

School_Nurse Daily Health Newsletter

By: Tamra Douglas, BSN, GN

Reviewed by: Hopiann Coombs BSN, RN, Reneta Mitchell, AsCJ, Shanique Haughton, BSN, RN,

Devotional Highlight

"String Too Short to Use"

Aunt Margaret's conservativeness was legendary. After she passed away, her nieces began the nostalgically bittersweet task of sorting her belongings. In a drawer, neatly arrayed inside a small plastic bag, they discovered an assortment of small pieces of string. The label read: "String too short to use."

How many of us are holding onto things that God did not tell us to? While the Israelites were in the desert, the Lord provided for them, yet they still complained of lack. The Lord instructed them to ensure that they gather enough for six (6) days, because none will be provided for the Sabbath (Exodus 16:5). Some listened, while some did not.

When we have provision in abundance, it's natural to want to cling to things in order to control it. However, there's no need to take things into our own hands when our faith is in a God who promised to "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).

(Extract from Our Daily Bread)



Topic of the Month

"Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)"

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). The grapevine suggests that many are less concerned with attracting these diseases and more concerned with not getting pregnant. So, we are here to take a deeper look at this issue. Let us get started.

What are STDs?

STDs are diseases/infections (also called STIs) that are transmitted/passed from one individual to the next through sexual contact. Some examples include: Chlamydia, Gonorrhoea, Genital Herpes, Human Papillomavirus (HPV), syphilis, and the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) (which lead to AIDS). Many of these do not manifest till the later stages, but even without you seeing or experiencing the actual symptoms, they can be passed on during sex.

How are they spread?

You contract STIs by having unprotected vaginal, anal, or oral sex with someone who has the infection. Thus, anyone who is sexually active is at risk for contracting STDs.



As a matter of fact, you can contract some STDs such as Herpes and Human papillomavirus (HPV) just by having skin-to-skin contact, such as kissing.

Are they common?

STDs are extremely common in young people (ages 15-24), and these individuals are at a greater risk of contracting the disease for several reasons (CDC, 2022):

1. Young women's bodies are biologically more prone to STDs.
2. Some young people do not get the recommended STD tests.
3. Many are hesitant to speak about their sex lives openly and honestly with a doctor or nurse.
4. Having more than one sex partner is common in young people.

Can I protect myself?

There are ways you can ensure that you do not contract these diseases. Namely:

1. Abstinence. Yes. Adolescence, the safest way you can ensure your safety and prevent unwanted pregnancies, is to abstain from having sexual intercourse.
2. Get tested before having sexual relations, this assures both you and your partner that you are STD free.
3. Ensure to use a condom every time, no matter the type of sex.



4. Talk with your sexual partner prior to having sex about what you will and will not do sexually. Be ready to protect your body.
5. Make sure you get the health care you need. Ask a doctor or nurse about STD testing and about vaccines against HPV and Hepatitis B.
6. Speak with your doctor and nurse about regular cervical cancer screening, and chlamydia and gonorrhoea testing.

7. Avoid mixing alcohol and/or recreational drugs with sex. If you use alcohol and drugs, you are more likely to take risks, like not using a condom or having sex with someone you wouldn't consider having sex with when sober.

How will I know if I have an STD?

Ensure to screen (get tested every 3 to 6 months). Many STDs do not cause any symptoms that you would notice. The only way to know for sure if you have an STD is to get tested.

Where to get tested?

You can get tested at your local health centre, doctor's office, or at hospitals.

Can the infections be treated?

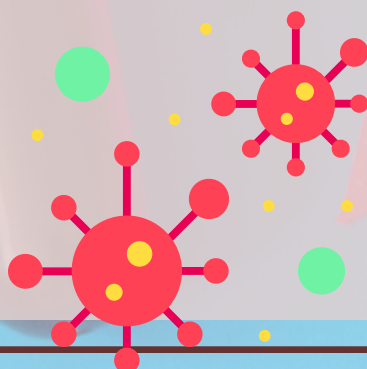
STIs such as chlamydia and gonorrhoea can be cured, however, those such as herpes cannot be cured, but medications can help with the symptoms.

It is important to note though, if you do not get STDs treated, they can cause dangerous consequences, such as difficulty for females to get pregnant, and increases your chances of contracting HIV.



Nurse D's Tip

I know it can be intimidating to admit that you may have contracted an STD, but see the doctor, no matter how afraid you may be. That disease is not afraid to advance.





Dear Parents

I would like to say that 'many of us do not know of our children having sex', but due to my exposure at my time here as a School Nurse, this has proven otherwise. We do know that they are having sexual intercourse, whether or not many of us want to admit it. So, with this in mind, help them keep themselves clean.

I know the culture we have here in Jamaica does not encourage some parents to have open relationships with their children, to talk about their intimate relationships. But I encourage you to develop one. You've already read the consequences of having unprotected sex, so I do not believe we would want our children to succumb to such danger, so this is my suggestion to you: Ensure you get your child vaccinated with the HPV vaccine, both males and females. This decreases their chance of contracting the HPV virus and developing cervical cancer or contracting HIV.

Also, have deep conversations with your children about abstinence. Encourage them to refrain from having sex due to the risks associated with it, and the fact that they are not equipped to handle those consequences. And if all fails, be sure to supply them with condoms and encourage them to have safe sexual relations.



Den Cu Yah!

It is recorded that STIs are on the rise, possibly due to more sexually active people who have multiple sex partners during their lives.

Women are more at risk to suffer frequent and severe symptoms from STIs.



Also, some strains of HPV infection in women may also be linked to cervical cancer. In both women and men, these strains may cause anal, head, and neck cancer. Which is why it is of utmost importance to get your HPV vaccines! Both males and females! (Stanford Medicine Children's Health, 2023)

Disclaimer: The content on this newsletter should not be used in place of medical / professional consultation or advice, but to be used for educational purposes only.

References

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Thank
you!