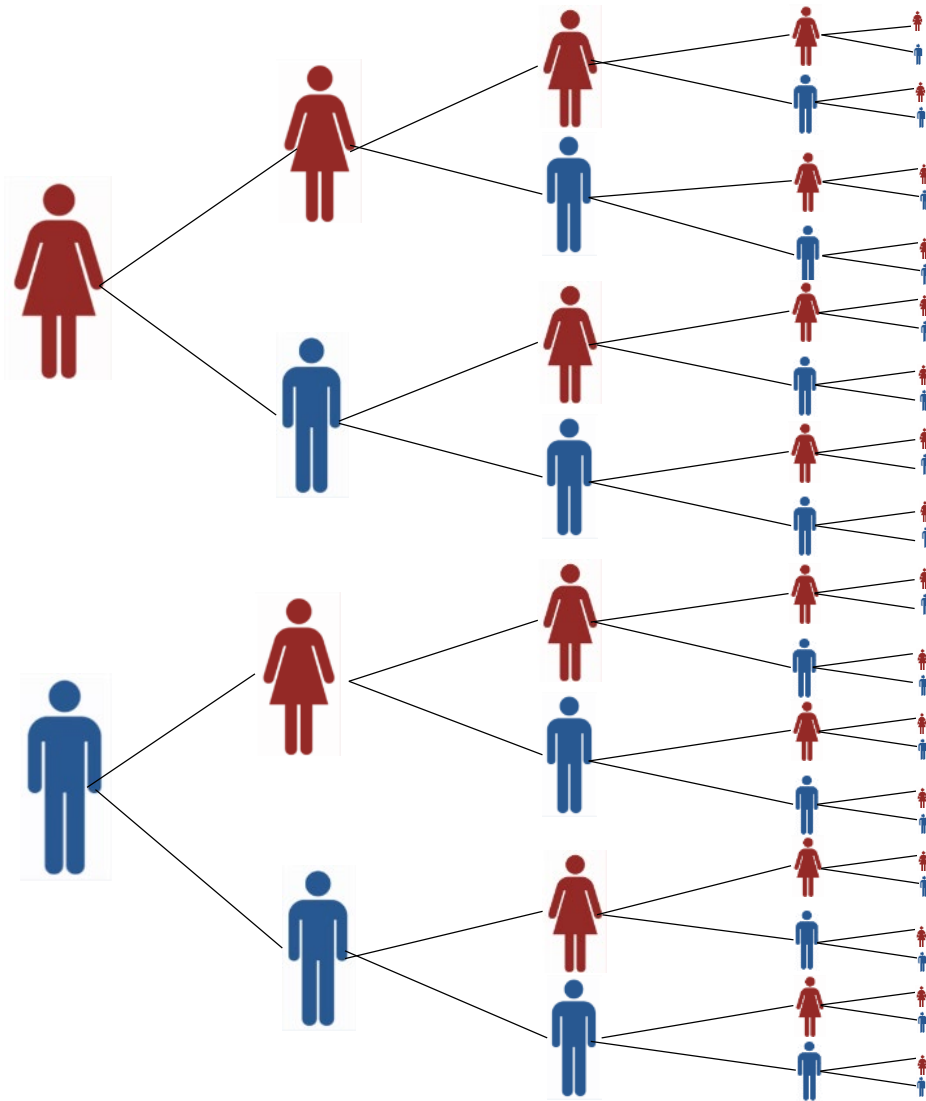
**Exchanging Body Fluids**

**Having a STI makes it easier to get HIV**

- It is possible to get some STIs in the mouth or throat from—
  - Giving oral sex to a partner with a genital or anal/rectal infection.
  - Getting oral sex from a partner with a mouth or throat infection.
- You can lower your chances of giving or getting STIs during oral sex by using a condom, dental dam or other barrier method every time.



