



Wear RED December 1



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## Workplace Toolbox Session 4: Unmasking Myths About STIs and HIV in PNG

**Objective:** To engage adults in a lively discussion about sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV and debunk common myths

### Materials:

- Whiteboard or flipchart, Markers
- Handouts with myth statements
- Information pamphlets about STIs, HIV, and sexual health services

**Duration:** Approximately 10 - 60 minutes – depending on prior knowledge, time and preparation.

### Introduction (2 minutes):

- Address the importance of debunking myths and ensuring accurate sexual health knowledge.
- Emphasise the significance of testing and accurate information for preventing STIs and HIV.

### Activity 1: Myth Busting Game (11 minutes)

#### Instructions:

- Display the myths on the whiteboard or flipchart or handout – print next page
- Divide participants into small groups and ask each group to discuss why the myths are false.
- Encourage participants to come up with creative and humorous reasons why each myth is untrue.
- After discussion, reveal the correct answers and discuss the facts related to each myth.

#### Myths and example simple answers:

1. Myth: "Eating spicy food prevents STIs." **Fact: Spicy food might make you sweat, but it won't cure infections!**
2. Myth: "You can't get STIs from oral sex." **Fact: STIs can be transmitted through oral sex; protection is key!**
3. Myth: "If you shower right after sex, you won't get an STI." **Fact: STIs don't wash off with soap and water; prevention is better than cure!**
4. Myth: "You can tell if someone has an STI by looking at them." **Fact: Many STIs have no visible symptoms; regular check-ups are important!**
5. Myth: "STIs only happen to promiscuous people." **Fact: Anyone who is sexually active can get an STI; it's about safe practices, not labels!**
6. Myth: "You can't get an STI if you're in a long-term relationship." **Fact: STIs don't discriminate; regular testing keeps everyone safe!**
7. Myth: "Herbs can cure STIs." **Fact: Medical treatments are necessary; natural remedies might help symptoms but won't cure infections!**
8. Myth: "Using two condoms is safer than one." **Fact: Using two condoms can create friction and increase the risk of breakage; keep plenty on hand but use only one at time. Yep, stick to one!**
9. Myth: "If you have an STI, you'll know it." **Fact: Many STIs have mild or no symptoms; regular testing is crucial!**
10. Myth: "STIs only affect young people." **Fact: People of all ages are at risk; awareness and prevention are key!**
11. Myth: "If you have an STI, you can't have a healthy relationship." **Fact: Open communication, testing, and treatment can lead to healthy relationships!**





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## 11 Myths about STIs:

- 1. Myth: "Eating spicy food prevents STIs."**
- 2. Myth: "You can't get STIs from oral sex."**
- 3. Myth: "If you shower right after sex, you won't get an STI."**
- 4. Myth: "You can tell if someone has an STI by looking at them."**
- 5. Myth: "STIs only happen to promiscuous people."**
- 6. Myth: "You can't get an STI if you're in a long-term relationship."**
- 7. Myth: "Herbs can cure STIs"**
- 8. Myth: "Using two condoms is safer than one."**
- 9. Myth: "If you have an STI, you'll know it."**
- 10. Myth: "STIs only affect young people."**
- 11. Myth: "If you have an STI, you can't have a healthy relationship."**

## 11 Slightly more complex myths

1. **Myth:** "You don't have any STIs if you don't have symptoms." **Fact:** Many STIs, including Chlamydia and Gonorrhoea, can be asymptomatic; regular testing is essential! Untreated they can cause infertility.
2. **Myth:** "HIV can be cured by holy water." **Fact:** There's no magical cure; only prescribed ART and prevention work.!
3. **Myth:** "You can't get STIs if you shower immediately after sex." **Fact:** STIs aren't washed away by water; proper protection during sex is crucial!
4. **Myth:** "Only promiscuous people get STIs." **Fact:** STIs don't discriminate; anyone who is sexually active can be at risk.
5. **Myth:** "Herpes is only contagious during outbreaks." **Fact:** Herpes can be spread even without visible symptoms; safe practices are vital!
6. **Myth:** "HIV is only transmitted through sex." **Fact:** HIV can also be transmitted through sharing needles and from mother to child during childbirth or breastfeeding.
7. **Myth:** "Using two condoms provides double protection." **Fact:** Using two condoms can increase friction and the risk of breakage; use one correctly.
8. **Myth:** "Vaccination protects against all STIs." **Fact:** Vaccination, like the HPV vaccine, protects against specific STIs – like HPV. There is no vaccine for HIV for everyone safe practices are still necessary.
9. **Myth:** "STIs only affect young people." **Fact:** People of all ages can get STIs; awareness and regular check-ups are important for everyone.
10. **Myth:** "STIs can be cured by drinking herbal teas." **Fact:** Herbal remedies might help symptoms, but medical treatment is necessary for curing STIs.
11. **Myth:** "You can't get STIs if you're in a committed relationship." **Fact:** STIs don't differentiate between relationship statuses; everyone needs to practice safe sex. Anyone with a vagina can get bacterial vaginosis, but it usually occurs in people who are sexually active.

