

Sexually Transmissible Infections

Also known as Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). Contact Family Planning for detailed information on any of these.

What is it?	How do you get it?	Symptoms	Treatment	Partners
CHLAMYDIA An infection of the lining of the cervix and urethra that is passed from person to person during sexual intercourse. It is the most commonly diagnosed STI in New Zealand. It can cause infertility in both men and women.	Through unprotected (no condom) sexual contact; vaginal, oral and anal sex. Pregnant women can spread the bacteria to children during birth.	For most people there are no symptoms. For women there may be: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• vaginal discharge• bleeding between periods• lower abdominal pain• pain when urinating (weeing)• pain during intercourse. For men there may be: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• pain when urinating• discharge from the penis	Antibiotics Chlamydia is treatable. When treated early there are no long term complications. To prevent reinfection, do not have vaginal, anal or oral intercourse for at least 7 days after you and your partners have been treated.	Recent sexual partners need treatment. The best advice is not to have sex until both you and your partner/s have had treatment. If you do have sex, you must use a condom or oral dam.
GONORRHOEA This is a bacterial infection of the genitals, throat or rectum. Gonorrhoea can cause infertility in both men and women.	Through unprotected (without a condom) vaginal, anal or oral sex with someone who has the infection. It can be spread from mother to baby during birth.	May be no symptoms in men or women. For women there may be: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• vaginal discharge• bleeding between periods• lower abdominal pain• pain during sex. For men there may be: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• pain when urinating• discharge from the penis or rectum• pain in the testicles (balls).	Antibiotics Antibiotics are given – it is important to get the right one as many of the gonorrhoea bugs are resistant to the usual antibiotics.	Condoms provide protection. Sexual partners should be contacted and treated. Don't have sex until both you and your partners/s have had treatment.
GENITAL WARTS Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) causes small lumps in and around the vagina and anus in women and on the penis, and around the anus in men. For information on Genital Warts contact HPV Hotline 0508 11 12 13 or www.hpv.org.nz	Through close skin to skin contact, usually during sex. Can be transmitted from mother to baby.	• small flat lumps on the genitals, these lumps may be itchy.	Treatment of obvious warts , mainly for cosmetic reasons, is done with liquid nitrogen (freezing), diathermy (heat) or a chemical paint. There is also a cream to rub on, which acts by helping the immune system fight the virus.	No test for partners, except by looking. If partners have warts they should be treated. Using condoms/oral dams will help reduce the risk of spreading the infection.
GENITAL HERPES Infection on the genitals, caused by the Herpes simplex virus, the same virus that causes cold sores. For information on Genital Herpes contact Herpes Hotline 0508 11 12 13 or www.herpes.org.nz	Through close skin contact with someone who has the virus. From mother to baby - if during late pregnancy an ulcer or blister is present, a decision may be made about a caesarean delivery of the baby.	• First attack may be the worst - painful blisters, ulcers or sores <ul style="list-style-type: none">• most people have no symptoms• you are most infectious just before you get a sore, with the sore and just afterwards. However people can spread the virus when they have no symptoms.	Anti Herpes medication These tablets shorten the attack. If you get lots of recurrences (more than 6 a year) you can take tablets all the time and this helps to prevent recurrence.	Partners who have a sore should be tested. Using condoms/oral dams will help reduce the risk of spreading the infection.
TRICHOMONIASIS A protozoal infection of the male and female genital area often called "trike".	Through unprotected (without condom) sexual intercourse with someone who has the infection.	There may be no symptoms. For women there may be: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• smelly vaginal discharge• itching and irritation around the vagina and vulva. For men there may be: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• pain when urinating• discharge from the penis.	Antibiotics	Do not have sex until you and your partner/s have had treatment, unless you wear a condom or oral dam.
NON SPECIFIC URETHRITIS (NSU) An infection that causes inflammation of male urethra.		Men: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• discharge from the penis• pain when urinating (but sometimes no symptoms).	Antibiotics	Treat with antibiotics to avoid reinfection. Do not have sex until you are cleared, unless you wear a condom or oral dam.
SYphilis An infection of the skin or lining of the genital area. It is an infection that can, in its late stages, cause damage to the heart, brain and spinal cord.	Through unprotected (without a condom) vaginal, anal or oral sex with someone who has the infection. It is also spread by close contact. It can be spread from mother to baby across the placenta during pregnancy.	• Painless ulcer, called a chancre, usually on the genitals. In its second stages: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a rash and maybe other symptoms	Antibiotics	Partners must be tested and treated. The best advice is not to have sex until both you and your partner/s have had treatment. If you do have sex, you must use a condom or oral dam.

