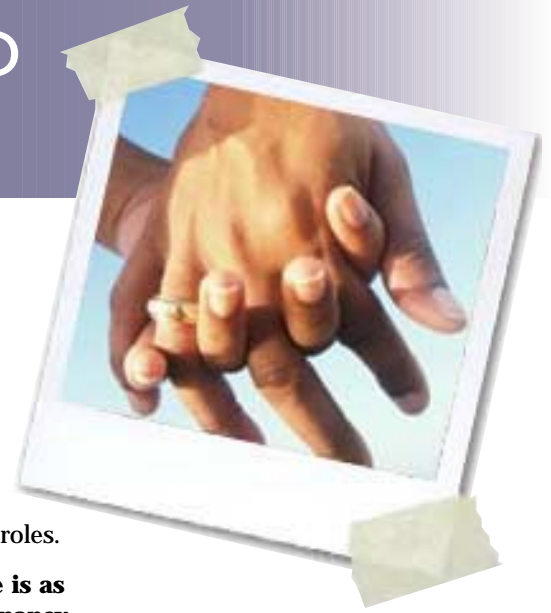




# SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS



## Silent problem

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are infections passed from one person to another through sexual contact. Take care. Learn about infections *before* you get pregnant to help prevent or treat diseases that could harm your health or a future pregnancy.

- ❖ STIs are a common health problem for both men and women.
- ❖ All STIs can be treated, and most can be cured. In fact, a past STI or herpes that flares up from time to time, will not keep you from having a healthy baby in the future.
- ❖ When infected with an STI, most men and women show no signs of infection.
- ❖ Some untreated STIs, like chlamydia and gonorrhea, may damage a woman's fallopian tubes – the travel route for the egg. This may make it difficult to get pregnant.
- ❖ Other STIs, like herpes and genital warts, may be a factor for increased risk of cervical cancer.
- ❖ Infected mothers can pass on an STI to their baby during pregnancy or childbirth.
- ❖ Hepatitis B is the only STI that can be prevented by vaccine.

### *Your STI safeguard*

Whether planning a pregnancy or not, both men and women can make 2 important decisions. Check your health and know your roles.

#### **1. Make sure the body you have is as healthy as possible before pregnancy**

- ❖ Have regular physical exams
- ❖ Ask your health care provider to test you for STIs—it's not always done
- ❖ For more information contact your local sexual health clinic

*See next page for point #2.*



# SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

## 2. Know your risks

	Yes	No	Unsure
I have regular physical exams. ....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have always practiced safer sex by insisting on condom use every time. ....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My partner has regular physical exams. ....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My partner and I have sex only with each other. ....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I never had a STI. ....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My partner never had a STI. ....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My partner has always practiced safer sex in the past. ....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know that using drugs and alcohol can blur my judgement. ....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I ask for a STI check if I am with a new partner. ....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If your answers to these questions tell you your STI risk is low (you answered “yes” to every question), then your body is likely to be free of infection. **To be sure, be tested.**

If you answered “no” to some questions, don’t despair. We are talking about risk only. Your answers don’t mean there is a problem. They tell you it is time to make some changes to your lifestyle or look for some more information. **To be sure, be tested.**

STIs don’t have to change relationships; you just need to know what they mean for your health, and how you can keep them from happening. You can be treated.

Any “unsure” checks to the questions above? It could be time to talk to your partner or see your health care provider. Your health care provider can talk to you about a Hepatitis B vaccination and testing for STIs, including HIV. Anonymous testing for HIV can be arranged.

Remember to tell your health care provider if you have had an STI so you can plan for a healthy pregnancy.

### FOR HELP CLOSE TO HOME CONTACT:

Health care provider: \_\_\_\_\_

Sexual health clinic: \_\_\_\_\_

Ontario HIV/AIDS and Sexual Health Information Line: 1-800-668-2437

Canadian HIV/AIDS Information Centre: 1-877-999-7740 or [www.aidssida.cpha.ca](http://www.aidssida.cpha.ca)

Ontario HIV/AIDS: Main Line (information about needle exchange programs and STDs and injection drug use): 1-800-686-7544