### Extended activity 2: Q&A and Discussion (10 - 20 minutes)

#### Instructions:

- Encourage participants to ask questions related to STIs, HIV, and sexual health.
- Discuss common misconceptions raised during the Q&A session.
- Provide information on local healthcare services, clinics, and resources for STI and HIV testing and prevention.

#### Conclusion (5 minutes):

- Thank participants for their active participation and willingness to engage in the discussion.
- Emphasise the importance of sharing accurate sexual health knowledge within their communities.
- Distribute information pamphlets and encourage participants to spread the correct information to promote healthy practices and regular check-ups.

By debunking STI and HIV myths in a humorous and interactive way, this toolbox session aims to promote accurate sexual health knowledge, encourage health service seeking, and foster open dialogue about hard to discuss topics.

Facts for 10 STIs next page.



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## FACTS about 10 Sexually Transmitted Infections:

### 1. Chlamydia:

- **Cause:** Bacterial (Chlamydia trachomatis)
- **Transmission:** Through unprotected vaginal, anal, or oral sex with an infected person.
- **Testing:** Urine test, swab test, or nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT) from the affected area.
- **Treatment:** Antibiotics (usually azithromycin or doxycycline) for 7 to 14 days.

### 2. Gonorrhoea:

- **Cause:** Bacterial (Neisseria gonorrhoeae)
- **Transmission:** Through unprotected vaginal, anal, or oral sex with an infected person.
- **Testing:** Urine test, swab test, or nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT) from the affected area.
- **Treatment:** Antibiotics (usually ceftriaxone and azithromycin) administered together.

### 3. Infectious Syphilis:

- **Cause:** Bacterial (Treponema pallidum)
- **Transmission:** Through direct contact with a syphilis sore during vaginal, anal, or oral sex.
- **Testing:** Blood test (VDRL or RPR test) to detect antibodies.
- **Treatment:** Penicillin /antibiotics, duration varies depending on the stage of disease.

### 4. Congenital Syphilis:

- **Cause:** Bacterial (Treponema pallidum)
- **Transmission:** From woman to her baby during childbirth or via placenta during pregnancy.
- **Testing:** Blood test - mother during pregnancy and testing the baby's blood after birth.
- **Treatment:** Penicillin injections, the duration varies depending on the stage of the disease.

### 5. Donovanosis:

- **Cause:** Bacterial (Klebsiella granulomatis)
- **Transmission:** Through unprotected vaginal, anal, or oral sex with an infected person.
- **Testing:** Biopsy of the affected tissue or swab test.
- **Treatment:** Antibiotics (usually doxycycline) for several weeks.

## 6. Human Papillomavirus Infection (Genital Warts):

- **Cause:** Virus (Human Papillomavirus)
- **Transmission:** Through skin-to-skin contact, usually during vaginal, anal, or oral sex.
- **Testing:** Physical examination, Pap test, DNA test, or biopsy of the affected tissue.
- **Treatment:** No cure; the warts can be removed through medications, cryotherapy, or surgery.

## 7. Trichomoniasis:

- **Cause:** Protozoan parasite (*Trichomonas vaginalis*)
- **Transmission:** Through unprotected vaginal sex.
- **Testing:** Swab test or urine test.
- **Treatment:** Antibiotics (usually metronidazole) for both partners.

## 8. Bacterial Vaginosis:

- **Cause:** Overgrowth of harmful bacteria in the vagina.
- **Transmission:** Not considered a classic STI, but sexual activity can increase the risk.
- **Testing:** Vaginal swab or fluid analysis.
- **Treatment:** Antibiotics (usually metronidazole or clindamycin) for 5 to 7 days.

## 9. HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus):

- **Cause:** Virus (Human Immunodeficiency Virus)
- **Transmission:** Unprotected vaginal, anal, or oral sex, sharing needles, or from mother to child during childbirth or breastfeeding.
- **Testing:** Blood test (HIV antibody test, RNA test, or antigen/antibody test).
- **Treatment:** Antiretroviral therapy (ART) for life to suppress the virus.

## 10. HSV-1 (Herpes Simplex Virus 1) and HSV-2 (Herpes Simplex Virus 2):

- **Cause:** Virus (Herpes Simplex Virus 1 and 2)
- **Transmission:** Through skin-to-skin contact, usually during vaginal, anal, or oral sex.
- **Testing:** Viral culture, PCR test, or blood test (specifically for antibodies to HSV-1 and HSV-2).
- **Treatment:** Antiviral medications (acyclovir, valacyclovir, or famciclovir) can help manage outbreaks and reduce transmission risk, but there is no cure. Treatment is episodic for outbreaks or suppressive for prevention in some cases.

Please note that while some of these infections have specific treatments, prevention through safe sex practices and regular testing is crucial in managing the spread of these infections.

See [www.businesses4health.com](http://www.businesses4health.com) for the list of STI and HIV clinics in PNG