

## BIOLOGY SS 1: WEEK FIVE

# Sexually Transmitted Infection (STIs)

### Sexually Transmitted Infection (STIs)

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) — or sexually transmitted infections (STIs) — are generally acquired by sexual contact. The organisms that cause sexually transmitted diseases are bacteria, viruses or parasites. They may pass from person to person in blood, semen, or vaginal and other bodily fluids.

Sometimes these infections can be transmitted non sexually, such as from mother to infant during pregnancy or childbirth, or through blood transfusions or shared needles.

STDs don't always cause symptoms. It's possible to contract sexually transmitted diseases from people who seem perfectly healthy and may not even know they have an infection.

### Symptoms

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) or sexually transmitted infections (STIs) can have several symptoms, including no symptoms. That's why they may go unnoticed until complications occur or a partner is diagnosed. Signs and symptoms that might indicate an STI include:

1. Sores or bumps on the genitals or in the oral or rectal area
2. Painful or burning urination
3. Discharge from the penis
4. Unusual or odd-smelling vaginal discharge
5. Unusual vaginal bleeding
6. Pain during sex
7. Sore, swollen lymph nodes, particularly in the groin but sometimes more widespread
8. Lower abdominal pain
9. Fever
10. A rash over the trunk, hands or feet

Signs and symptoms may appear a few days after exposure, or it may take years before you have any noticeable problems, depending on the individual.

### Causes

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) or sexually transmitted infections (STIs) can be caused by:

- Bacteria (gonorrhoea, syphilis, chlamydia)
- Parasites (trichomoniasis)

- Viruses (human papillomavirus, genital herpes, HIV)

### Risk factors

Anyone who is sexually active risks some degree of exposure to a sexually transmitted disease (STD) or a sexually transmitted infection (STI). Factors that may increase that risk includes:

1. Having unprotected sex.
2. Improper or inconsistent use of condoms can also increase your risk.
3. Having a history of STIs. Having one STI makes it much easier for another STI to take hold.
4. Anyone forced to have sexual intercourse or sexual activity. (rape)
5. Misuse of alcohol or use of recreational drugs. Substance misuse can inhibit your judgment, making you more willing to participate in risky behaviours.
6. Injecting drugs. Needle sharing spreads many serious infections, including HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C.
7. Being young. Half the STIs occur in people between the ages of 15 and 24.
8. Men who request prescriptions for drugs to treat erectile dysfunction.

### Transmission from mother to infant

Certain STIs — such as gonorrhoea, chlamydia, HIV and syphilis — can be passed from an infected mother to her child during pregnancy or delivery. STIs in infants can cause serious problems or even death. All pregnant women should be screened for these infections and treated.

### Complications

Because many people in the early stages of a sexually transmitted disease (STD) or sexually transmitted infection (STI) experience no symptoms, screening for STIs is important in preventing complications.

### Possible complications include:

1. Pelvic pain
2. Pregnancy complications
3. Eye inflammation
4. Arthritis
5. Pelvic inflammatory disease
6. Infertility
7. Heart disease
8. Rectal cancers

### Prevention

There are several ways to avoid or reduce the risk of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) or sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

1. The most effective way to avoid STIs is to not have (abstain from) sex.
2. Stay with one uninfected partner.
3. Wait and test. Avoid vaginal and anal intercourse with new partners until you have both been tested for STIs.
4. Get vaccinated.
5. Use condoms and dental dams consistently and correctly.
6. Don't drink alcohol excessively or use drugs. If you're under the influence, you're more likely to take sexual risks.
7. Consider pre exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). to reduce the risk of sexually transmitted HIV infection in people who are at very high risk.
8. Generally, continue to practice safe sex to prevent other STIs.

## ASSIGNMENT

1. What are STIs?
2. State five (5) risk factors associated with STIs.
3. State five (5) ways you can prevent STIS