# How are STIs Spread?

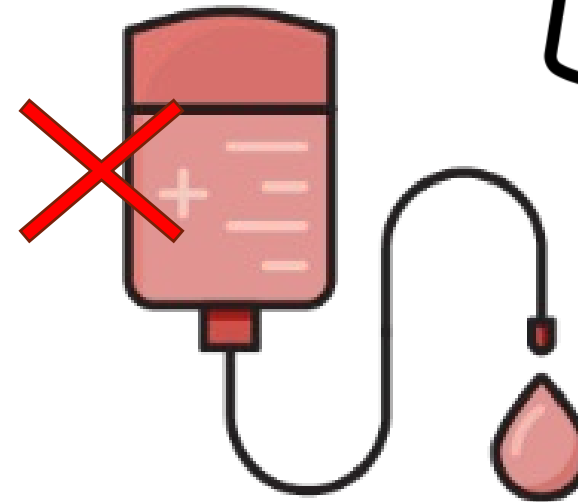


- When you have unprotected sex with someone you are having sex with everyone they have had sex with!
- Social networking and dating apps do not tell you who has an STI, so take precautions and protect yourself!



# STIs are **NOT** Spread Through

- Air, water, or food
- Shaking hands or hugging
- Insect bites
- Donating blood
- Touching surfaces or objects, such as telephones, door knobs, toilet seats



- Unprotected Sex
  - Oral, Vaginal, or Anal
- More than one sexual partner in the last 12 months
- One night stands or internet “hook ups”
- Sex solicitation
- Sharing razors, needles, or other sharp objects
- Tattooing or body piercing from risky sources
- Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol

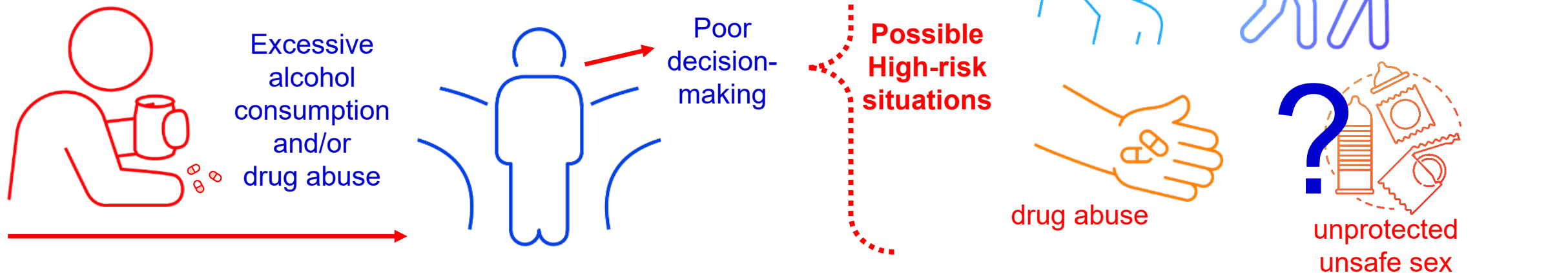


➤ **Decision making can be impaired by—**

- Excessive alcohol consumption; and
- Drug use (e.g., illegal drugs, prescription drug abuse, marijuana).

➤ **Impaired decision-making can increase chance of high-risk situations, such as—**

- Unprotected sex;
- Sexual behaviors you usually wouldn't do; and
- Being victimized in an assault or robbery.