Infections that are both sexually transmitted and transmissible in other ways

HEPATITIS A A viral infection that affects the liver.	Through contaminated food or water, not washing hands after the toilet or before touching food. Hepatitis A can be spread through unprotected sex (without a condom) which involves oral to anal contact (rimming).	• often no symptoms <ul style="list-style-type: none">• yellowing of the skin and the whites of the eyes.• dark urine• mild flu-like symptoms• abdominal pain• nausea.	Immunisation for prevention During recovery eat a well balanced low fat diet and avoid alcohol and drugs. Avoid anal sex until recovered.	Immunisation for prevention and avoid anal sexual practices until recovered.
HEPATITIS B A viral infection that affects the liver.	Spread by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• having unprotected (without a condom) vaginal, anal or oral sex with someone who is infected• from mother to baby• sharing implements that may pierce the skin or have blood on them (needles, syringes, unsterilised instruments, razors, toothbrushes)• blood transfusion (in countries that do not pre-test blood for transfusion).	• often no symptoms <ul style="list-style-type: none">• yellowing of the skin and the whites of the eyes.• dark urine• mild flu-like symptoms• abdominal pain• nausea.	Immunisation for prevention Rest, exercise, eat a well balanced low fat diet. Avoid alcohol and drugs. Make sure that any prescription drugs or over the counter medications are safe to use, that is, do not affect the liver.	Always use a condom if partner is not immunised. Protection is offered to babies on the immunisation schedule and to children under 16 years. Free immunisation is available for household and sexual contacts.
HEPATITIS C A viral infection that affects the liver.	Through contact with infected blood, sharing needles, syringes and any other equipment and rarely through sexual contact. Blood transfusion (in countries that do not pre-test blood for transfusion).	• often no symptoms <ul style="list-style-type: none">• tiredness• yellowing of the skin and the whites of the eyes (rarely).• dark urine• mild flu-like symptoms• abdominal pain• nausea.	Rest, exercise, eat a well balanced low fat diet , with plenty of fruit and vegetables. Avoid alcohol and using intra-venous drugs. Some antiviral treatments are now available, talk to your doctor.	Sexual and needle-sharing partners can have a blood test to check for Hep C antibodies.
HIV AND AIDS The Human Immuno-deficiency Virus attacks the white blood cells and damages the immune system causing difficulty in fighting infection.	Through contact with infected blood, semen (cum), vaginal fluids, sharing needles and from mother to baby. Blood transfusion (in countries that do not pre-test blood for transfusion).	• often no obvious symptoms for years <ul style="list-style-type: none">• early flu-like illness• frequent attacks of thrush and other infections.	The disease can be controlled by antiretroviral medication. Treatments are available for the secondary infections and some cancers. No cure or immunisation available.	Practise safer sex to prevent transmission. Do not share needles with a partner. Partners should ask for an HIV test.
PUBLIC LICE OR CRABS Small lice that live in the pubic hair. These cause inflammation and irritation.	Through close body contact, usually during sex with an infected person. Lice can be spread through infected, shared bedding and clothing.	• intense itching in and around the pubic area <ul style="list-style-type: none">• nits (lice eggs) are often found on the pubic hair.	Special shampoo , cream or ointment are applied to the pubic area to kill the lice. Clothing and bedding should be washed.	Treat recent partners of the last 3 months in same way at the same time.
SCABIES Small mites that burrow into the skin and cause inflammation and irritation.	Through close body contact sometimes during sex. The mites can spread through infected shared bedding and clothing.	• itching that is worse at night <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a rash.	Special lotion , cream or ointment applied to the infected area. Clothing and bedding should be washed.	Treat recent partners of the last 3 months in same way at the same time.

These are not sexually transmissible but can affect the genital area

THRUSH OR CANDIDIASIS Caused by a yeast organism that irritates the mucous membrane of the genitals. Called balanitis if under the foreskin of the penis of uncircumcised men, and vaginitis or vulvitis if inside or around the vagina or vulva.	Can occur after sex but also without sex. Commonly it is an excess of yeast growth when using antibiotics, during pregnancy, when immunity is low or in diabetics.	In women: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• itching around the vagina or vulva• whitish thick vaginal discharge. In men: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a rash• itching• a discharge under the foreskin.	Creams and pessaries (tablets that are inserted into the vagina). Oral anti-fungal tablets may be given if the case is severe or when in the throat. Salt water baths are usually enough for men, and they can also use cream.	Partners need treatment if showing symptoms.
BACTERIAL VAGINOSIS Can result from an imbalance of normal bacteria in a healthy vagina. The acid/alkaline balance is upset.	Can be brought on by anything that changes the balance of bacteria in the vagina e.g. new sex partners, increased sexual activity, but can occur in some women who have never had sexual intercourse.	• greyish white smelly vaginal discharge <ul style="list-style-type: none">• smell often worse after intercourse and around period time.	Tablets taken orally. Don't drink alcohol while taking these tablets.	Partners do not need treatment.
CYSTITIS A bacterial infection causing inflammation of the bladder lining. It can spread to the kidneys and cause damage to kidney function.	Through bacteria from around the anus getting into the urethra and bladder. It can also be caused through not emptying the bladder properly. Cystitis is much more common in women.	• burning sensation when urinating <ul style="list-style-type: none">• urinating more often than usual• feeling of urgency to urinate• cloudy or bloodstained urine• aching in the lower abdomen, or back.	Antibiotics Drink plenty of water. Use pain relief and urine alkalisers e.g. Ural, citravescient.	Partners do not need treatment.