Choices Matter

Factual Information About Sexual Health

You have a choice

And thinking about this choice *before* you make it is so important.

Abstinent

Abstinence means choosing to wait to become sexually active until you are in a long-term, committed relationship. Ideally, this would mean waiting until you are married.

Sexually Active

Sexually active means choosing to become sexually active by participating in any form of sexual intercourse with another person whether it is traditional, oral or anal as well as other types of sexual skin-to-skin contact.

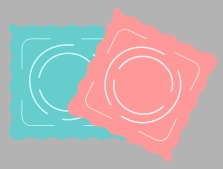
LET'S THINK ABOUT

BENEFITS AND RISKS

THE CHOICE OF BEING ABSTINENT
AND BEING SEXUALLY ACTIVE
COMES WITH BENEFITS AND RISKS.

Let's Talk About Contraceptives

13% Condoms



Latex condoms are intended to prevent pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, and other sexually transmitted infections. Latex condoms reduce the risk of transmitting STIs by providing a barrier against the source of the infection. However, they do not completely eliminate the risks of pregnancy and STIs.

7% Birth Control Pill

Birth control pills are a kind of medicine with progestin. Birth control pills come in a pack, and you take 1 pill every day. Does the pill protect you against an STI? No. The pill is only effective in attempting to prevent a pregnancy.

4% Birth Control Shot

The birth control shot (sometimes called Depo-Provera, the Depo shot, or DMPA) contains progestin. Does the shot protect you against an STI? No. The shot is only effective in attempting to prevent a pregnancy.

1% Implant

The birth control implant (AKA Nexplanon) is a tiny, thin rod about the size of a matchstick. The implant releases progestin into your body. A nurse or doctor inserts the implant into your arm. Does the implant protect you against an STI? No. It is only effective in attempting to prevent a pregnancy.

11% Plan B

Plan B can be taken immediately after sexual intercourse. This pill has to be taken within 3 days to have a chance to be effective. Read the instructions that come in the package for more information and for possible side effects. Plan B does not protect you against an STI.

22% Pulling Out/Withdrawl

Pulling out is a way to try to prevent pregnancy by keeping sperm out of the vagina. Does pulling out protect you from getting an STI? No. You always contract an STI through skin-to-skin contact or through a bodily fluid.

Failure Rates

These are the most commonly used forms of birth control among young people. You will notice that each method has a failure rate. None of these methods can guarantee you that you will not experience a pregnancy.

Chlamydia

Chlamydia is bacterial which means the infection can be cured.

Here are some important things you need to know about this particular STI.

Interesting Fact

Most infected people will not show any symptoms. In fact **80% of females** with Chlamydia won't show symptoms. And **50% of males** with Chlamydia won't show symptoms.

How can I get it?

You can contract Chlamydia through **any type of sexual activity** (traditional, oral or anal intercourse) including sexual skin-to-skin contact.

My body

If you contract Chlamydia, the infection can be in **multiple places in your body** including: your vagina, penis, throat, anus or eyes.

Symptoms

Symptoms can include: **discharge** from the vagina or penis, abnormal **bleeding** (females), and abdominal **pain**.

Learn more about STIs at: www.cdc.gov/sti/

Gonorrhea

Gonorrhea is bacterial which means the infection can be cured.

Here are some important things you need to know about this particular STI.

Interesting Fact

About **1,568,000 infections** occur each year in the United States. And most of those people do not show any symptoms.

How can I get it?

You can contract Gonorrhea through **any type of sexual activity** (traditional, oral or anal intercourse) including sexual skin-to-skin contact.

My body

If you contract Gonorrhea, the infection can be in **multiple places in your body** including: your vagina, penis, throat, anus or eyes.

Symptoms

Symptoms can include: **discharge** from the vagina or penis, abnormal **bleeding** (females), and **burning** during urination.

Learn more about STIs at: www.cdc.gov/sti/

Syphilis

Syphilis is bacterial which means the infection can be cured.

Here are some important things you need to know about this particular STI.

Interesting Fact

Without treatment, this STI **progresses into stages**. If a person reaches stage 3 Syphilis, it can cause **major damage** to the brain, the heart and the eyes.

How can I get it?

You can contract Syphilis through **any type of sexual activity** (traditional, oral or anal intercourse) including sexual skin-to-skin contact.

My body

If you contract Syphilis, the infection can be in **multiple places in your body** including: your vagina, penis, throat, hands, or anus.

Symptoms

Symptoms can include: painless **chancres** (non-painful sores) form on the body, temporary **rash**, **flu-like** symptoms.

Learn more about STIs at: www.cdc.gov/sti/

Genital Herpes

Genital Herpes is viral which means the infection can not be cured.

Here are some important things you need to know about this particular STI.

Interesting Fact

There are about **572,000** new cases of Genital Herpes each year in the United States.

How can I get it?

You can contract Genital Herpres through **any type of sexual activity** (traditional, oral or anal intercourse) including sexual skin-to-skin contact.