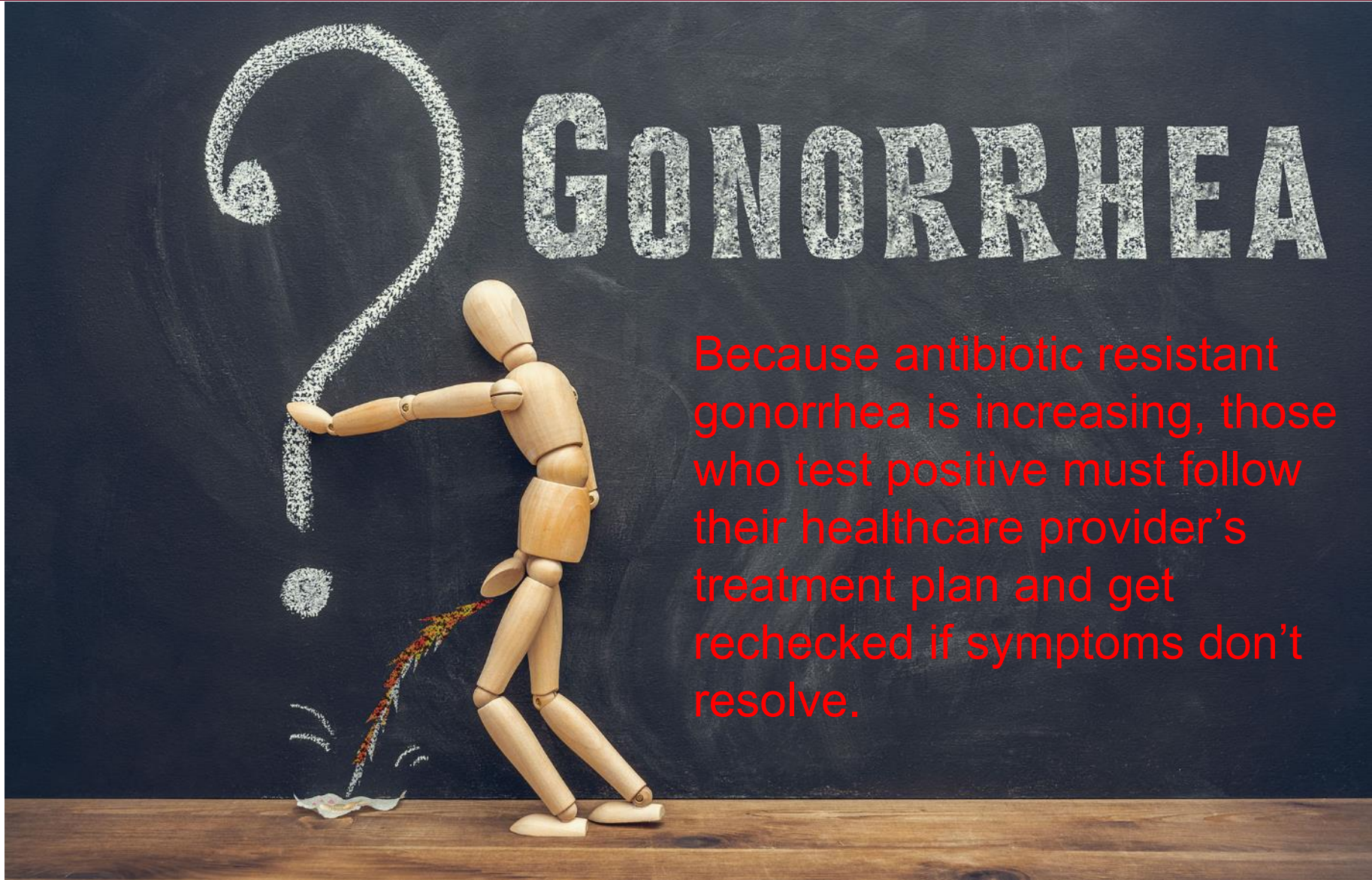




- Unusual discharge from vagina, penis, or anus
- Pain or burning feeling when urinating
- Pain and/or bleeding when you have sex
- Abdominal pain
- Lumps or skin growth around genitals or anus
- Rash on different parts of the body
- Unusual vaginal bleeding
- Itchy genitals or anus
- Blisters, sores, or warts around genitals or anus, mouth, or throat (rare)
- **NO SYMPTOMS\***



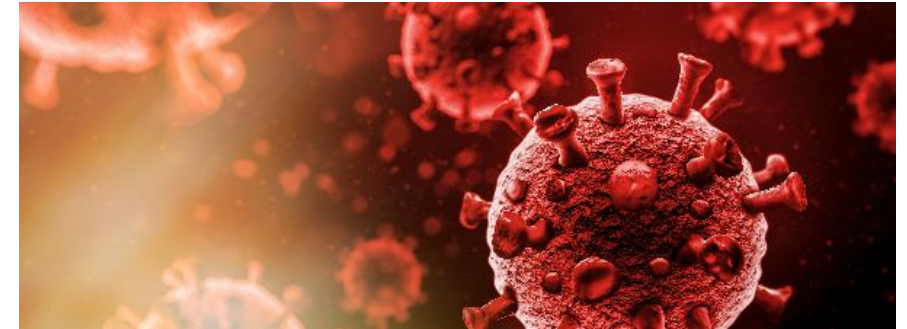
**\*Persons with no signs or symptoms can be silent carriers – don't assume "clean!"**

