

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

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Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) are diseases that can be passed from one person to another via sexual contact. Some STDs can be treated and cured, while others, once contracted, remain for a lifetime. Chlamydia is one of the more common STDs that both women and men are susceptible to. It is the result of exposure to a bacteria called Chlamydia Trachomatis. In women, the infection can occur in the cervix, throat, or rectum, while men who are infected experience the infection inside the penis (urethra), throat, and rectum. With regard to transmission, Chlamydia can be transmitted from one person to the other via vaginal, oral, or anal intercourse.

Another major STD is Genital Herpes, caused by the Herpes Simplex virus. Symptoms include the presence of sores in the thigh area, the buttocks, and the rectum (p. 1). The sores appear as blisters that rupture, and heal (p. 1). An infected individual may be unaware that he or she is infected due to no symptoms being shown or the presence of very mild symptoms occurring to the point that such symptoms are not as noticeable. With regard to transmission, this STD can be passed from one person to another via vaginal, anal, or oral intercourse. Genital herpes can be transmitted from one person to another, whether or not the infected individual is experiencing an outbreak of sores (p. 1). Once the virus is in the body, it remains there for life. It must be noted that the use of a condom only reduces the risk of transmission but does not extinguish the risk of transmission as a whole. Both Chlamydia and Herpes can be transmitted from a pregnant woman to her child during birth.

Another example of an STD is Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS). This particular virus harms the body through the

destruction of white blood cells, making a person more susceptible to life-threatening infections in addition to certain types of cancer. AIDS is the last stage of HIV. It can be transmitted through sexual intercourse with an infected individual, sharing needles with an infected individual via drug use, or general contact with the blood of an infected person. This is also able to be transmitted during pregnancy or throughout the birth process from a mother to her child.

Another STD that poses a risk to the health of individuals is Syphilis. Syphilis is caused by bacteria and presents as an infection in the genitals, lips, and other areas of the body. It is transmitted via sexual contact with an infected person. Initial symptoms may manifest in the form of a rash on the hands or feet (p. 1). If left untreated, this STD can progress in stages, each more detrimental to the health and well-being of the individual than the prior stage.

As it has been demonstrated above, there are multiple STDs that pose a risk to one's physical health and well-being. It is important to bear in mind that the use of condoms does not preclude the risk of transmitting or contracting the above mentioned diseases as well as others that have not been elucidated above, although they lower the chance of transmission in many cases. The one finding consistent among each of these STDs is that the best way to avoid contracting such infections is to refrain from participating in sexual intercourse with infected individuals in addition to refraining from making contact with the blood or other body fluids of infected individuals.

References

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