My body

If you contract Genital Herpes, the infection can be in **multiple places in your body** including: your vagina, penis, throat, hands, or anus.

Symptoms

Symptoms can include: painful **sores**, **discharge**, **fatigue** with body **aches**, or **swollen** lymph glands .

Learn more about STIs at: www.cdc.gov/sti/

Human Papilloma Virus

HPV is viral which means the infection can not be cured.

Here are some important things you need to know about this particular STI.

Interesting Fact

HPV accounts for **half of the STIs** among 15 - 24 year olds. **40 million** Americans are currently infected with this STI.

How can I get it?

You can contract HPV through **any type of sexual activity** (traditional, oral or anal intercourse) including sexual skin-to-skin contact.

My body

If you contract HPV, the infection can be in **multiple places in your body** including: your vagina, penis, throat, or anus.

Symptoms

Symptoms can include: genital **warts** and **cancer** of the infected area.

Learn more about STIs at: www.cdc.gov/sti/

HIV/AIDS

HIV is viral which means the infection can not be cured.

Here are some important things you need to know about this particular STI.

Interesting Fact

Often times when a person contracts HIV, it takes **several years** before any symptoms start to become noticeable. HIV can develop in AIDS over time.

How can I get it?

You can contract HIV through **any type of sexual activity** (traditional, oral or anal intercourse) including sexual skin-to-skin contact.

My body

If you contract HIV, the infection can be in **multiple places in your body** including: your vagina, penis, throat, or anus.

Symptoms

Symptoms can include: **fatigue**, **fever**, and **body aches**.

Learn more about STIs at: www.cdc.gov/sti/

Pubic Lice (Crabs)

Pubic Lice is parasitic which means the infection can be cured.

Here are some important things you need to know about this particular STI.

Interesting Fact

Pubic Lice is **parasitic** - which means it is **caused by a parasite**. These lice can also be spread by sharing towels, bed sheets, and clothes with someone who is infected.

How can I get it?

You can contract Pubic Lice through **any type of sexual activity** (traditional, oral or anal intercourse) including sexual skin-to-skin contact.

My body

If you contract Pubic Lice, the parasites will be on your **genital area**.

Symptoms

Symptoms can include: a mild **itching** that develops into a **rash** a few days later.

Learn more about STIs at: www.cdc.gov/sti/

Trichomoniasis

Trichomoniasis is parasitic which means the infection can be cured.

Here are some important things you need to know about this particular STI.

Interesting Fact

Although this is a parasite, most people who have it **do not show symptoms**. **90%** of men do not show symptoms and **50%** of women do not show symptoms.

How can I get it?

You can contract Trichomoniasis through **any type of sexual activity** (traditional, oral or anal intercourse) including sexual skin-to-skin contact.

My body

If you contract Trichomoniasis, the parasites will be on or inside your **genital area**.

Symptoms

Symptoms can include: **itching**, skin-**irritation**, bad **odor**, **painful** intercourse, **burning** during urination or ejaculation.

Learn more about STIs at: www.cdc.gov/sti/

3 SIMPLE STEPS TO THE

SUCCESS SEQUENCE

1.

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Finish middle and high school.

2.

GET EMPLOYED

Begin full-time work after finishing high school or college.

3.

WAIT UNTIL YOUR 21 YEARS OLD

Wait until your 21 or older to start a family.

By doing these 3 things in order, you have a **98%** chance to be financially successful in today's economy.

What is the best and healthiest choice for you?

Before making a choice regarding your sexual health whether to be abstinent or sexually active, it is important that you think through the benefits and the risks of both of your options. From this moment going forward, YOU are in control of your sexual health choices – not your friends, not someone who you may be interested in a relationship with, not media, not culture – YOU get to choose what is best for you.

The choices that you make today regarding your sexual health matter for your future goals and dreams you have for yourself. Above is the success sequence that shows if you graduate from high school, begin full-time work after high school or college, and then wait until your 21 years old or older before you start trying to have children, you have a 98% chance to be financially successful in today's economy.[26] Experiencing an unplanned pregnancy, or a Sexual Transmitted Infection, or any of the other risks that we have talked about can cause your financial stability to be affected as well as your personal goals to either be delayed, be much harder to accomplish, or not to happen at all.

Boundaries are beneficial when it comes to sexual health decisions. Expressed boundaries in a relationship show how a person wants to be treated, what is acceptable and what is not acceptable. They shouldn't be viewed as a means to keep people out but viewed as a way to allow people in without compromising what is important to you. If you choose abstinence think about what boundaries you would need to put in place in order to stick to your choice. Boundaries are a way to remain secure and confident in a relationship. They help set expectations and should be respected by both parties.

It is the goal of Choices Matter to give you the educational tools you need to make sexual health decisions that are informed and based on information that is factual. It is our hope that you will take this information seriously, that you will do some self-reflecting as you think through your options, and that you will pursue the personal choice that you believe is the best and healthiest choice for you to make.

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