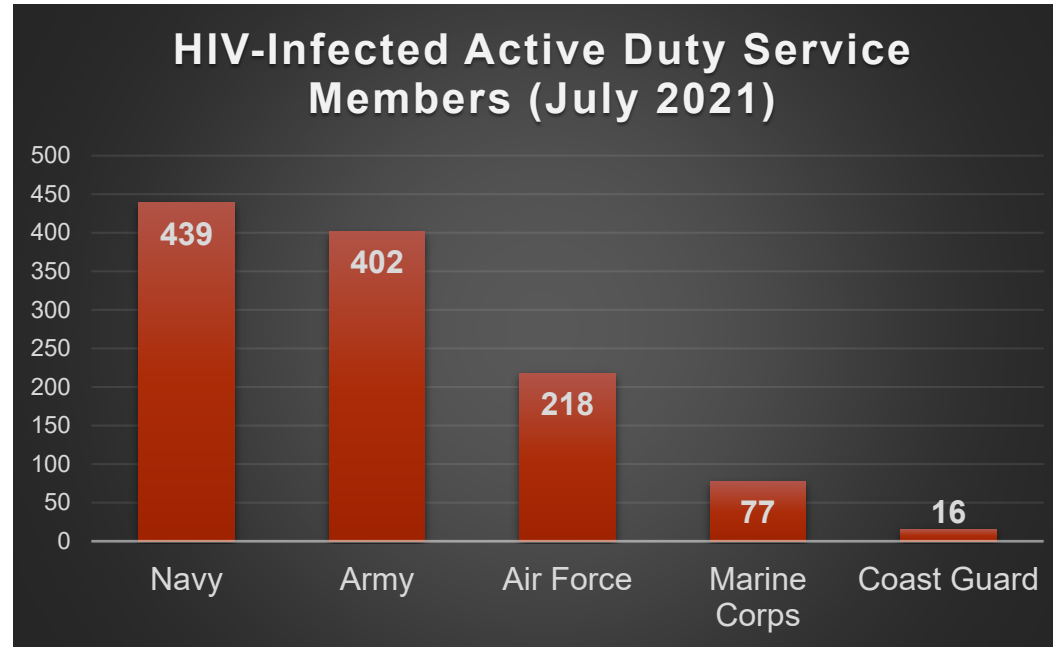


Because antibiotic resistant gonorrhea is increasing, those who test positive must follow their healthcare provider's treatment plan and get rechecked if symptoms don't resolve.



- **HIV attacks the immune system and can cause Acquired Immune Deficiency (AIDS).**
- **There is **no vaccine** to prevent HIV, and there is **no cure** for HIV or AIDS.**
- **Symptoms**
  - Flu-like symptoms
  - Can take up to 10 years to show noticeable symptoms
  - Can still transmit without showing signs or symptoms
- **Testing**
  - Blood test or Oral swab
- **Treatment**
  - Slows disease progression by reducing viral load
  - Not a cure, but can help provide for a longer, healthier life if started sooner rather than later





- HIV is a disqualifier for service entry, but continues to infect active members.
- HIV impacts deployment readiness because of blood bank concerns.

<b>ARMY Breakdown</b>	<b>Enlisted</b>	<b>Officer</b>	<b>Total</b>
Active Component	338	64	402
Guard	240	30	270
Reserve	209	34	243
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>787</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>915</b>



## HIV testing is required—

- At accession into service (Active Duty, Guard, and Reserve),
- Every 2 years, and
- As directed for medical readiness (e.g., blood donation or recipient, newly diagnosed STI, certain restricted activities).

## **HOWEVER,**

**As with any STI, you can always get tested more often and should be tested if you have—**

- Unprotected sex.
- Multiple partners.
- New partner.
- An HIV positive partner.
- IV drug use.
- Clinical symptoms.

## Testing is reliable but—

- The body has a “Window Period” time of 30-90 days from exposure to develop enough antibodies to show up in the blood screening, and
- During this time, levels can be too low to detect, and the virus can still be spread to others.

