

Sexually transmitted infections, or STIs, are sometimes also called sexually transmitted diseases or STDs, but they mean the same thing.

Did you know that about half of sexually active teens and young adults will get an STI before their 25th birthday – and many of them will have no idea?

How do I know if I have an STI?

STIs are really common, and a lot of people who have them don't have any symptoms. STIs spread from one person to another, usually during vaginal, anal, and oral sex.

Without treatment, STIs can lead to serious health problems. But the good news is that getting tested is no big deal, and most STIs are easy to treat.

The three most common STIs are Gonorrhea, Chlamydia, and Trichomonas. People who experience symptoms may notice the following:

- pain or burning while peeing
- pain during sex
- lower belly pain
- abnormal vaginal discharge (may be yellow, green, gray and have a strong smell)
- bleeding between periods
- discharge from the penis
- swollen or tender testicles
- pain, discharge and/or bleeding around the anus
- persistent sore throat

Not everyone with an STI has symptoms.

You should get checked if:

- you have had unprotected sex with a new partner
- you or your sexual partner have had sex with someone else without using a condom
- your sexual partner has any symptoms
- you're planning to get pregnant and may have been at risk of infection

What should I do if I think I've got an STI?

If you think you may have a sexually transmitted infection (STI), go to your Primary Care Provider (PCP) or local sexual health clinic such as Planned Parenthood.

Most STIs can be successfully treated, but it's important to get any symptoms checked.

In Colorado, any minor can access testing and treatment for STIs from a medical provider, without their parents' consent. However, it doesn't mean that they won't find out. If you use your insurance, your parents will receive the statement that says you received care, but won't necessarily provide details about what care you got.

Resuming sexual activity after treatment

STOP having sex with others until you take ALL of the medicine, and **DO NOT** have sex for the next 7 days after finishing the medicine. It takes 7 days for the medicine to work in your body and cure most STI's. If you have sex without a condom during the 7 days after taking the medicine, you could still pass the infection to your sex partners, even if you have no symptoms. While using condoms correctly and consistently is effective, the safest way to make sure you do not pass this infection on to anyone else is to **NOT** have sex for 7 days.

If you are having any kind of sex, or thinking about getting started, use condoms to protect yourself and your partner, even if you are using a different kind of birth control.

Need FREE Condoms? Stop by and see the nurse at River Bridge or Planned Parenthood in West Glenwood.