**So repeat testing is critical for those who participate in risky activities.**





View at  
<https://youtu.be/BYzHZr0S--I>





- **Respect and Protect** your health and your partners.
- **Talk** openly and honestly to your partner(s) and your healthcare provider about sexual health and STIs.
- **Use Protection – Wear a condom!**
- **Get tested.** It's the only way to know for sure if you have an STI.
- **Military Treatment Facility (MTF)**
  - Free testing
  - Confidential treatment and counseling
- **Other Low cost STI Testing and Treatment**
  - Find testing locations <https://gettested.cdc.gov/>

**LABORATORY  
Test Results**

Chlamydia	Negative
Gonorrhea	Negative
Hepatitis B	Negative
HIV	Negative
Syphilis	Negative

Date: Today

**Testing is reliable, but remember that repeat testing is critical for those who participate in risky activities.**

- A “Window Period” of 30-90 days from exposure is needed for body to develop enough antibodies to show up in the blood screening. During this time, the virus can be—
  - Too low to detect, and
  - Spread to others.

**If you test positive for an STI, work with your healthcare provider to get the correct treatment.**



**Untreated Sexually Transmitted Infections can cause long-term effects** such as infertility, pelvic or abdominal pain, certain cancers, or pregnancy complications, and can increase your risk of HIV.

**Your Army medical provider can help PROTECT you!**

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

**TALK** > **TEST** > **TREAT**

<https://phc.amedd.army.mil/topics/healthyliving/rsbwh/Pages/default.aspx>  
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**Public Health**  
 Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
**Army Public Health**

- All STIs can be treated to manage symptoms and prevent long-term complication—some can be cured completely with antibiotics.
- Your doctor can recommend medicines to treat an STI that are safe to take while you are pregnant.
- Finish all your medicine to be sure you are cured and reduce risk of antibiotic resistance.
- Do not share your medicine with anyone. You need all of it.
- In some cases, it is critical for partners to get treatment—inform your healthcare provider and your partner(s) so they can also get tested and treated.



Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/std/prevention/NextSteps-GonorrheaOrChlamydia.htm>

## ➤ **Abstinence**

- Abstain from sex (vaginal, oral, and anal).



## ➤ **Mutual monogamy**

- Agree to only have sex with one person who agrees to only have sex with you.

## ➤ **Talk to your partners**

- Reduce number of sex partners.
- Ensure you and partner(s) get tested.

## ➤ **Get vaccinated**

- Get the HPV and Hepatitis B vaccines.



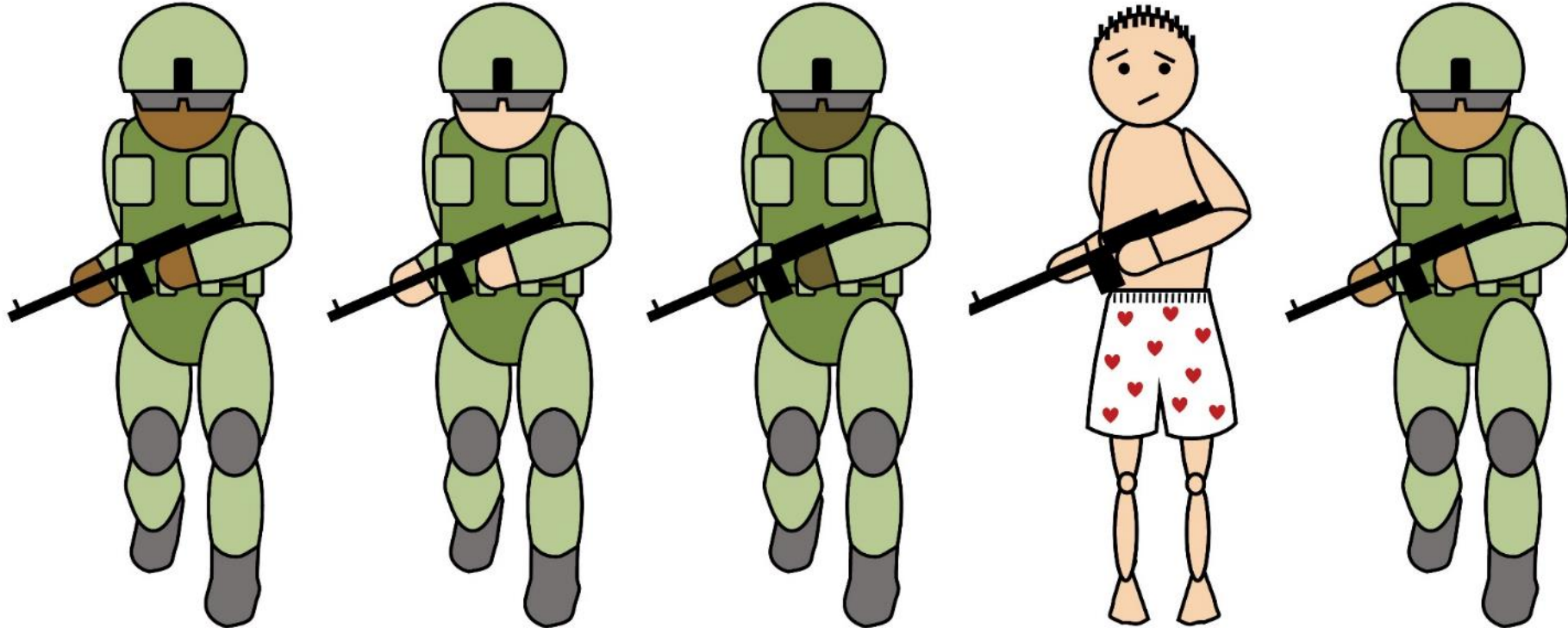
## ➤ **Avoid behaviors that increase risk**

- Avoid excessive alcohol and drugs that might inhibit your thinking.
- Do not share needles or razors.
- Avoid risky tattoo parlors.



## ➤ **Wear a CONDOM!**

You wouldn't go into combat without **protection...**



At least **1 in 5** Americans has a **Sexually Transmitted Infection!**  
**Protect yourself from STIs** use a condom every time you have sex!

## Don't Be That Person!

## Excuses

- I'm clean and my partner looks clean.
- I'll pull out.
- We don't need condoms - I'm/you're on the pill.
- I just got a negative STI/HIV test report.
- They're too much trouble and you can't feel anything, they—
  - Make things messy.
  - Aren't big enough for me.
  - Always break.
  - Might come off.
- My partner didn't want to use a condom.

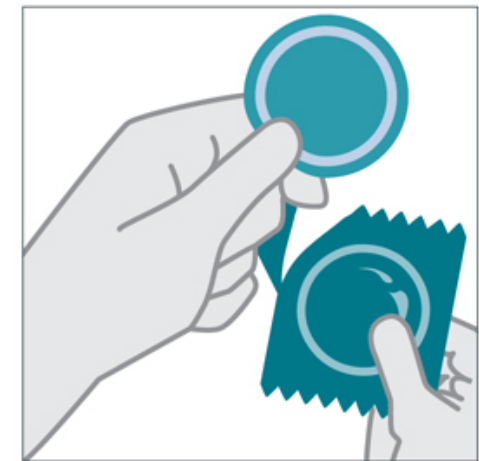
## Reality Check

- You can't tell if someone has an STI.
- You can still get STIs and pregnant if you use the "pull out" method.
- Being on birth control doesn't mean that you can't get an STI.
- It can take up to 3 months for antibodies to show up on a blood test.
- Test results are only reliable if you and your partner did not participate in high risk behaviors after getting tested.
- It takes less than 30 seconds to put on a condom correctly so it fits comfortably and won't break or fall off.
- Respect yourself and your partner—use protection.

- **Do** use a condom every time you have sex.
- **Do** put on a condom before having sex.
- **Do** read the package and check the expiration date.
- **Do** make sure there are no tears or defects.
- **Do** store condoms in a cool dry place.
- **Do** use latex or polyurethane condoms.
- **Do** use water-based or silicone-based lubricant to prevent breakage.



- **Don't** store condoms in your wallet as heat and friction can damage them.
- **Don't** use nonoxynol-9 (a spermicide), as this can cause irritation.
- **Don't** use oil-based products like baby oil, lotion, petroleum jelly, or cooking oil because they will cause the condom to break.
- **Don't** use more than one condom at a time.
- **Don't** reuse a condom.





The dental dam is used when performing oral sex.

- The dental dam is a thin latex sheet.
- Place the dam over the vulva or anus prior to oral sex.



dental dam

**Myth:** If you or your partner had an STI, you would see signs.

**Fact:** Many STIs have no symptoms or only mild symptoms, or symptoms may go away for a while but then come back. Even if you have no symptoms, STIs can still damage your body, and you can still spread them to your partner.



**Myth:** STI symptoms may be bothersome, but most STIs do not have serious consequences.

**Fact:** Left untreated, most STIs can lead to serious conditions. They can cause infertility, urinary tract problems, and cancers of the vulva, cervix, vagina, penis, and anus. Some STIs, including syphilis and AIDS, can cause death. All STIs require professional medical treatment.

**Myth:** If you think you may have been exposed to an STI, wait to see if symptoms develop.

**Fact:** If you think you may have been exposed, see your doctor right away. He or she can often tell with a simple lab test if you have been infected. Also, let your partner or partners know that they are at risk and should be tested too.

**Myth:** You can catch an STI from a toilet seat, telephone, or other object used by an infected person.

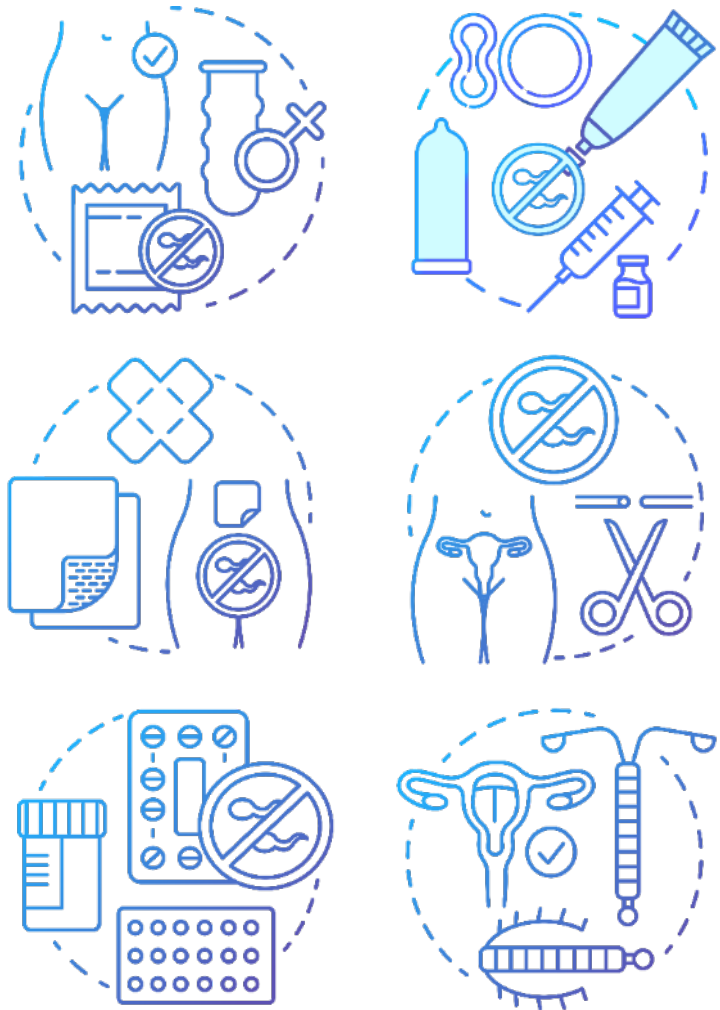
**Fact:** STIs are transmitted by vaginal, anal, and oral sex. Some STIs may spread to a baby during pregnancy, childbirth, or breastfeeding. Herpes can be transmitted by kissing, if herpes blisters are in the mouth or around the lips. Hepatitis B, syphilis, and HIV can be spread by sharing needles or other objects contaminated by blood, as well as through sexual contact. STIs are not spread by handshakes, hugs, toilet seats, towels, dishes, telephone receivers, or insect bites.



**Myth:** You can't get an STI more than once.

**Fact:** With the exception of hepatitis B, your body does not build immunity to any STI. If your partner is infected, the two of you may pass the STI back and forth unless you both get treated and get a clean bill of health before having sex again. Also, once you've had one STI, you may be more likely to get another.

## Preventing Unintended Pregnancy!



- Some forms of contraception (not including condoms) can prevent unintended pregnancy, but not an STI.
- Which method of contraception is best for you?—
  - Check out information at: <https://www.cdc.gov/pregnancy/avoiding.html>
  - Talk to your healthcare provider about which contraception method is best for you.

**Be sexually  
responsible —  
protect yourself,  
protect others**

